

ANTH/EALC 435 Ethnic Identity and Minority Politics in China

Professor Jenny Chio (jchio@usc.edu)

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M/W 12-1:20 p.m. (Note: registration is for 12-1:50; class will end at 1:20)

Location: SOS B37



Ethnic Baiku Yao community filmmakers record a discussion with village residents about changes to houses and living conditions in rural Nandan County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (2015, photo by J. Chio).

Why have over one million Uyghurs and other Muslims been detained in so-called “re-education” camps in China? What is the relationship between the Chinese state and Tibetans? How come the People’s Republic of China recognizes exactly 56 ethnic groups, and not one more and not one less? Where did the number 56 come from?

The history of the People’s Republic of China is deeply intertwined with the history of non-Han Chinese peoples living in and around the current political borders of the country. This class will explore the modern history (20th century to present) and contemporary conditions of ethnic groups in China, with a focus on the politics of race, belonging, and borders. Readings will include new scholarship on Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in a period that some scholars have called an unfolding “cultural genocide” of Uyghur identity, the effects of state-led development and resettlement in Tibetan China, and the cultural politics of being “minority” in China today. Independent research projects will be prioritized; pre-requisite is at least one previous class, in any discipline, on Chinese history, society, or politics.