

IHSS 6007: Selected Topics in Anthropology:

Classical Approaches to the Anthropology of Chinese Religion

Graduate seminar, HKIHSS, Fall semester 2018

Instructor: David A. Palmer (palmer19@hku.hk)

This seminar will focus on classical works in the anthropology of religion as applied to China. We will examine the connections and mutual influences between the theories and studies of Emile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Marcel Granet, at the intersection between anthropology, sociology and sinology. The works of these authors will be brought into dialogue with the classical works of the sociology of religion in China – Weber's *Confucianism and Daoism* and C. K. Yang's *Religion in Chinese Society*, and with canonical anthropological studies of Chinese religion by Arthur Wolf, David Jordan, Robert Weller, Emily Ahern, Stephen Sangren and Stephan Feuchtwang.

Proposed time slot: Mondays, 12-2 pm.

Sessions:

1. (Sept 10) : *Primitive Classifications, The Elementary forms of the Religious Life, and Festivals and Songs of Ancient China*: Mauss, Durkheim and Granet.
2. (Sept 24) : *The Chinese Mind (La pensée chinoise)* and *The Savage Mind (La pensée sauvage)*: Granet, Lévi-Strauss and Descola.
3. (Oct. 15): *Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors* (Wolf, Jordan, Weller)
4. (Oct. 29): *Chinese Ritual and Politics / The Imperial Metaphor* (Ahern, Feuchtwang)
5. (Nov. 5) : *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Village / Chinese Sociologies* (Sangren)
6. (Nov. 26): Macro-Sociological Studies (Weber, C. K. Yang, Weller)

Assessment:

Attendance and participation: 20%. Students must give a brief presentation of one of the readings in the seminar.

5000-word essay on a topic agreed with the instructor, which may be related to your dissertation research: 80%.

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