

## **IHSS 6007: Selected Topics in Anthropology:**

### **China and Classical Social Theory**

#### **Graduate seminar, HKIHSS, Fall semester 2019**

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

Co-Instructor: Martin Tse ([martinmh@hku.hk](mailto:martinmh@hku.hk))

This seminar will focus on classical works in the French tradition of anthropological theory, which will be studied in dialogue with the anthropology of ancient Chinese society as theorized by Durkheim's disciple, the sinologist Marcel Granet. This juxtaposition will generate new and critical insights for the analysis of Chinese culture and society, even as it will bring new perspectives on social theory through thinking through Chinese materials. Authors studied will include Durkheim, Mauss, Levi-Strauss, Bourdieu, Foucault and Descola. Each session will discuss selected passages from key works of these authors, as well as passages from Chinese texts that will illuminate or interrogate the theoretical works.

Proposed time slot: Thursdays, 12-2 pm.

#### Sessions:

1. Sep. 12: Ritual: Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*
2. Sep. 26: Exchange: Marcel Mauss, *The Gift*
3. Oct. 17: Structure: Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*
4. Oct. 31: Habitus: Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*
5. Nov. 14: Sex, gender and spirituality, Michel Foucault: *The History of Sexuality*
6. Nov. 18: Ontology: Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*

#### Assessment:

Attendance and participation: 20%.

5000-word essay on a topic agreed with the instructor: 80%.

#### Bibliography:

TBA.