

A Sociological Study of Overseas Chinese Diaspora: Identity, Assimilation, and Globalization

Course Syllabus

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Office Hours: By appointment. Please e-mail professor to set up an appointment.

Focus of Class

We will explore the origins, trends, and experiences of global Chinese immigrants by utilizing comparative and sociological perspectives. We will learn how Chinese migrants spread worldwide and established global diasporas. Instead of treating each diasporic community as an independent entity, we will comprehensively survey these communities– through exploration of their similarities, differences, unique social, historical, cultural, or economic characteristics, and their transnational connections. Through the stories of the Chinese immigrants, we will investigate how the social context of a local society uniquely shapes immigrants’ lives. In the meantime, these immigrants build, sustain, and recreate their respective racial, ethnic and cultural identities in the host societies.

Student Learning Objectives

This course will be a **discussion-centered** seminar, coupled with **writing assignments**. Besides discussions on core reading materials, students will learn how to put **comparative** and empirical sociology research into practice. Most importantly, this course aims to hone students’ understanding and appreciation for **cross-cultural** engagements.

Format and Evaluation

Class Discussion

- The basic approach will be discussion-centered seminar.
- Emphasis will be on development of critical thinking and the practice of analytical and communicative skills.
- **Active** class participation is strongly encouraged and evaluated.

Weekly Blackboard Forum

- Students are required to formulate and post **four or five** discussion questions based on the weekly course materials, **24** hours prior to class time. For example, as class is on **Tuesday at 1:30 pm**, questions and reflections must be posted on Blackboard by **Wednesday 1:30**. Questions posted later than 24 hours will not be credited.
- Forum questions should be **analytical**, instead of informational or descriptive.
- Small group discussion methods will be frequently used. Each week there will be one assigned group discussion leader. The discussion leader of the week is responsible to provide a short summary of the weekly materials, to organize students’ online questions into discussion themes, and to lead discussions in class. The quality of leading and organizing discussions will also be evaluated.

*Film Reflective Essays*¹

- Two film reflection essays are due for the semester. Each essay is about 3-4 pages long, double-spaced, 12-point font.
- Rather than simply summarizing or describing a film, the reflective essays should be thoughtful, substantive, and critical. It should reflect your deeper understanding of the material and your critical analysis of the social or cultural issues revealed in the film.

Final Research Paper

- Final paper is about 12-15 pages, due on 5:00pm, May 9, 2017.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Weekly blackboard discussion questions: 33%
 - $3 * 11$ (weekly sessions) = 33 %
- Class attendance, participation, and discussion leading evaluations: 30%
 - Attendance 10%
 - Activeness of class engagement, quality of discussion 10%
 - Quality of small group leadership and organization 10%
- Two film reflection essays: 12%
- Final paper: 25%

Code of Conduct

- Each student is responsible to follow the George Mason University Code of Conduct (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=410>)
- Cell phones, Ipads, laptops or any other electronic devices are distractions in the classroom. To ensure the effectiveness of class learning, students are asked to restrain from using cell phones, text messaging, surfing the Internet, receiving or responding to emails, checking for phone messages, or engaging any other interruptive activities.
- Any incidence of plagiarism will be reported to the university authorities immediately.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjLa2sJjla0>

Week	Topic	Topic
1 01/24/2017	Course Overview	Course Introduction Theoretical Background—Why do people migrate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emigration, immigration, and the formation of identities • Assimilation, integration, and ethnic boundaries • Individual migration vs overseas diaspora institutions
2 01/31/2017	Origins and History of Global Chinese Migration	How did Chinese migrate? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The origins and brief history of Chinese migration • The rise of overseas Chinese diasporas • Trends of modern migration demography
3 02/07/2017	Chinese Diaspora in East Asia (1)	Building Home Away from Home (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese communities in Hong Kong • Chinese communities in Taiwan • Chinese communities in Macau • Guest speaker
4 02/14/2017	Chinese Diaspora in East Asia (2)	Home Away from Home (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Diaspora in Singapore • Chinese Diaspora in Japan • Chinese Diaspora in Korea
5 02/21/2017	Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia (1)	The Challenges and Struggles of assimilation outside of Chinese Speaking Societies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Diaspora in Malaysia • Chinese Diaspora in Indonesia • Guest Speaker
6 02/28/2017	Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia (2)	The Rise, Fall, and Renewal of Chinese community in Southeast Asia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese diaspora in Laos • Chinese Diaspora in Vietnam • Similarities and tensions
7 03/07/2017	Film and Critique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nowhere to Call Home</i> (Documentary)²
8 03/14/2017	Spring Break	No Class
9 03/21/2017	Chinese Diaspora in Americas (1)	Chinese Immigrants in the United States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Brief history of Chinese immigration to the

		<p>US</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current trends and demographic patterns • Building identity under globalization: Social, cultural, and ethnic integration • Guest Speaker/Documentary
11 03/28/2017	Film and Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film <p>Guest Speaker and Discussion (TBA)</p>
10 04/04/2017	Chinese Diaspora in Americas (2)	<p>Chinese Diaspora in South America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chinese “invasion” of Jamaica in early 20th Century • The Chinese Peruvians: the making of “Barrio Chino” and the establishment of Chinese communities in Latin America • Guest Speaker
12 04/11/2017	Chinese Diaspora in Europe	<p>The Brief History of Chinese Diaspora in Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Diaspora in Europe during World War I and World War II • “Made in Wenzhou, Italy: The untold story of Chinese communities in Europe” • “When the Chinese became Irish”
13 04/18/2017	Chinese in Australia and Oceania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early migration and settlement • Contemporary migration and settlement • The transformation of immigrant community and culture
14 04/25/2017	Chinese in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical development • Economic activities • Documentary: “<i>The Chinese are Coming</i>” by BBC
15 05/02/2017	Film and Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film: <i>Finding Mr. Right (Anchoring in Seattle)</i>, 2014
16 05/09/2017	Final presentations	Final Paper Due

