Gender and Ethnicity in China and Tibet
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Course Description
Chinese and Tibetan peoples have interacted for centuries, but it is only in the last half of the twentieth century that the "Tibet question" in China has risen to global attention. This course looks at modern Sino-Tibetan relations through the lens of ethnicity and gender as a way to understand the contentious process through which the Chinese nation-state and national identity have been constructed. Through readings, films, discussions and lectures, we will explore the diversity of Tibetan and Han Chinese family organization, gender ideologies and ethnic identities just prior to, during and after the Communist revolutionary period. This perspective will shed light on the incorporation of Tibetans as a "minority nationality" in the Chinese "multinational state", the role of such minorities in constructing Han Chinese majority identity, and the differing impact of state policies on men and women in the context of rapid economic reform and globalization in the PRC.

Late Paper Policy: Deadlines are strict. Barring personal crisis, family emergency, or severe illness (please let me know ahead of time), all late papers will be subject to one half grade off per day late. Except for abrupt crises, no requests for extensions will be heard within 48 hours before the deadline (that includes for reasons of computer malfunctioning, minor illnesses or being "behind").

Summary of Requirements
- Discussion leadership
- 5 multimedia film commentaries (due by Friday of week after film screened).
  - I of these MUST be for week four film "Stranger in my Native Land";
    Must discuss the film in terms of nationalism and imagined community
- Take-home midterm exam
- Final paper proposal and annotated bibliography
- 10 page final paper project

Course Organization
This course is your chance to delve into a particularly controversial topic in current world politics. Classes will revolve around student-led discussions and film viewings. There will be 5 multimedia film commentaries, a take-home midterm exam, and a final 10 pg. paper project. I will expect your avid participation--including regular attendance, prompt completion of assignments, and active involvement in discussions whenever possible. In fact, class participation and attendance will comprise a significant portion of your grade. Beginning week 2 class members will take turns posting discussion questions on the class moodle page and helping to lead class discussions.

Reading and writing assignments are meant to encourage close, critical engagement with the history and cultural politics of the Sino-Tibetan relationship, as well as your thoughtful reflection on the issues they raise in the context of the anthropological perspective on gender, ethnicity and nationalism presented in class. The reading load is moderate to heavy and it is assigned per week. On average, you should expect to put in two to three hours of work outside of class for every hour of in-class time.
Weekly further readings are provided for your use. These readings are ones that are especially relevant or provide differing viewpoints; they offer points of departure for deepening your understanding of particular issues.

Part I: Nationalisms and Rethinking Histories

Week One: Locating "Tibet"

Class 1: Introductions and Goals of the Course.
Class 2: Locating "Tibet"

Week 2: Imagined Communities

Week Two Film Assignment: Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion, Earthworks Films, 2004, 103 min.

Class 1: Nation, Culture and Identity Theorized

Class 2: Narratives of Nation

Week 3: Making Majorities: From Empire to Nation in China and the Invention of Nationality

Week Three Chronology: Moments in Chinese Narratives of History

Class 1: Empire and Nation in China

Class 2: Ethnicity and Nation in the PRC
• Mullaney, Thomas. 2011. Intro, p. 1-5, Ch. 1 Identity Crisis in Postimperial China, in Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China. (~30 pp)

Film clip: "Amazing Marriage Customs", Nanhai Film Co., 1992, ~20 min.

Week 4: Constructing a Pan-Tibetan Identity: From Empire to Nationalism in Tibet
Week Four Chronology: Creating Tibetan Identities
Week Four Film Assignment: 4 pm Sunday, Sept. 18, Bio 19 A Stranger in My Native Land, 1997 (33 min).

Class 1: Empire and State in Tibet

Class 2: The Threat of Modernity: Nationalist efforts
• Shakya, Tsering. 1993 Whither the Tsampa Eaters? Himal Sept-Oct: 8-11

Stranger/Nationalism film commentary due Mon.

