This course examines the processes of social and cultural change in contemporary China. We shall focus on the practical and conceptual problems of modernity, particularly in relation to questions of globalization, technological change, and the alteration of social relationships because of market forces. In doing so, we shall discuss such issues as work experiences, living arrangements, sexuality, gender, consumption, entertainment, social order, education, religion, and language.

Required Texts:


Readings on Blackboard:


Films:

• Yang Zhang, “Shower” (Xizao), 1999.
• Feng Xiaogang, “Big Shot’s Funeral” (Da War), 2002.
• Zhang Yibai, “Curiosity Kills the Cat” (hao qixin hai si mao), 2006.

Evaluation:

Your course grade will be based on the following:

• Three question-directed papers, 5-7 pages each (25% each, #1 & #2, 30%, #3)
• Class participation and evidence of preparation (20%)

Paper Due Dates: February 19th; April 8th; May 1st

Paper topics must be approved in advance. Topics are up to you, as long as you have a specific focus and begin with a question, not a claim you seek to prove. Because this is an anthropology course, this assignment requires you to draw on the approaches and perspectives of anthropologists, not simply economists or political scientists. Your goal is to not start with an argument and then defend this (e.g., ‘Chinese Muslims are prevented from practicing their religion’), but to start with a question and seek to unpack this (‘What does it mean to be a Muslim in China? How does ethnicity relate to religion among Chinese Muslims?’).
Class Schedule

**PART I: Agency, Labor & Mobility**


Week IV (2/5-2/7): Dagongmei: Female Factory Workers & the Things You Own (Ngai Pun, all)

Week V (2/12-2/14): MOVIE: Shower

**PART II: Consumption & Individualism**

Week VI (2/19-2/21): Youth, Sex and Style (Farrer, 1-149)

Week VII (2/26-2/28): Desire and the Market (Farrer, 150-326)

Week VIII (3/4-3/6): FILM: The World

Week IX (3/11-3/13): A Politics of the Senses (Farquhar, Part I)

**Week X (3/18-3/20): SPRING BREAK**

Week XI (3/25-3/27): Bodies & Desires (Farquhar, Part II)

Week XII (4/1-4/3): FILM: Curiosity Kills the Cat

**PART III: Being Different: Ethnicity & Otherness**

Week XIII (4/8-4/10): Becoming Chinese: Minorities & the State (Gladney, Chapters 1-5)