

Onward: Gender, Revolution and Society in Chinese History | A Celebration of the Scholarship of Gail Hershatter and Emily Honig, May 20-21, 2022, UC Santa Cruz

Sponsored by the History Department and The Humanities Institute at the University of California, Santa Cruz

Conference Schedule Friday, May 20, 2022 9:00 A.M. Breakfast

9:30 A.M. Welcome Remarks from Jasmine Alinder, Dean of Humanities at USCS

10:00 A.M. Panel A Women In-Between: Navigating changing gender roles and expectations in 20th-century China

11:45 A.M. Lunch Break

Conference Schedule Friday, May 20, 2022 1:30 P.M. Roundtable I- Regenerations: Race, Diaspora, Science, and the Environment

3:00 P.M. Break

3:30 P.M. Panel B The Geography of Social Reproduction in Socialist and Post-Socialist China

5:30 P.M. Reception

Conference Schedule Saturday, May 21, 2022

9:00 A.M. Breakfast

9:30 A.M. Roundtable II - Disquiet in the China Field: Methodologies from the Margins

12:00 P.M. Lunch Break

2:00 P.M. Special Guests' Remarks on the Contributions of Gail Hershatter and Emily Honig

Conference Schedule Saturday, May 21, 2022 **3:30 P.M.** Break

4:00 P.M. Open Forum: The Future of the China Field

5:00 P.M. Special Remarks by Gail Hershatter and Emily Honig

7:00 P.M. Dinner Time

# Panel A: Women In-Between: Navigating changing gender roles and expectations in 20th-century China

Chair/Discussant: Noriko Aso, Associate Professor of History, UCSC

Presenters:

Melissa Brzycki, Assistant Professor, Monmouth University

Stephanie Montgomery, Assistant Professor, St. Olaf College

Amanda Shuman, Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin (post-doc researcher, lecturer, and database manager), University of

Freiburg (Germany)

Abstract: Both state officials and private individuals have to navigate pre-existing gender roles and expectations in pursuing their own goals. A tension often exists when individuals or the state's goals do not align with these gender roles, and in particular when one aspect of a gender role is changing while others remain static. In this case, gendered expectations for women in the domestic sphere continued relatively intact throughout twentieth-century China, while the possibilities for women outside the domestic sphere expanded and changed. We examine what happens to women caught within these uneven changes. Stephanie Montgomery shows that women professionals studying crime in Republican China engaged with transnational criminological theory and designed their own studies to understand criminalized women. Although some reified existing negative stereotypes of these women, others pushed back to create new knowledge on the social and economic origins of women's crime. Melissa Brzycki argues that although PRC state officials considered state-run institutions to be best suited for raising the next generation of revolutionaries, pragmatically, officials also tried to influence the family, and mothers remained a major target of progressive reformatory efforts. Amanda Shuman argues that sportswomen continually dealt with tensions between delivering superior athletic performance (as state-sponsored athletes and later coaches) and fulfilling socially-expected heteronormative reproductive and domestic roles.

# Panel A: Women In-Between: Navigating changing gender roles and expectations in 20th-century China

#### Melissa Brzycki, "Other Mothers: Maternal Figures in the PRC"

Although PRC state officials considered state-run institutions to be best suited for raising the next generation of revolutionaries, pragmatically, officials recognized that many children would be primarily reared within the family unit. This labor generally fell to the women of the family, mothers and grandmothers. However, despite often being the primary caregiver for children within the home, older women, mainly grandmothers, remained at the periphery of state efforts to create the next generation of socialist childhood, and they were not the target of family reform efforts to the same degree as mothers. They were, however, the target of reform efforts carried out by their grandchildren. In children's storybooks, they were often cast as misguided figures who had lived difficult lives before Liberation but nonetheless retained some feudal superstitions and anti-collectivist attitudes, which the children in their lives were well placed to help eradicate.

