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HONG KONG CULTURE

I. AIMS

- (1) To examine the symbolic and cultural meanings embedded in the city of Hong Kong;
- (2) To decipher the process of cultural continuity and change from historical perspective;
- (3) To sensitize students to a critical understanding of local culture in various domains of social life.

II. INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- Explain a few salient facets of Hong Kong culture and identity from historical perspective;
- Analyze culture in terms of the values, meanings, discourses and ideologies underpinning various social spheres;
- Formulate their own informed interpretations of Hong Kong culture.

III. CONTENT

The course consists of two major thematic clusters and one special topic:

- i) Culture and identity from historical perspective
 - ii) Space, community and cityscape
- “Culture and identity” looks at the historical formation of Hong Kong culture through the local/ national/ global nexus. It considers the roles of popular culture (market), the state and civil society in shaping our local culture since the 1960s. It explores the construction of identity in different domains of social life from colonial times to the post-colonial era.
 - “Space, community and cityscape” extends the discussion of culture and identity into the arena of urban space and development, exploring the issues of memory and heritage, public versus private space, globalism and localism, community and development, urban versus rural, as well as home and housing inequalities.
 - (Special Topic) “Popular Culture” addresses issues relating to cultural production, popular tastes and audience reception, while echoing some of the issues relating to culture and identity.

IV. MODES OF LEARNING/ASSESSMENT

Short Assignment	10%
Seminar Presentation	10%
Seminar Participation	10% (including attendance and participation)
Discussion Sessions	5%
Essay	25%
Final Exam	40%

- ※ Seminars: Each student will do one group presentation. Attendance in the seminars is required.
- ※ A short assignment, *on an individual basis*, is due on **Oct 16 (Sun), 11:59pm**. (See section VI)
- ※ An essay, *on an individual basis*, is due on **Dec 20 (Tue), 11:59pm**. Choose from among the 8 seminar questions (Q1-Q8 only) and write an essay of 2,000-3,000 words in English or in Chinese. References should be included. (Exception: You may write a paper on popular culture, but you must formulate a specific question and seek prior approval by Nov 30.)
- ※ Final exam will be in the form of essays.

V. SCHEDULE FOR LECTURES AND SEMINARS

Wk	Monday	Wednesday
1	[05/09] Introduction	[07/09] Culture and Identity (historical focus)
2	[12/09] {holiday}	[14/09] Culture and Identity (historical focus)
3	[19/09] Culture and Identity (historical focus)	[21/09] The Concept of Culture
4	[26/09] Discussion	[28/09] Culture and Identity (historical focus)
5	[03/10] Culture and Identity (historical focus)	[05/10] Culture and Identity (historical focus)
6	[10/10] Space & Community	[12/10] Space & Community
7	[17/10] Space & Community	[19/10] SEMINAR (1)
8	[24/10] SEMINAR (2)	[26/10] SEMINAR (3)
9	[31/10] SEMINAR (4)	[02/11] Space & Community
10	[07/11] Space & Community	[09/11] Space & Community
11	[14/11] Discussion (Popular Culture)	[16/11] Discussion (Popular Culture)
12	[21/11] SEMINAR (5)	[23/11] SEMINAR (6)
13	[28/11] SEMINAR (7)	[30/11] SEMINAR (8)

VI. SHORT ASSIGNMENT

Write an essay of 500-800 words, in English or in Chinese, on ONE of the following two questions with CLOSE reference to the required reading. (You are advised to focus your discussion primarily on the reading.) The purpose is to give you some preliminary training regarding the method, approach as well as language used in cultural/discourse analysis. [Due date: October 16, 11:59pm]

Question (A)

“The formation of Hong Kong identity is a process of hegemonic construction.” Discuss this statement with reference to the right of abode example.

Reading {also reading for seminar 1}:

Ku, Agnes S. (2001b). “Hegemonic Construction, Negotiation and Displacement – Struggle over Right of Abode in Hong Kong.” *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 4 (3): 259-27.

Question (B)

“The nation is a cultural and political construction.” Discuss this statement with reference to the following reading.

Reading {also reading for seminar 3}:

盧思騁 (1997), “民族主義與殖民統治---國粹派的民族觀念系統” 載羅永生 (編) (1997): 【誰的城市?】。香港: 牛津大學, 頁 39-67。

VII. DISCUSSION SESSIONS, SEMINAR QUESTIONS AND READINGS

[26/09] **Discussion Session (Hong Kong ethos)**

*Identify specific idioms or icons that you think most represent the Hong Kong ethos at the present time and analyze their symbolic meanings. How far do these meanings reflect some larger ideological discourses? (*Please prepare two different examples in writing, in just a couple of lines, and submit them by Sep 24, 11:59pm.)*

Readings

吳俊雄 (2002): 「尋找香港本土意識」

[14/11] **Discussion Session (Popular culture)** (more details later)

[16/11] **Discussion Session (Popular culture)** (more details later)

SEMINAR QUESTIONS

[19/10] **Q1 [Culture & Identity] – Narrating Hong Kong**

Analyze the cultural frameworks and discourses used to narrate modern Hong Kong and discuss how they shed light on the representation of Hong Kong identity during 1960s-1990s.

Required Readings

Turner & Ngan (1995), *Hong Kong Sixties*, pp. pp.xvi, 13-34, 80-83 (focus: 1960s)

Ku (2018), “Identity as Politics” {excerpts} (a historical overview)

Ku (2001), “Hegemonic Construction” (post-1997)

「80年代有咩好?!」 in *Being Hong Kong 2022*, pp252-269 (primary source/ focus: 1980s)

Recommended

Background materials on economic development in 1970s-80s (Leung 1996, pp.4-12)

[Advice]

- Examine these frameworks/ discourses and possible tensions within and among them.
- Consider continuity and change over time (e.g.1960s-70s; 1980s-97 & early post-1997 era).
- The background materials are not directly relevant but would give you some ideas about HK’s growth as a prosperous modern economy.

