

## **HIEA 167/267: TOPICS IN MODERN CHINESE HISTORY CHINESE FAMILY HISTORY**

**Time:** Tuesday 2-5

**Place:** H&SS 3086

**Instructor:** Joseph W. Esherick

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**Office hours:** Mondays 9-10, Wednesdays 11-12 and by appointment

**Purpose of course:** The primary purpose of this course is to give students an opportunity to read some good (and interesting) books related to the Chinese family, to analyze and comment on them, and to write a paper discussing some aspect of Chinese family history. (In a past version of this course, many students researched their own family background, and that worked very well.) We will be reading a wide variety of books: anthropological studies, autobiographical works, novels, and works of historical analysis. All relate in some way to life in a Chinese family, and we will want to pay attention to how Chinese families work – and how they have changed over time. We are all familiar with clichés about the strength of the Chinese family, or the Chinese family as the basis of Chinese society. Like all clichés, they contain important elements of truth – but they also greatly oversimplify matters. More importantly, they often tend to suggest that the Chinese family was some unchanging essential nucleus of Chinese society. That is a notion we will want to examine closely – for history tells us that the world is constantly in flux, and it would be surprising if the Chinese family were not changing along with the rest of the world.

This is an upper-division colloquium, and satisfies small-class writing requirements in History, and Chinese Studies. Some background in Chinese history is assumed. thus **enrollment is limited and by consent of instructor** and I will give priority to students with a solid background in Chinese history, Chinese Studies majors, and History majors.

### **Course Requirements:**

- 1. Active classroom participation.** Too many UCSD History classes are large lecture classes in which student learning is entirely passive. This is a rare course (certainly for me, and perhaps for you as well) in which you have a real opportunity to interact intellectually with other students, and with a professor. You will be expected, indeed **required**, to participate in classroom discussion. Silent students should expect to be called upon.
- 2. Introductions of the readings.** One or two students (to be assigned in the first meeting of class) will be primarily responsible for introducing the discussion of each book. You should say something about the author, about the nature of the study and its sources, and its main point or argument. You should also prepare a few (perhaps 3-4) questions that you think are worth discussing.

- 3. Two book reviews.** You may select the books from your readings. The first review will be due in class in the fourth week of class; the second will be due in the seventh week. Book reviews should be 3-5 double-spaced pages in length.
- 4. Final paper.** This may be on any topic you choose within the field of Chinese family history. As noted above, many students in the past have done oral history interviews of their older relatives, linked this history to appropriate written sources to provide historical context, and written very interesting papers. Others have written topical papers based on the course reading. Examples of possible topics might include such questions as the family in the Chinese revolution, mother-daughter relations in the Chinese family, or differences between urban and rural families. You are not expected to do much (if any) extra reading. There will already be a fair amount of reading in this course. Sometime in the seventh or eighth week of class, you should come to see me in office hours to discuss your topic and how you should approach it. Final papers should be 10-15 pages in length and include full, proper footnoting and bibliographic references. Final papers will be due Friday, June 5, by 5:00 p.m. During exam week, you will give presentations to share your findings with your fellow students.

**Readings** will be roughly one book per week and will include these titles which are available for purchase in the UCSD Bookstore.

Margery Wolf, *The House of Lim*

Ba Jin, *Family*

Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in Sung*

Ida Pruitt, *Daughter of Han*

Jung Chang, *Wild Swans*

Yue Daiyuan & Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Chinese Revolutionary Woman*

Susan Mann, *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family*

I will also be assigning (and requesting your comments on) a book that I have just finished, which will be available in manuscript form, entitled *Leaves: The Ye Family and Modern China*. (I have about four copies which will have to be shared among you.)

### **Syllabus and Reading Schedule**

**Week 1 (March 31): Introduction and Background**

In class, read selections from Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society* (pp. 54-56) and Francis Hsu, *Americans and Chinese* on differences between Chinese and American families (pp. 72-87). Discuss the ideas – and the clichés.

**Week 2 (April 7): An anthropologist's view of a Chinese family in Taiwan (1950s)**

Marjery Wolf, *The House of Lim*

**Week 3 (April 14): A Chinese novelist's view (1920s)**

Ba Jin, *Family*

**Week 4** (April 21): **Women** in the family – I (Song dynasty).

Patricia Ebrey, *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*

**FIRST BOOK REVIEW DUE**

**Week 5** (April 28): **Women** in the family – II (Qing dynasty).

Susan Mann, *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family*

**Week 6** (May 5): **Peasant and working families.**

Ida Pruitt, *Daughter of Han* **or**

Marjery Wolf, *Women and Family in Rural Taiwan*

**Week 7** (May 12): The **changing family** of 20<sup>th</sup> century China.

Olga Lang, *Chinese Family and Society*

**or**

Jon Saari, *Legacies of Childhood: Growing Up Chinese in a Time of Crisis*

**SECOND BOOK REVIEW DUE**

**Week 8** (May 19): Three-generations of a **modern family**

Jung Chang, *Wild Swans*

**Week 9** (May 26): The family in revolutionary **China**

Yue Daiyuan & Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Chinese Revolutionary Woman*

**Week 10** (June 2): **Critiquing the Professor's work**

Joseph W. Esherick, *Leaves: The Ye Family and Modern China*

**Exam Week:** Tuesday, June 9: 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. Presentation of Final Papers.

**Other readings on the Chinese Family**

Hugh D.R. Baker, *Chinese Family and Kinship* (New York: 1979)

Hilary Beattie, *Land and Lineage in China: A Study of T'ung-ch'eng County, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties*

Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*

Frank Ching, *Ancestors: 900 Years in the Life of a Chinese Family*

Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung* (New York: 1966)

Marion J. Levy, Jr. *The Family Revolution in Modern China* (New York: 1968)

Francis L. K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Kinship Personality and Social Mobility in Village China* (Garden City: 1948/1966)

Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *Son of a Revolutionary*

Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*

Joanna Meskill, *A Chinese Pioneer Family*

Janice Stockard, *Daughters of the Canton Delta*