#### Stephanie Montgomery, "'Monumental Works': Women Sociologists in Republican China and the U.S."

In early 20th-century Republican China, the question of how to address supposedly increasing instances of women's crime was entangled with national debates on the proper status of women and fears over industrialization and modernization. This presentation compares the lives and research of Chinese women who spoke into this male-dominated conversation in which women's crime was still primarily framed as a "biological" weakness related to menstruation, pregnancy, or women's inferior mental capacity. This new generation of university-trained women social scientists rejected biological theories and produced a new analytical framework based on the social and economic origins of women's crime. This small but significant group of Chinese women scholars also drew extensively on transnational research from Italy, the U.S., and Japan, including their U.S. women counterparts who designed similar studies of women's crime.

#### Amanda Shuman, "The Burden of the "Double Burden" for Sportswomen"

Sportswomen in the Mao and early Reform era generally received the same resources and training as sportsmen. Nevertheless, both during their prominent athletic careers and in coaching jobs post-athletic retirement, these sportswomen continually dealt with tensions between delivering superior athletic performance (as state-sponsored athletes and later coaches) and fulfilling socially-expected heteronormative reproductive and domestic roles. This presentation will examine these issues in the lives of two specific sportswomen: Qiu Zhonghui and Lang Ping.

## Panel B: The Geography of Social Reproduction in Socialist and Post-Socialist China

Chair/Discussant: Juned Shaikh, Associate Professor of History, UCSC

#### Presenters:

Sarah Chang, PhD Candidate, UCSC

Alex Day, Associate Professor of History and Chair, Asian Studies, Occidental College

Xiaofei Gao, Assistant Professor, University of Colorado, Denver

Xiaoping Sun, Assistant Professor, Saint Mary's University, Canada

Abstract: This panel seeks to generate conversation among presenters whose work shares a focus concerning the relation of labor to economy and politics in post-1949 Chinese society. It benefits from the pioneering studies of Chinese laborers done by Gail and Emily by continuing to ask: how did the Chinese working population, men and women in cities and the countryside, contribute to state-making, economic development, and the reproduction of the labor force? It also extends the geographical scope of Gail's and Emily's inquiry to Northeast and Southwest China, bridges the temporality between the Mao and post-Mao eras, and broadens scholarly conceptualization by linking labor and the natural world. Sasha (Alex) Day's paper examines the organization of rural labor and agricultural modernization in Guizhou. Xiaoping Sun looks at the making of a female labor model in relation to agricultural mechanization at the Friendship State Farm in Beidahuang since the 1950s. Xiaofei Gao shifts attention to urban and rural reforms in fishery in early PRC. Sarah Chang concludes the panel with her presentation about space, gender, and factory life in Sichuan in the 1980s.

## Panel B: The Geography of Social Reproduction in Socialist and Post-Socialist China

#### Sarah Chang, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun: Gender and Factory Space During the Early Economic Reforms"

This paper addresses gender and urban space with attention to how working-class women in Chengdu explored new urban spaces during the 1980s. Based on examinations of communal values and authority within a state-owned steel mill, it shows that factory cadres saw women worker's proper place to be in the home and on the shop floor and prohibited young women from visiting urban dance halls. I argue that dancing presented new affective and embodied experiences that helped transform young working-class women's understanding of their gendered identity in 1980s China. My paper is inspired by Emily's writing on women workers in Shanghai and its consideration of how gendered social values shaped women workers' experiences. It borrows from Gail and Emily's reflections on gender in 1980s China in *Personal Voices*. Finally, it relies on *The Gender of Memory* to make sense of women workers' recollections about dancing, the 1980s, and their collective past.

#### Alex Day, "A Factory in the Fields: Socio-biological Reproduction, Accounting, and the Communist Horizon in Rural China"

Building on Gail's *Gender of Memory*, which locates the limits of rural revolution in the failure to socialize reproductive labor, this talk outlines the insides and outsides of socialist accounting with uneven attention to fertilizer, labor, agricultural collectives, reproductive work, tea plants, state-owned farms, and a county in northern Guizhou. With the help of Petr Kropotkin, Silvia Federici and the Midnight Notes Collective, Chuang, End Notes, Jason Moore, and others, I want to investigate the tides of a state-owned farm to include and exclude from the balance sheet.