Week 5: Gendered Nationalisms
Week Five Chronology: Nationalism and Gender in China

Class 1: Gender, Nation and Modernity

**Class 2:** Engendering Tibet (Charlene in England, in-class film)


**Week 6: One Nation Under Mao: Erasing Difference During The Radical Years**


Week Six Chronology: The Radical Years in the PRC

**Class 1:** The Pursuit of Gradual Assimilation: Reform and Revolt

**Class 2:** The Homogeneous and Androgynous Ideal: The Cultural Revolution and the Collective State

**Handout Take-Home Midterm**

**Week 7: The Eighties Reforms: Reasserting Dangerous Difference**
Week Seven Chronology: "Reform and Opening Up" in the PRC

Class 1: Reform and Opening Up

Class 2: Living the Reforms

Take-Home Midterm due Friday

Part II: Post-Mao Cultural Politics

Week 8: The Cultural Politics of Development
Week Eight Film assignment: "Kokonor", Chenaktsang Dorje Tsering, 2008, 53 min.

Class 1: Nation, Ideology and Development

Class 2: Development and Environment in Tibet: Myth and Reality

Week 9: Gender and the Family in the Reform Era

Class 1: Marriage and Family
- Compare:
• Short Story:

**Class 2:** Gender, Ethnicity and the State: "Family Planning"


**Week 10: Religious Revival and Ethnic Nationalism**

**Week Ten Film Assignment:** (4 pm, Sunday Nov. 6, Bio 19): The XVII Karmapa's return to Tsurphu, 1993 (110 min.)

**Class 1:** Gender, Ethnicity, Religion and the State


**Class 2:** Gender and religious revival: the case of nuns

• Short Story:

*In-class Film:* "Satya", Ellen Bruno, 1994, 28 min

**Final project proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due Friday**

**Week 11: Work and the Rural-Urban Divide**

**Class 1:** Work, Gender and the State


**Class 2:** Work, Gender and Education among Tibetans

• Skim:

**Weeks 12-13: Refiguring Identities: Globalization, Urbanity, and Consumption**

**Class 1:** Han Disenchantment and the Commodification of Minorities


• Short Story:

**Week Thirteen Film Assignment:** (4 pm, Sun. Nov. 27, Bio 19): "Windhorse", Paul Wagner, 1998, 97 mins

**Class 2:** Moral Crises: Consumption and Gendered Sexualities Among Tibetans

• Selected media coverage on prostitution in Lhasa 1996-2009. (ereserve).


• Online exhibit:

**Class 3:** Masculinity, Disenchantment and the Negotiation of Modernity among Tibetans


• Poem:
  o Dhondup Gyal (trans. Tsering Shakya). "Waterfall of Youth" in Song of the Snow Lion


**Week 14: Conclusions: the Future of a Relationship**

**Class 1:** Hope and Fear

Moments in Chinese Narratives of History

221 BCE Unification of "China" (Zhongguo, middle kingdom) under the Qin ruler who took the new title of huangdi, emperor.

3rd cent. BC. Qin emperor orders construction of Great Wall to protect new empire from nomad warriors.

206 BC-220 AD Han dynasty founded; military campaigns conquer vast territories, incl. what is now N. Vietnam, Korea, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang; Consolidate notion of "The Middle Kingdom" surrounded by barbarians.

3rd-6th AD "Period of disunion". Region splinters into a variety of contending polities.

581-617 AD Sui Dynasty. Plains region reunified by shortlived dynasty.

618-907 AD Tang dynasty, new capitals at Chang 'an and Loyang; reunites vast territories previously carved up into competing regimes; claims Tibet as vassal state.

907-960 AD Five Dynasties. Region splinters into a variety of contending polities.

960-1279 AD Song dynasty; elite Chinese culture and administrative system flourishes, but territories lost to non-Chinese states.

1279-1368 AD Yuan dynasty; Mongols under Ghenghis Khan conquer whole territory, rule vast empire with Chinese-style administrative system and officials.

1368-1644 AD Ming dynasty; Chinese rebels retake plains region, capital in Nanjing; formalized tribute system with over 40 other "vassal" states.

1644-1911 AD Qing dynasty; Manchus from north conquer China, administer empire with Chinese-style system, adopt Chinese elite culture. Great prosperity and expansion of some administrative control into Tibetan regions.

