

History Programme
Academic Year 2021-2022, Semester 1

HH3003
Migration and Diaspora:
Chinese Experiences in Comparative Perspective

Academic Units: 3 AUs
Instructor: A/Prof. Els van Dongen
Time and Venue: Tuesdays, 14.30-17.30, TR+153

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Content

“Diaspora” has become a buzzword in the last decades—with scholars referring to the proliferation of the term as a “diaspora diaspora”—but what do we mean when we talk about “diaspora”? Is there such a thing as a “Chinese diaspora”? And why do some use terms such as “overseas Chinese” and “Chinese overseas” instead? In this course, we will critically engage with different research paradigms to study the movement of Chinese to Southeast Asia, the Americas and Europe.

We will first outline the broader historical patterns of migration, focusing on traders in Southeast Asia, mass migration since the mid-nineteenth century, migration after 1945, and the rise of the “new migrants” after 1978. Following this, we will look at distinct migration patterns in more detail: Why and when did Chinese migrate to regions such as Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Europe? Apart from local and global structural factors, what policies existed in both the host societies and in China and how did this affect the formation of Chinese communities? This brings us to the third area of interest, namely the organizational aspects of Chinese communities. How did community organizations materialize in different contexts? How did they change over time? Finally, we will look into questions of identity and representation in film, TV series, and literature. Throughout the course, we will engage with various types of primary sources, such as cartoons, photographs, novels, films, magazines, and historical artefacts.

Learning Objectives

- (1) You will be able to compare and contrast the major historical approaches and theories in the field;
- (2) You will be able to investigate and explain Chinese migration patterns and their relation to regional and global developments;
- (3) You will be able to apply theoretical models to the development of Chinese communities in various geographical regions;
- (4) You will be able to analyze and interpret representations of Chinese communities using primary and secondary sources;
- (5) You will be able to formulate, articulate, and present historical arguments based on your own research, both individually and in group.

Course Outline (Subject to Change)

S/N	Topic	Seminar Hours
	<i>PART I: Macro-Overview</i>	
1	Introduction	3
2	What's in a name? Changing approaches and concepts	3
3	Broad historical overview (1500s-today)	3
4	Community organizations I (<i>huiguan</i> , secret societies)	3
5	Migration politics and policies	3
	<i>PART II: Communities around the Globe</i>	
6	Geographical dispersion I Southeast Asia [visit to Baba House (if Covid situation allows)]	3
7	Geographical dispersion II the Americas [primary source discussion/paper outline peer review]	3
8	Geographical dispersion III Europe [visit to Chinese Heritage Centre and exhibition (if Covid situation allows)]	3
9	Representation and self-representation I [Documentary screening]	3
	<i>PART III: Group Work</i>	
10	Preparation of group presentation	3
11	Group presentations I	3
12	Group presentations II (depending on class size; if the group is smaller, we will discuss a topic of your choice)	
13	Revision and wrap up	3

Assessment

Online Participation and Group Discussion	10%
Individual Class Participation	10%
Mini-Presentations for Field Trips and Write-Up	20%
Paper Outline	10%
Group Presentation	20%
Research Paper	30%

Assessment Component 1 – Online Participation (Discussion Board) and Group Discussion 10%:

To prepare for the discussion, you need to post weekly on the discussion board. The individual discussion board posts are then used for small group discussion (peer-to-peer learning) in class. In the individual post and the contributions to the group discussions, you need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the basic themes and interpretations in the readings. You need to be able to formulate your own arguments based on a critical reading of both the primary and secondary sources assigned for that week.

Assessment Component 2 – Individual Class Participation 10%

In addition to the weekly group discussion exercise, your individual contributions to other discussions will count for 10% of the mark. In these individual contributions, you need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the basic themes and interpretations in the readings. You need to be able to formulate your own arguments based on a critical reading of both the primary and secondary sources assigned for that week.

Assessment Component 3 – Mini Presentation for Field Trips and Write-Up 20%

10% group mark (see below); 10% individual mark (individual presentation performance graded by instructors)

For the excursions, you need to conduct research on one aspect of the museum/venue to be visited by the class and present your findings to the class. You need to apply concepts and themes as presented in the readings to narratives of museum exhibits. You will submit the written version of your preparation as part of the mark. Each student will present for 5-10 minutes during the excursion (depending on class size). This is a group work as you need to coordinate who presents on which aspect of the museum/venue. However, you will also receive an individual mark for your part of the presentation. The writing exercise also needs to be submitted per group, with each student contributing a short write up of the section they are presenting on.

The group mark will be based on the following components:

- 1) Organization (20%)
- 2) Analysis (30%)
- 3) Use of sources (30%)
- 4) Teamwork (10%)
- 5) Presentation Format (10%)

Note: Depending on the Covid situation, this component might be slightly modified. In this case, however, the exercise will still revolve around representation/history in practice.

Assessment Component 4 – Paper Outline 10%

You need to submit an outline of 1-1.5 pp in which you present your research question, a short literature review and overview of primary sources to be used, the research methodology, and a list of references.

Assessment Component 5 – Group presentation 20%

10% group mark (see below); 10% individual mark (individual presentation performance graded by instructors)

Building on the historical and thematic overview provided throughout the course and the critical reading of both secondary and primary sources, the presentation needs to engage critically with one of the course themes as applied to a Singaporean context. The presentation needs to include a clear introduction, main argument, and conclusion and a list of references needs to be provided at the end. The presentation should last about 30 mins (the exact length will depend on class size), followed by a short Q&A session (5 mins.). Apart from critical reading of sources and presentation of an original historical argument, the presentation should also demonstrate teamwork skills.

The group mark will be based on the following components:

- 6) Organization (20%)
- 7) Analysis (30%)
- 8) Use of sources (30%)
- 9) Teamwork (10%)
- 10) Presentation Format (10%)

Assessment Component 6 – Research Paper 30%

You need to submit a 2500-word essay at the end of the course in which you demonstrate your ability to formulate an original historical argument based on research. You can work on a topic of your interest but you should include at least one primary source for the essay. You should bring a basic outline of the paper, including the primary source, during week 8. We will do an in-class discussion based on the primary source and a peer review exercise of the paper outline.

The following will be taken into account when grading:

Analysis and argument (30%)

- Critical analysis
- Formulation of a clear argument

Use of Sources (30%)

- The use of relevant readings
- The recognition, where appropriate, of different perspectives
- The use of a primary source/primary sources (non-history majors: please let me know if you need more help with this or if you are not sure what constitutes a primary source)

Organization (20%)

- The relevance of the answer to the question set
- A clear introduction; a clear conclusion

Writing/Grammar (10%)

- Grammar, style, and presentation, including the accurate acknowledgement of sources

Reference Style (10%)

- Please submit your paper double-spaced.
- For references, please use the Chicago Style (footnotes, not author-date style).

References (Subject to Change)

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