

ANSC 137: Chinese Popular Religion

Spring 2023

MWF 11-11:50 am PST

HSS 2154

Instructor:

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Pronouns: he, him, his

Office Hours: M/W/F 10-10:50 am (no appt. necessary) at picnic table outside Peterson Hall

or by appointment in Zoom personal meeting room: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/3969178702>

Course Overview

This class is about popular manifestations of religion, not so much the religion found in texts and pondered by educated elites, but the often raucous and sometimes contradictory versions enacted by masses of people who often do not know or care about the theological implications or justifications of their actions. Thus, popular religion can show us enormously varied and individualized expressions of religiosity as well as collective religious movements that are hard for outsiders to understand, or governments to control.

We will touch on China's "three great teachings" of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism with a focus on how they are interpreted and experienced by lay believers. But we will go beyond these traditions to discuss direct experience of divinities through spirit possession, traditions of healing and divination, deification of mortals, local manifestations of transnational religious movements, transformation of Chinese religiosities abroad, and the various meanings of popular stories about ghosts and irreverent deities.

The Chinese context gives us an immensely diverse array of religiosities to explore, so the final paper will give you the opportunity to research a question about the social function, political impact, psychological meaning, etc. of one religious myth, practice, movement, etc. While China is our specific arena of study, keep in mind that it is just one particularly interesting case study chosen to advance our understanding of the role of popular religious practices in human societies and our own individual lives.

Course Requirements:

Online Discussion Participation 10%

Before each class meeting, you must post a paragraph to a discussion forum on the Canvas course page. Your paragraph can EITHER introduce a discussion question about one or more

of the readings and/or films assigned for that day OR respond to a question posted by one of your classmates. Questions must be posted by 11:59 p.m. on the night before the day the readings or film you are writing about are assigned. Responses must be posted before lecture begins on the day the readings under discussion are due. You should ask debatable (not factual) questions that could have a variety of plausible answers, and give your post a title that will inspire other students to read it and respond. The goal of these questions is to help you think critically about the readings and to inspire discussion in class. Each student should review the online discussion before each class in addition to doing the assigned readings.

Attendance OR Asynchronous Assignments 10%

To get the most out of this class, it is essential that you attend or view all of our class meetings and actively participate in class discussions and group activities. If you are unable to attend lectures live (in person or via Zoom), you may still simulate this participation and receive full credit by completing an asynchronous assignment instead. Asynchronous assignments will be posted after each lecture and must be completed before the next lecture begins. No late asynchronous assignments will be accepted except in cases of verifiable medical excuses or emergencies.

Midterm: 20%

Making and explaining connections between key terms and using class material to make an argument in response to an essay prompt will assess your ability to apply the material presented in the first half of the course.

Final Exam: 25%

The final will be similar in format to the midterm, but focused on the second half of the course, except it will also include an additional comprehensive essay question.

Paper Proposal 10%

The subject matter of this course is incredibly broad, and it is designed to give you a basic understanding of many facets of Chinese popular religion. Thus, the final project for this class will enable you to explore one aspect of one type of Chinese religiosity in depth. In week four, you must submit a 2-3 page paper proposal in which you identify (1) a specific religious practice within a specific tradition that interests you, (2) a debatable research question about the significance, meaning, effects, etc of this practice, and (3) at least three scholarly sources NOT assigned for this course that will help to answer your question. You must explain how you will use sources to answer your question, and how this will enrich scholarly understanding of Chinese popular religion and the anthropological meaning/function of religion in general. You are encouraged to consult with the professor about this project before and after turning in the assignment (this is why we have office hours).

Final Paper 25%

You will write a 7-10 page paper that answers a question of your choosing by integrating data from scholarly, anthropological sources. The question will be a refined version of the one

featured in your paper proposal and must be approved in advance by the professor, either in comments on your proposal or in later consultation. This paper should use academic evidence to support a debatable argument related to the issues addressed in the course, but **it does not have to be a topic specifically included on the syllabus..**

All information used in your paper that is not your own original work must be cited, and we will be using [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) to check for originality. Chicago style citations are preferred in anthropology and most social sciences (Author's last name, year: page #) (Stewart 2015:1), but MLA, APA or any other recognizable style will work as long as you **include an in-text citation that points to a reference on a works cited or bibliography page that identifies the year and publication information of the source** of your information.

In Class Presentation: (Extra Credit +3% on assignment of your choice)

Once during this course, you may present one set of readings alone or together with a group of one or two other students. The presentation should last between ten and fifteen minutes, and each group member must participate. Even though you will present the readings as a group, you will be graded as an individual. The goal of your presentation is to spark discussion, so you should come prepared with interesting questions that will inspire a response from your peers. You can also review questions your classmates have posted on TritonEd and raise the ones that best fit with your presentation.

