The Anthropology of Global Tibet
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Since the Dalai Lama fled to exile in India in 1959, Tibet and Tibetans have garnered emblematic status in global debates on indigenous cultures and human rights. The widespread Tibetan unrest and subsequent military crackdown during China's "Olympic year" (2007-2008) focused renewed global attention on the issue of Tibet in the face of China's rise as an important political and economic power. This course draws on anthropological theories of ethnicity, modernity and globalization to understand this phenomenon in its historical and ethnographic contexts. Working with a wide range of theoretical, historical and ethnographic writings, as well as a variety of other media such as film, popular songs, websites and blogs, we consider the global contexts and causes of changing meanings of Tibetanness before and after Chinese Communist intervention. We focus especially on the historical and contemporary diversity among Tibetans across the Himalayan region and into the diaspora, as well as the changing political economic conditions of Chinese-Tibetan relations.

Summary of Requirements:
- Discussion leadership
- Written assignments
  - 5 film commentaries (due by Friday of week after film screened).
  - At least 2 should be turned in by the end of the 8th week
  - Take-home midterm exam (due Friday, Oct. 18, 5 pm)
  - Final paper proposal and annotated bibliography (due Friday Nov. 15, 5 pm)
  - 10-12 page final paper (due Wed., Dec. 18, 5 pm)

Late Paper Policy: Deadlines are strict. Barring personal crisis, family emergency, or illness, all late papers will be subject to one half point off per day late.

Course Organization:
Classes will revolve around student-led discussions, presentations, and film viewings. There will be a take-home midterm exam, 5 film commentaries, and a final 10-12 pg. paper. 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 forum. For the week in which you are posting questions, you will also be responsible for helping to lead discussions both days. Our moodle site can be found at: https://moodle.reed.edu/course/view.php?id=1837. It serves only as our class discussion forum. All information on the course is available on the website.

Reading and writing assignments are meant to encourage close, critical engagement with the history and cultural politics of Tibet in a globalizing world, as well as your thoughtful reflection on the issues they raise in the context of the anthropological perspective on nationalism, states and ethnicity 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 supplemental 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.

Required readings are marked on the syllabus for where they can be found. Multiple copies of all texts are available on reserve in the library, and many books are available in the bookstore. In addition, a large number of required readings are available on-line, through e-reserves and on the web.

Please print out as many readings as you can! Reading is much more engaged when it is on paper and laptops and phones are prohibited in class. All readings available on-line are easily accessed via links on the web syllabus. Please let me know if you have any trouble obtaining the readings. To facilitate discussion, you should bring all readings for the day to class.

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Week 1: Locating Tibet

Chronology: Turning points in Modern Sino-Tibetan Relations

Film

- *Lost Horizon*, 1937, Frank Capra, Wed, Sept. 4, 4 pm Psych 105, 130 mins.

Class 1: Introductions and Goals of the Course

- No reading assignments

Class 2: Where is Tibet? Who Says?


Week 2: Ethnicity, Nationalism, State

Class 1: Theories


Class 2: Narratives of Ethnicity, Nation and State

• Norbu, Jamyang, April 1999. "**Rangzen Charter,**" (23 pgs).

**Week 3: Tibet as Global Exception**

**Chronology:** Creating Tibetan Identities

**Film**

• **Milarepa,** 2007, 4 pm Bio 19, 90 mins.

**Class 1: Tibet as place**


**Class 2: Tibet as polity**


**Week 4: Buddhist interventions**

**Film**

• **Kundun,** 1998, 4 pm Bio 19, 135 mins.

**Class 1: Incarnations**


**Class 2: Monasticism and Sectarian expansions**


**Week 5: Constructions of Tibetan (trans)locality: Landscape and divine power**

*Optional Film*

- **Blindsight** (award-winning 2006 documentary)

**Class 1: Pilgrimage as ritual**


**Class 2: Pilgrimage, difference and power**


**Week 6: Encounters with "the West"**

*Optional Film*

- **Seven Years in Tibet**, 1998, 136 mins.

**Class 1: Tibet as Political Agenda**


**Class 2: Tibet as Escape and Salvation**


**Week 7: Early Tibetan modernities**

**Take home midterm due at the end of the week**

*Film*

- **Angry Monk**, 2005, 4 pm Bio 19, 97 mins.