[24/10] **Q2 [Culture & Identity] – Remembering (Forgetting) our Past**

How have collective memories been constructed and negotiated to tell of Hong Kong’s past?

Required Readings

Zhang et al. (2018), “Politics of Memories” (comparing the museums in Macau & Hong Kong)

Leung (2009) “Fates of European Heritage”

Ku (2010), “Making Heritage in Hong Kong” (Central Police Station compound)

Recommended

Weedon and Jordan (2012), “Collective Memory” (concepts)

[Advice]

- Focus on HK but you may also discuss Macau briefly to shed a comparative light on HK.
- Consider the different underlying frameworks used to selectively remember (or forget) and represent the past and think about their relations.

[26/10] Q3 [Culture & Identity] – Positioning “Chineseness”

Examine the divergent discourses of Chinese nationalism whereby Hong Kong has been positioned vis-à-vis mainland China over the years.

Required Readings

盧思騁 (1997): 「民族主義與殖民統治」, 載羅永生(編)

李祖喬 (2011): 「香港文化的邊緣」, 載彭麗君(編)

Lau, T. et al. (2016). “Dynamics of Chinese nationalistic education in HK from 1945 to 2012”

Ma, E. (2007) “Grassroots Nationalism: Changing Identity in a Changing Context”

[Advice]

- Pay attention to the differences and dynamics in the discourses between different camps and in different fields; explain the development as well as the outcome.

[31/10] Q4 [Culture & Identity] – Rethinking Hybridity

How far does “hybridity” offer a useful framework to anchor our understanding of Hong Kong culture?

Required Readings

Wong and Chan (2017) “... Bilingualism in HK’s Linguistic Landscape” (signage)

Padua (2007). “Designing an Identity ... Post-traditional Landscape” (architecture)

Ho (2020) “Cosmopolitan locavorism” (food culture)

Wong (2021), “Making Vitasoy ‘Local’” (case: Vitasoy)

Recommended

陳冠中 (2007): 【我這一代香港人】, 頁 50-73

[Advice]

- Explore some common and different themes of duality highlighted in the articles; “tradition vs. modernity” being one example, among others.
- Reflect on some conceptual issues relating to hybridity as addressed in the articles.

[21/11] Q5 [Space] – Cityscape

How have the city images of Hong Kong been formed, mobilized and contested? Analyze how cultural factors interact with other factors in shaping the cityscape as well as spatial development of Hong Kong since the 1980s.

Required Readings

Healey (2002), “On Creating the ‘City’ as a Collective Resource.” (concepts)

Raco and Gilliam (2011), “Geographies of abstraction” (West Kowloon Cultural District)

Karvelyte (2020), “Shifting Meanings ... Creative City” (adding a comparative angle)

Li (2013), “Terminating Architecture” (Kowloon Station)

[Advice]

- Healey’s article provides a clear exposition of the idea of city images.
- Give some thought to the divergent ideologies and discourses at work at different times.
- Consider not only the government but also other actors who have played a role.
- You may discuss Hong Kong comparatively but you need not examine other cities in detail.

[23/11] Q6 [Space] – Place, Heritage and Community

What make places? Analyze the dynamics in the processes of making and un-making places with reference to some specific examples in Hong Kong.

Required Readings

Gieryn (2000), “A Space for Place in Sociology”

Abbas (1997), *Culture and Politics of Disappearance*, ch.4

谷淑美、徐匡慈 (2009): 「一場新社區運動帶來的啓迪」

Lau and Chow (2019). “The Right to Landscape” (State Theatre)

[Advice]

- Gieryn’s article provides a good overview on the notion of place.
- Think about the role of culture in place-making. (Consider how cultural resources are used and how discourse and space shape each other in generating cultural resources etc.)

[28/11] Q7 [Space] – Public Spaces

Discuss how public spaces have been regulated, negotiated and/ or transformed through various discursive and spatial practices in our society.

Required Readings

Ku (2012), “Fashioning ...” (Star Ferry and Queen’s peers/ 2006-07)

Pang (2016), “Arendt in Hong Kong” (art and place-making/ Umbrella)

~~Wang et al (2019), “Space in a Social Movement” (university campus/ Umbrella)~~

Yu (2018) “The Changing Urban Political Order” (public open spaces in private developments)

Recommended

Qian (2020), “Geographies of Public Space” (concepts)

[Advice]

- Qian’s article offers different theoretical readings of the notion of public space
- Consider how public spaces have been defined and re-defined, and how their uses might be negotiated by different people through discourses and various activities.

[30/11] Q8 [Space] – Home & Housing

“Home is a cultural construction that reinforces social inequalities.” Discuss this statement in the context of Hong Kong.

Required Readings

Chan, Kam Wah (2000). “Prosperity of Inequality”

La Grange and Pretorius (2016). “State-led Gentrification in Hong Kong.”

Choi et al. (2019). “Luxury Housing”

黎婉薇 (1996): 「大都會計劃的背後」

[Advice]

- Analyze how “home” has been culturally constructed in society.
- Delineate the social/ housing inequalities and explain in what ways the cultural construction of “home” reinforces (or simply reflects) such inequalities.

VIII. REFERENCES

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B. Hong Kong Culture: Specific Issues

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