

EALC 535 Proseminar on Chinese Visual Culture: Media Ethnography

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Fall 2022, Fridays 9-11:50

This proseminar on Chinese visual culture will explore the tensions and elasticity of media as a simultaneously local and global mode of sociality and cultural politics. Through close readings of contemporary media and visual culture theory, alongside ethnographies of Chinese visual cultural production, we will examine how media forms and media technologies engage and engender particular ways of being in/knowing the world that are equally specific to local contexts and expressions of global connectivity and potentialities. Methodologically, we will explore the approach and possibilities of media ethnography, taking a “ground-up” perspective to the critical analysis of visual forms and mediated practices in the world today. This multi-modal approach forces us to confront often taken for granted assumptions about (visual) media: as information, as knowledge, as constitutive of society. “Media” for our purposes will encompass a range of technologies and types, including television, radio, film, photography, print, and online; state-sponsored, commercial, underground, and independent; verbal, visual, and interactive. Seminar discussions will challenge us to consider media both as a text and as a social context, with a particular emphasis on developing productive methodological connections and analytical insights between approaches in cultural anthropology, film and media studies, and visual culture.

Readings may include:

- Azoulay, Ariella. 2008. *The Civil Contract of Photography*. New York: Zone Books.
- Berry, Chris, Lu Xinyu, and Lisa Rofel, eds. 2011. *The New Chinese Documentary Film Movement: For the Public Record*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Chumley, Lily. 2016. *Creativity Class: Art School and Culture Work in Postsocialist China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. 2011. *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Neves, Joshua and Bhaskar Sarkar, eds. 2017. *Asian Video Cultures: In the Penumbra of the Global*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Parikka, Jussi. 2012. *What is Media Archaeology?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Parks, Lisa, and Nicole Starosielski, eds. 2015. *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructure*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. [e-book]
- Pickowicz, Paul and Yingjin Zhang, eds. 2017. *Filming the Everyday: Independent Documentaries in Twenty-First Century China*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Sun, Wanning. 2014. *Subaltern China: Rural migrants, media, and cultural practices*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Tang, Xiaobing. 2015. *Visual Culture in Contemporary China: Paradigms and Shifts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, Luke. 2013. *Independent Chinese Documentary: From the Studio to the Street*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Voci, Paola. 2012. *China on Video: Smaller-Screen Realities*. London: Routledge.
- Wong, Winnie Won Yin. 2014. *Van Gogh on Demand: China and the Readymade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Zhang Zhen and Angela Zito, eds. 2015. *DV-Made China: Digital Subjects and Social Transformations after Independent Film*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.