#### Xiaofei Gao, "The Blue Revolution: Urban and Rural Fisheries in Socialist China"

This paper discusses the simultaneous development of urban and rural fisheries in the 1950s. The reforms reflect the process of absorbing new social groups into the regime's revolutionary course. They also expose the social and environmental consequences of the state's promotion of urban industrialization and rural collectivization at the same time. This paper focuses on the connections and frictions between class, gender, and labor, building on the work of Gail and Emily.

#### Xiaoping Sun, "The Skylark Girl: Female Labor Model and Agricultural Mechanization in China's Pursuit of High Modernism"

This paper examines public discourse on and self-representation of China's first female combine harvester driver Liu Ying, the "Skylark Girl," since the 1950s to illustrate how an individual evolved together with agricultural mechanization on China's largest state farm, the Friendship State Farm in Beidahuang, and continue to serve as a symbol of revolutionary spirit to this day. Inspired by Gail's *Gender of Memory* and Emily's *Across the Great Divide*, I will situate Liu's movement between Beijing and Beidahuang and from a combine driver to Director of the People's Congress of Friendship County in the context of state farm establishment and reforms to highlight the struggles in China's pursuit of high modernism.

### Roundtable I Regenerations: Race, Diaspora, Science, and the Environment

Chair: Alice Yang, Professor of History, UCSC (potential chair)

#### **Panelists**

Ana Maria Candela, Assistant Professor, Binghamton University

Shelly Chan, Associate Professor, UCSC

Kyuhyun Han, Ph.D. Candidate, UCSC

Jeremy Tai, Assistant Professor, McGill University

Jinghong Zhang, Ph.D. Candidate, UCSC

Abstract: Inspired by Gail and Emily's lifelong work on gender and ethnicity, this panel will emulate the originality of their ideas to explore a new territory of race, diaspora, science, and the environment. We will borrow their concepts about time, place, and agency to generate new insights about the current state of China and Asian studies, and ask how the new interventions may alter everything from classroom pedagogy to research methods to critical theory. Thus, we hope to re-generate the fresh thinking Gail and Emily brought to different generations of China scholars by breaking some new ground ourselves. In doing so, we decenter, shake up, and regenerate what we call "China."

# Roundtable II Disquiet in the China Field: Methodologies from the Margins

Chair: Lisa Rofel, Professor Emerita, Anthropology, UC Santa Cruz

#### **Panelists**

Angelina Chin, Associate Professor and Chair of History Department, Pomona College

Cathy Clayton, Associate Professor and Chair, Dept of Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Fang Yu Hu, Assistant Professor of History, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Wilson Miu, Ph.D. Candidate, UCSC

Yajun Mo, Assistant Professor, History Department, Boston College

Wenging Kang, Associate Professor of History, and Gender and Women's Studies, Cleveland State University

**Abstract**: In this roundtable, we inject disquiet into the field of Chinese history by approaching "China" -- as Gail and Emily have done with gender -- "not as a structure, but as a fractured, unpredictable, and expansive terrain," and taking into account the "frictions, gaps and incommensurabilities" in what China is and how it matters. The six panelists are all engaged in scholarship about events, groups and regions that sit awkwardly within the narratives through which we have come to understand 20th century China: the Cultural Revolution in Macau; nostalgia for Japanese rule in Taiwan; photographic representations of the Sino-Tibetan frontiers; interregional relationships between Hong Kong and Taiwan; cross-border marriages between Hong Kong and socialist Guangdong; and male same-sex relations in socialist China.

The roundtable will begin with very short presentations from each panelist, followed by a targeted discussion about how a focus on China's margins, and on the processes by which they have become marginalized, can provide new perspectives and sources from which to understand the history of China (not only the PRC) in the Maoist and post-Mao periods.

### Open Forum: The Future of the China Field

Chair/Moderator: Lyn Jeffery, IFTF Distinguished Fellow

**Abstract**: How do we position ourselves in relationship to the PRC today? Given our decades-long ties of kinship, friendship, scholarship and life histories bridging the US and China (and elsewhere), how do we navigate the politics of this moment, when limits on scholarship and expression seem to be deepening and expanding? What kinds of voices need to be heard today, both in the US and in China, and how can we amplify them? How do we represent China to American (or other) audiences when US mass media has only negative portrayals of the PRC? How is this moment similar to or different from other moments (eg, post-Tian'anmen) that we might learn from?