1911-1949 AD Tumultuous period of nation-building; political control collapses into competing warlords and civil war between KMT and CCP. Threats and humiliating defeats from imperialist Japan and western states.

May 4, 1919 May Fourth Movement; Chinese students and merchants protest Japanese interference, new national identities emerge.

1949 CCP wins civil war; establishes the "multinational state" of the People's Republic of China.

1953 Chinese scholars begin massive effort to investigate and define "minzu" groups. 400 different groups initially claim separate identities; 56 eventually
recognized by the state, with "Han" defined as the majority, all others as "minority" minzu. Tibetans called "Zangzu".

Nationalism and Gender in China
May 4, 1919 May Fourth Movement; Chinese students and merchants protest Japanese interference, new national identity formed. Female students participate. First large-scale involvement of women in political action. 1920's-30's Campaign carried out in press, new literary journals for a "New China". Men and women writers attack "big family system" and the oppression of women. Urban women push for birth control, end of foot binding, and a political voice. But rural women little affected. 1927 The KMT under Chiang Kai-shek attempts to eliminate Communist rivals in brutal massacre. New nationalist government advocates gender conservatism, limits political roles of women, stresses modern woman practice self-restraint and self-sacrifice. 1937-49 Communists escape Chiang's troops and end up after Long March in Yenan in northern Shanxi province. They build up local support against KMT and Japanese and establish social program for development of a new, socialist China--including promises to "modernize" marriage and gender relations. 1942 CCP Rectification Campaign. Mao purges his enemies, return to explicit policy of gender conservatism. Woman writer Ding Ling punished for criticizing party leaders' treatment of women. Advocate women's participation in production as only means to "liberation". 1950 CCP Marriage Reform Law. Granted rights to divorce, banned arranged marriage, infant betrothal, and selling women. Conjugal "love" now seen as basis of proper monogamous marriage. National identity emphasizes hard work, collectivity. Begin period of Communist sexual puritanism. 1953 Failures of Marriage Reform Law reported. Publicity campaign launched to "gently" inform people of the new laws. later 50's Conservative retrenchment in rural areas; women urged in "5 Goods" campaign to work hard in family and household. Collective labor was subject to gender restrictions. 1958 Great Leap Forward. Mao attempts to push China to quick modernization. Collective kitchens and daycare for women to work longer hours. "Iron woman" models as strong, patriotic, independent and doing man's work to benefit the nation. 1960-70's Cultural Revolution. Mao mobilizes youthful "Red Guards" to whip nation into patriotic frenzy. Women encouraged to participate more fully in production and political activities. Young women leave home as Red Guards or sentdown youth. Sexuality seen as bourgeois and improper. All citizens made to wear gender-neutral, desexualized clothing and hairstyles. 1980's-90's Conservative retrenchment with economic reforms at the same time as young people feel more "liberated" sexually. Women hold up rural economy while men seek work elsewhere. "Double burden" intense for urban women.

The Radical Years in the PRC
"The Chinese Communist Party has consistently recognized the nationalities question as being one of the major questions of the Chinese revolution and the liberation of the national minorities as being a part of the liberation of the Chinese...What has been called nationality struggle is in reality a question of class struggle". Mao Zedong (1940's?).

1949 Communist victory, "Liberation" of China, establishment of PRC.

Oct. 1950 PLA troops cross Yangtze river and defeat Tibetan troops in Chamdo, on the eastern edge of Central Tibetan territory.

Nov. 1950 The regent and the Kashag (Council of ministers) in Lhasa request the 16 year old 14th Dalai Lama to take up his full powers as religious and political authority of Central Tibet two years ahead of the traditional age.

May 1951 Tibetan delegation reluctantly signs the "17 Point Agreement" with the CCP w/out Dalai Lama's approval. First time Tibetan govt. formally recognized Chinese sovereignty. Agreement promises to leave traditional govt. intact. PLA troops march into Lhasa.

1951-56 Mao pursues "gradualist" policy in TAR, urges PLA and Han cadres to "make friends and do good", respect local customs. At same time, Chinese begin massive infrastructure construction in Tibetan regions.