**Class 1: The Great Thirteenth**


**Class 2: The Modern Madman, Gendun Chosphel and Masculine Modernities**


**Week 8: Encounters with China**

**Chronology:** [Moments in Chinese Historiography](#)

**Film**

- *Red River Valley* (Hong He Gu), 2003, 4 pm Bio 19, 120 mins.

**Class 1: Lamas, Emperors and the Rise of the Chinese nation-state**


**Class 2: Chinese Modernist Claims and Tibetan Resistance**


**Week 9: China's Tibet**

**Chronology:** [The Maoist Years and the Rise of the PRC](#)

**Film**

- *Distorted Propaganda*, 2006, 4 pm Bio 19, (63 mins)

**Class 1: Official Chinese views of Socialist Transformation**


**Class 2: Tibetan views of Socialist Transformation**


**Week 10: The Dilemmas of Exile**

**Film**

- *We're No Monks*, 2004, 4 pm Bio 19, 129 mins.
Class 1: New Lives and Spaces

Class 2: Modernities in Exile

Final Paper Proposal and annotated Bibliography due Friday

Week 11: Dilemmas of Post-Mao modernities
Chronology: *The Era of "Recovery": "Reform and Opening Up" in China*

Film
- *Stranger in my Native Land*, 1997, 4 pm Bio 19, 33 mins.

Class 1: Modernization and Protest in Lhasa

Class 2: Dondrup Gyal and New Tibetan Media
  - "Blue Lake" lyrics (Tibetan script, transliteration, English - Word doc)

Week 12: (Trans)localizing Tibetan Buddhism

Film
- *Tibet: Cry of the Snow Lion*, 2004, 4 pm Bio 19, 103 mins.

Class 1: Buddhism, Tourism and Contested Modernities
Week 13: Global environment and development

Film
- *Kekexili (Mountain Patrol)*. 2006, 4 pm Bio 19, 89 mins.

Class 1: Green Tibetans?

Class 2: Marketing Green Tibet as Medicine

Week 14: Self-immolation Protest and the future of Tibet

Last day

Final paper due

Chronology: Turning points in Modern Sino-Tibetan Relations

1903 British invasion of Tibet. Troops under Colonel Younghusband force their way to Lhasa from India, ostensibly to open trade with the reluctant 13th Dalai Lama. The 13th Dalai Lama flees to Mongolia.
1910 In part in response to the British invasion, ~2000 Qing Chinese troops occupy Lhasa, the first Chinese attempt to establish direct rule in Tibet. The 13th Dalai Lama flees to India.
1911 Collapse of the Manchu Qing Dynasty, the last imperial dynasty in China.
1913 13th Dalai Lama returns to Lhasa. Sends all Chinese troops out of the city and declares independence from Republican China.
1913-1950 Central Tibet under the 14th Dalai Lama’s government enjoys de facto independence
1949 Chinese Communists (CCP) win civil war against Republicans (KMT), call this the "liberation" of China and establish the People's Republic of China (PRC).
1950-1 Communist troops attack borders of central Tibet, Tibetans surrender and sign "17-Point Agreement" acknowledging Chinese sovereignty and claiming Tibet will be protected from communist reforms.
1958-1959 Revolts in eastern Tibetan regions and in Lhasa against Chinese-led reforms and flight of the 14th Dalai Lama. Tens of thousands of Tibetans flee to exile in India.
Feb/Mar 2008 During the much-hyped run-up to the Beijing Olympics (Aug 2008), Tibetan monks and laity participate in unprecedentedly widespread unrest across 4 provinces in China’s far west. A military crackdown ensues, along with de facto martial law.

March 2009 First self-immolation protest by a young monk in Sichuan province, commemorating the protests and crackdown a year earlier. In 2011, more self-immolations by Tibetans begin an unprecedented series of such protests (121 by July 2013).

Moments in Chinese Historiography

Important Dates:
221 BCE Unification of China under the Qin ruler who took the new title of huangdi, emperor.
3rd cent. BCE Qin emperor orders construction of Great Wall to protect new empire from nomad warriors.
206 BCE-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 cent. 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 China, 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 Republican Era; Tumultuous period of nation-building; political control collapses into competing warlords and civil war between KMT (Guomindang, "Republican Party") and CCP. Threats and humiliating defeats from imperialist Japan and western states.

1912 Founding of the Republic of China. Revolutionary activist Sun Yat-sen, in exile in the U.S., returned to be elected the first president. But Yuan Shikai, head of the northern military, proclaimed himself emperor later that year and Sun, after leading an unsuccessful revolt, fled to Japan, where he organized the Republican Party (Guomindang, KMT). Centralized control collapses. Competing warlords control most of the north.