Guidelines for Presentations:

Rather than just summarizing everything the readings say, you should give a critical presentation highlighting main components of the argument, critiquing them, and comparing them to other readings. You should include discussion questions to prompt your classmates to think critically about this article. Feel free to cite your classmates' questions, cultural references, video clips, etc. Here are some questions to get you started:

- What question is the author trying to answer?
- What is the author's primary argument (answer to the question)?
- What evidence does he/she use to answer the question?
- Does the evidence adequately support the argument?
- Is there other evidence he/she should have considered?
- Do you agree with the author's point of view? Why or why not?

Students must complete all components of the class listed above in order to pass the course.

Policies

Attendance

You are required to either attend lecture OR submit an asynchronous assignment each week. Attendance at live lectures is strongly recommended, but lectures also will be podcast or recorded and posted. You are responsible for all material presented in lecture. PowerPoint slides will be posted online, but they are only a rough outline of the material and not a substitute for attending class. **Asynchronous assignments will be posted after each lecture and must be completed before the next lecture begins. No late asynchronous assignments will be accepted**, except in cases of verifiable emergencies.

Late Work

Electronic submissions are due before midnight on the dates specified. Please plan to submit in advance, because extensions will not be granted in case of technical difficulties or incomplete submission. Assignments submitted after the due date will be docked 4% for each day (24 hrs) they are late (including weekends). (Note that this means you can still get an A if you submit a perfect assignment one day late.) Late discussion questions and asynchronous assignments will not be accepted unless a student gives prior notice or has a documented excuse.

Classroom Environment

We will discuss some sensitive issues in this class, and you are expected to approach them with an open mind. **You are encouraged to contribute critical and alternative viewpoints, but you must always be respectful** and refrain from using any language that could be construed as a personal attack.

Communication

You can contact me via email for basic questions about the course, **but please specify which course**, and I will do my best to respond within 48 hours. You also can post questions on Canvas for an even faster response. **Please check Canvas and your UCSD email regularly for class updates.** However, for complex questions about course material or paper topics and a more in depth response, please **come talk with me in person during office hours.**

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating are very serious offenses; all quotations and paraphrasing must be properly cited and everything not cited must be your own, original work. Canvas will automatically submit your papers to turnitin.com to confirm their originality. Those suspected of misconduct will be referred to the Academic Integrity Office, and will be subject to failing the course in addition to appropriate disciplinary sanctions. See <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>.

Academic Support Services

If you require accommodations due to a disability, you must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Please present AFAs as soon as possible to allow time for appropriate planning for the provision of reasonable accommodations.

Grade Disputes

If you have questions about why you received a grade, please talk to me in office hours right away about how you can do better in the future. Grade changes will only be made for errors in calculation or in extreme circumstances. Please do not wait until after your final grade has been calculated to ask questions about how assignments are graded.

Required Texts and Films

All texts are available for free electronically on Canvas or through links, including many to Prof. David Jordan's website. Prof. Jordan taught this and numerous other classes before retiring, and his website is a veritable treasure trove of China and anthropology-related resources well worth exploring on your own: <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/china.html>

Course Schedule*

all readings available on TritonED

All readings are due by lecture or section (whichever comes first) on the day they are listed.

If readings require a password and username, enter "china" for both.

***Like all things, subject to change**

Week 1: Foundations

4/3: Introductions: No Assigned Readings

4/5: Popular Religion in the Chinese Religious Landscape

Teiser, Stephen F. 1999. "The Spirits of Chinese Religion," In *Religions of China in Practice*. edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton University Press.

4/7: Temples and Communal Religious Life

Tam, Wai Lun. "Communal Worship and Festivals in Chinese Villages." In *Chinese Religious Life*. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press. 30-49.

Week 2: Folk Tales and Cosmology

4/10: Ancestor Veneration and Folk Confucianism

The 24 Filial Exemplars <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/shiaw/shiaw00.html>
(read intro and follow link to read all 24 stories)

Hsieh, Melody. "Ancestor Worship: A Passport to Eternity: Chinese Ancestral Spirit Tablets"
<http://dkjordan.net/chinaltd/twltld/TW-rel/AncestorTablets.html> ID and PW = china

4/12: The Monkey King: Sun Wukong

Journey to the West (retelling) <http://dkjordan.net/chtales/shiyoujih/ShiYou.html>

Bradeen, Ryan and Jean Johnson. 2005. "Using *Monkey* to Teach Chinese Religions." *Education about Asia*. 10.2: 39-43.