1955-56 Sino-Tibetan relations in TAR and eastern Tibetan regions deteriorate. CCP treats other Tibetan regions as part of other provinces, land reforms and other attempts at forced assimilation implemented there. Men in Khams and Amdo take to mountains in revolt, try to organize guerrilla campaign of resistance, refugees flee to Lhasa.

1958 Great Leap Forward. Mao tries to mobilize country to quickly modernize and achieve pure Communism in one step. Mass kitchens, day care organized, women encouraged to work, industry emphasized. All ethnic customs, dress, language discouraged.

1958-59 Revolts in eastern Tibetan regions and in Lhasa and flight of Dalai Lama to India. PLA troops crackdown. Monasteries shelled, looted, monks and lamas arrested as "leaders" of rebels. Terms of 17-pt. agreement renounced and reforms implemented in TAR. Mao's economic policies cause massive famine throughout the country, ~30 million people die.

"The thought of Mao Zedong is the sun in our heart, the root of our life, and the source of all our strength. Through it one becomes unselfish, daring, intelligent, and able to do anything; no difficulty can conquer him, while he can conquer any enemy. The thought of Mao Zedong transforms men's ideology, transforms the fatherland... Through it the oppressed people of the world will rise". PLA newspaper, 1966.

1966-1976 The "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution". In order to re-establish his power in Beijing, Mao encourages radical youth to organize (as "Red Guards) and destroy the "elites", launches "Destroy the 4 olds" Campaign. Red Guard factional fighting sends country into anarchy. Some Tibetans take advantage of the social chaos to rebel, others participate in destruction of religious monuments. Most monasteries, temples, shrines in Tibetan regions damaged or completely destroyed. All ethnic customs, dress, hairstyles, language learning prohibited.
1976 Death of Mao Zedong. His widow, Jiang Qing, tries to maintain radical policies.  
1978 Rise of new moderate government. Jiang Qing and 3 associates (called the "Gang of Four") arrested, imprisoned, and scapegoated for failures of the Cultural Revolution.  
1981 "Reform and Opening Up". Deng Xiaoping emerges as head of state, dismantles many of Mao's policies, decides people needed material incentives, not political campaigns, to modernize. Ethnic minorities allowed more freedom to express ethnicity, religious beliefs. Tibetans begin revitalization of religion, local customs.

"Reform and Opening Up" in the PRC

Never feared the ultimate fate.  Now that the country has become Red,  Who will be its guardians?  Our mission, unfinished, may take a thousand years;  The struggle tires us, and our hair is gray.  You and I, old friend,  Can we just watch our efforts being washed away?

(Mao Zedong, poem to Zhou Enlai in 1975, months before both died)

Dec. 1978 The dominance of Deng Xiaoping is confirmed at the 3rd plenum of 11th Central Committee. Deng introduces new pragmatic economic reforms--initiated the decollectivization of agriculture, the beginning of the "household responsibility system", and declared an "open door" to foreign investment. Advocates polices for "4 modernizations".

1979 Deng invites delegations from the Dalai Lama's government to tour Tibetan regions. Han officials believe they will be impressed. Instead, the tour members are mobbed by sobbing crowds in Qinghai, Gansu and Lhasa. Tibetan tour members are shocked by the level of poverty and cultural devastation among Tibetans. Begin series of failed negotiations with the exiled govt.

1980 Hu Yaobang, CCP General Secretary, sent to the TAR. He is shocked, likens 20 years of CCP rule to "colonialism" and calls for 6-point reform program aimed at modernizing the economy and promoting respect for Tibetan culture.


Spring 1989 Massacre in Tiananmen square. Deng Xiaoping calls in PLA troops to crackdown on massive student protests in Beijing demanding democracy, end to official corruption.

1990's Period in which the state continues rapid economic development but cracks down on political dissent, strengthens security apparatuses, tightens control on school curricula. Tibetan monasteries more tightly regulated or closed in a "Patriotic Education" campaign. Tighter restrictions on public, especially religious gatherings

1999 President Jiang Zemin launches the "Develop the West" Campaign.