May 4, 1919 May Fourth Movement; Chinese students and merchants protest post-WWI Treaty of Versailles and Japanese interference, new national identities emerge.
1937 Japanese invasion and occupation of Manchuria (NE China).
1949 CCP wins civil war; establishes the "multinational state" of the People's Republic of China (Zhonghua Renmin Gonghe Guo).

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1953 Chinese scholars begin massive effort to investigate and define "minzu" groups in the PRC. 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".

Creating Tibetan Identities

The Imperial Era: The Yarlung Dynasty

627 AD  King Songtsen Gampo (609-650) becomes king of Tibetan Yarlung empire; unifies vast kingdom under organized military districts

641 Songsten Gampo marries Chinese princess; (Wencheng); Tibetan histories say this is the time when Buddhism first introduced to Tibet ("1st dissemination")

650-754 After death of Songtsen, series of 4 kings

754 King Trisong Detsen takes throne, begins supporting Buddhism in earnest.

779 Samye, first Buddhist monastery established in Tibetan Yarlung valley.

842 Assassination of King Langdarma, who is said to have opposed Buddhism, and break-up of Tibetan kingdom. End of effective Tibetan power on Chinese frontier. Buddhism said to decline in Central Tibet.

Tibetan Local Rule

9th-10th "Age of Fragmentation" ("dark ages"). Buddhist monasteries closed, but Buddhism localized and popularized, rise of local charismatic teachers, great interest in tantric Buddhist ritual.
11th-13th Monastic Buddhism flourishes again in Central Tibet ("2nd dissemination"). Major Buddhist sects emerge and build monasteries in the valley, compete for lay patrons.

**Mongol Overlordship**

1206 Genghiz Khan (Chinggis Khan) declared Supreme Khan of Mongols; later Mongol and Tibetan sources say Tibetan king/chiefs surrendered; but this unclear.

1240 Mongol troops first sent into Tibet; Buddhist sects vie for Mongol patrons.

1249 Sakya lama appointed Tibetan viceroy by the Mongols, succeeded by his nephew Phagpa.

1268 Mongol domination over Tibet completed with pacification of Tibetan resistance.

1368 Fall of the Mongol Yuan dynasty; Tibetans independent

**Tibetan/Mongol Local rule**

14th-17th Period of lay Tibetan rule, series of rival principalities

1409 Emergence of Gelug sect, establishment of first Gelug monastery

1578 Sodnam Gyatso given title of Dalai Lama by Mongol ruler Altan Khan

1642 Gushri Khan, Mongol leader, defeats lay king of Tibet and sets up 5th Dalai Lama as ruler of Tibet. 5th Dalai Lama first ruler to unite Buddhist and secular; builds stature of Tibet, builds Potala, new monasteries, meets Qing emperor.

1682 Death of 5th Dalai Lama. His regent hides his death for 15 years.

**Qing Overlordship**

1705-1723 Period of civil war, struggles with Mongols over rule of Tibet. No other Dalai Lama holds actual power from here on until the 13th. Qing emperor establishes authority in Lhasa.

1723-1747 Lay noble Pho Lha defeats rivals and governs Tibet with Qing support. Qing ambans in Lhasa.

1750's-1870's 8th-12th Dalai Lamas die young; Tibet governed by series of monk regents through a monastic bureaucracy.

1904 British Younghusband expedition, British troops force their way into Lhasa, forces signing of "treaty" to open trade access.

1910 Zhao Erfeng's Qing troops occupy Lhasa. 13th Dalai Lama flees to India, denounces relationship with Qing.

(1911 Fall of Manchu Qing dynasty)

**De facto Independence**

1913 13th Dalai Lama evicts Chinese from Lhasa; begin period of de facto independence.

1914 Simla Conference between China, Britian and Tibet. Tibet gains no legal status.

1934 Death of 13th Dalai Lama, begin period of conflict over succession.

1930's-40's Tibetan elites in Lhasa refuse attempts to modernize. Expel and imprison Tibetan intellectuals advocating change.

1950 Chinese Communist troops march on Central Tibetan territory.

The Maoist Years and the Rise of 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, framed as "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 crack down. 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.

The Era of "Recovery" (huifu): "Reform and Opening Up" (gaige kaifang) in China

Loyal parents who sacrificed so much for the nation  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

Important Dates:
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 crack down on massive student and worker 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 "Great Develop the West" Campaign.