Watch an adaptation of the *Journey to the West* on Youtube or elsewhere (my personal favorite is the live action CCTV series here):

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIj4BzSwQ-_sfc7l2xm1wQswAd5jqrrDS

4/14: Daoist Immortals, Medicine, and Divination

Tales of the Eight Immortals. Retold by David K. Jordan. <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/bashian/bs0Intro.html>

The Five Elements <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/WuuShyng.html>

Week 3: Chinese Patriarchy and its Discontents

4/17: Ways of Doing Religion in China

Chau, Adam Yuet. 2011. "Modalities of Doing Religion." In *Chinese Religious Life*. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press. 67-86

4/19: Gender, Sexuality and Self-Cultivation

Huang, C. Julia, Elena Valussi, and David A. Palmer. "Gender and Sexuality" In *Chinese Religious Life*. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press. 107-123.

4/21: Guan Yin and Chinese Goddesses

Sangren, P. Steven. 1983. Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols: Kuan Yin, Ma Tsu, and the "Eternal Mother." *Signs*. 9.1:4-25

Week 4: Religiosity, Mediumship, and the Self

4/24: Ghost Stories and the Afterlife

The Jade Guidebook: A Visitor's Guide to Hell (read Introduction, First Court, Tenth Court, and one court of your choosing in between) <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/yuhlih/yuhlih-intro.html>

Pu Songling, Ghost story of Nie Xiaoqian <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/liaujai/NiehGhost.html>

Saving the Damned: Two Tales of the Bodhisattva Dizàng <http://dkjordan.net/an137/ChRelWk09.html>

4/26: Production of Patriliney

Sangren, Steven 2017. Popular Religion, a Chinese Superboy, and "The Investiture of the Gods" Filial Obsessions: Chinese Patriliney and its Discontents. Palgrave Macmillan pp. 13-33.

4/28: Spirit Mediumship

Jordan, David. 1976 "A Medium's First Trance." Marc J. Swartz & David K. Jordan, eds. *Anthropology: Perspective on Humanity*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

<http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/scriptorium/firsttrance/FirstTrance.html>

Jordan, David. 1977. "How to Become a Spirit Medium"

<http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/scriptorium/medium-main.html>

Week 5: Healing and Embodiment

5/1: Spirit Possession and Patriliney

PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Sangren, Steven. 2017. *Filial Obsessions: Chinese Patriliney and its Discontents*. 92-114

5/3: Mediumship, Healing, and the Self

Lee, Boon-Ooi. 2016. "Transformation in Dang-ki Healing and its Perceived Legitimacy." *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry*. 40:422-449.

5/5: MIDTERM

Week 6: Popular Religion and Politics

5/8: Self-Cultivation, Embodiment, and the State

Palmer, David A. "The Body: Health, Nation, and Transcendence" In *Chinese Religious Life*. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press. 87-106

5/10: Religion and Sovereignty in China

Palmer, David A. "Religion in Chinese Social and Political History." In *Chinese Religious Life*. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press. 155-171.

5/12: Guandi as a Multivocal Symbol

Jordan, David. Background to the Three Kingdoms.

<http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/chinahistory/SanGwo.html>

Duara, Prasenjit. 1988. Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War. *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 47.4:778-795.

Week 7: Popular Religion, Markets, and Modernity

5/15: Spirituality in Modern China

Fan, Lizhu and James Whitehead. 2011. "Spirituality in a Modern Chinese Metropolis." In *Chinese Religious Life*. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press. 13-29

5/17: Pilgrimage, Tourism, and Ethnicity

Kang, Xiaofei. 2009. "Two Temples, Three Religions, and a Tourist Attraction: Contesting Sacred Space on China's Ethnic Frontier." *Modern China* 35.3: 227-255.

5/19: Pilgrimage and Uyghur Shrines

Harris, Rachel & Rahilä Dawut (2002) Mazar festivals of the Uyghurs: Music, Islam and the Chinese State. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 11:1, 101-118.

Week 8: New Religious Movements in Modern China

5/22: The Cult of Mao

Landsberger, Stefan R. "The Deification of Mao: Religious Imagery and Practices during the Cultural Revolution and Beyond", Woei Lien Chong (ed.), *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counternarratives (Asia/Pacific/Perspectives)* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), pp. 139-184.

5/24: Qigong and Charisma

Palmer, David. Embodying Utopia: Charisma in the post-Mao *Qigong* Craze." *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, 12.2: 69-89.

5/26: Falun Gong and State Reaction to Revival

Penny, Benjamin. 2008. Animal Spirits, Karmic Retribution, Falungong, and the State. In *Chinese Religiosities*. Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. 135-154.

Week 9: Globalization and Popular Chinese Religions

5/29: MEMORIAL DAY - No class

5/31: Indigenization of Protestantism as New Religious Movements in China

Dunn, Emily 2015. Protestant-related New Religious Movements in Contemporary China." In *Lightning from the East: Heterodoxy and Christianity in Contemporary China*. Brill.

