

**Course Title:**

Rethinking Gender: A Journey Through History and Popular Culture

**Instructor:**

Dr. Carol Tsang, Department of History, School of Humanities

**Course Description:**

Why are warriors in history and popular culture predominantly male? Why are men more likely to commit crime than women? Why are single women in China named ‘leftover women’? Why are some men wearing make-up, especially in East Asia today? *Rethinking Gender* focuses on contemporary societies through the critical lens of the past. It explores how women and men have confronted, deflected or negotiated the challenges facing them. We discuss a wide range of historical and popular cultural material, including texts, films and adverts in order to rethink such issues as gender relations and parenthood, through facilitating a dialogue between the sexes.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Explain the political, social and cultural issues that shaped the masculinity and femininity ideals across time, space and culture.
2. Examine how women and men conformed and resisted to the changing ideals at different historical points.

**Course Structure:**

Day 1, Lecture 1: Rethinking Gender

- Key concepts in gender history
- Masculinity and femininity ideals in Asia and the West
- Gender stereotypes in history and popular culture

Day 2, Lecture 2: Understanding Gender Relations

- Women, men and power play
- A history of courtship

Day 3, Lecture 3: Marriage and Celibacy

- Marriage and celibacy in history and popular culture
- Sworn spinsters in late Qing and early Republican periods
- ‘Leftover women’ and ‘leftover men’ in the People’s Republic of China

Day 4, Lecture 4: Family Structure and Parenthood

- From the extended family to the nuclear family
- The rise of working mothers in history
- Old dad, new dad and super dad
- The making of the Tiger Parents

Day 5, Lecture 5: Warriors and Superheroes

- National manhood and the military in history
- Warriors and superheroes in Asia and the West
- Criminal masculinity and supervillains
- Superheroines and feminism

**Assessment:**

Class participation – 30%

Take-home assignments – 30%

In-class quizzes – 40%

**Study Load:**

Lecture hours: 3 x 15 = 45

Self-study hours: 20