6/2: Popular Islamic Revival in China

Stewart, Alex. 2020. Imagining Transnational Communities: Conflicting Islamic Revival Movements in the People's Republic of China. In *Ethnographies of Islam in China: Revivals, Identities and Mobilities*. Rachel Harris, Guangtian Ha, and Maria Jaschok, eds. Indiana University Press.

Week 10: Globalizing Chinese Religions

6/5: Chinese Religiosity Beyond China

Madsen, Richard and Elijah Siegler. "The Globalization of Chinese Religions and Traditions. In Chinese Religious Life. David Palmer, Glen Shive, and Phillip Wickeri, eds. Oxford University Press 227-240

6/7: Traditional Medicine Goes Global

Janes, Craig R. 2002. Buddhism, Science, and Market: The Globalisation of Tibetan Medicine. *Anthropology & Medicine*. 9.3:267-289.

6/9: Commonalities Among Chinese Popular Religions **FINAL PAPER DUE******

Vermander, Benoît, Liz Hingley, and Liang Zhang. Conclusion: The Sacred Tapestry IN Shanghai Sacred: The Religious Landscape of a Global City. University of Washington Press. 172-190

Final Exam: Friday 6/16, opens at 11:30 am, online submission due at 11:59 pm

Other Policies and Resources

Preferred Pronouns: I will gladly honor your request to address you by your chosen name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make the appropriate adjustments to my records.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work or ideas as one's own. UC San Diego expects that both faculty and students will honor academic integrity to protect the validity of our intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. When you use the words and ideas of others in any written work, you must cite it properly. Instructors, for their part, will exercise care in planning and supervising academic work, so that honest effort will be upheld. Submitting assignments online through Canvas automatically checks for potential violations against anything openly available on the internet, including samples of firewalled written assignments. All suspected instances of plagiarism will be reported. A verdict of violation of academic integrity for any course assessment will result in failure of this course. Additional information is available at <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/>

Accommodations: UC San Diego welcomes students who have (dis)abilities and wish to participate in the academic and professional opportunities available in the community. Students requesting accommodations and services due to (dis)abilities should let the professor know in private within the first two weeks of class. They will need to receive authorization through the Office for Students with Disabilities. For more information, visit University Center Room 202, call them at 858.534.4382, visit them online at <https://osd.ucsd.edu/> or email them at osd@ucsd.edu (requests for deaf/hard of hearing services: deaf-hohrequest@ucsd.edu).

Religious Holidays: Students who miss work for the purpose of religious observance are permitted to make up this work. Students should submit to me, in writing by the end Week 2, their documented religious holiday schedule for the semester.

Title IX Compliance: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions that are recipients of federal funds. Students have the right to an educational environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. Sexual misconduct and physical and/or psychological abuse will not be tolerated. This includes sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. As an instructor, I am committed to promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct or physical and/or psychological abuse, I am required to report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to speak to a confidential source, you may also contact the Title IX Coordinator. Title IX Office ((858) 534-8298, ophd@ucsd.edu) provides information and assistance to students, faculty, and staff regarding reports of bias, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. Students may receive confidential assistance at CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center (858-534-5793, sarc@ucsd.edu, <http://care.ucsd.edu>) or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS, 858-534-3755, <http://caps.ucsd.edu>).

Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services (OASIS): OASIS offers free, one-on-one tutoring for students (<http://oasis.ucsd.edu>). Tutoring services are designed to guide students to the point at which they become independent learners, no longer needing a tutor.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): CAPS is pleased to provide a wide range of services to assist students, including confidential short-term counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and 24/7 crisis counseling. CAPS is located in Galbraith Hall 190 and can be reached at 858-534-3755. You can also visit <http://caps.ucsd.edu>.

Teaching + Learning Commons: The Teaching + Learning Commons offers a range of services that will benefit you in this class and others. Their free services include one-on-one and group consultations for written assignments and oral presentations, content tutoring, or understanding various learning strategies. You can drop by in person on the lower level of Geisel Library, or make an appointment online at <http://commons.ucsd.edu>.

Basic Needs: If you are or someone you know is experiencing hunger or homelessness, there are resources on campus to assist you. Visit <http://basicneeds.ucsd.edu> for more information on services such as the Triton Food Pantry and the Food Recovery Network.

Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD): If you are a student with a (dis)ability requesting reasonable accommodations in this course, please visit OSD at University Center 202 or call 858-534-4382. All requests for reasonable accommodations require registration with OSD in advance of need. You can apply for OSD services at <http://osd.ucsd.edu>.