National Identity
Spring 2012 * Thursday 6-9pm * DEW 200
Instructor: Yue Hong yhong@kzoo.edu
Office hour: Monday and Wednesday 3:00-4:00, DEW 209

Course Description:
This course, an interdisciplinary senior seminar on the subject of national identity, asks students to consider what it means to be a citizen of a nation. Our course will begin with a discussion of basic concepts such as nation, national identity, and nationalism, as well as an introduction to important theoretical frameworks and recent scholarship. This will be followed by case studies in which we will examine the nature, sources, and consequences of national identity on individual nations. In each instance, we will analyze the characteristics of national identity as it relates to other forms of collective identity (i.e., religious, ethnic, territorial, etc.). We will also discuss the relationship between national and individual identities, and the role that national identity plays in modern politics and society. The overarching questions we will be exploring are: What does the existence of national identity say about us? And how can an understanding of the meaning of national identity help us to better communicate with the governments and peoples of other nations in an age of globalization?

As a Shared Passage senior seminar, this course requires students to demonstrate initiative. Participants will each contribute to discussion by applying their particular disciplinary training, unique study (and/or living) abroad experiences, and personal interests to case studies. For example, I will bring my experience as a Chinese citizen and “China scholar” to our discussion of Chinese national identity. Questions under consideration will include: How did Chinese identity take shape during the early twentieth century in an atmosphere rich with anti-Imperialist sentiment? How has Chinese identity been cultivated and used by politicians, propagandists, and intellectuals during the last 100 or so years? How is Chinese national identity perceived and discussed in contemporary China and the West? How does Chinese nationalism continue to shape China’s domestic and foreign policy? Likewise, small groups of students will take turns presenting their case studies of national identity. Each group will choose a nation—a nation where they grew up, studied abroad, or have a particular interest in—as the subject of their case study. Students in each group will help the rest of the class understand what it means to be a citizen of that nation by assigning readings, making presentations, and facilitating class discussion and debate. Assigned readings may include scholarly books, newspaper and journal articles, memoirs and interviews, fiction, film, art, and internet resources. In so doing, students can expect to improve their research, oral presentation, and collaboration skills — skills that will serve them well long after they graduate from Kalamazoo College.

Course Goals:
- To improve collaboration skills by working closely with other students on a project
- To improve critical thinking skills by making, defending and responding to various
arguments
- To improve facilitation skills by leading discussion and providing constructive comments
- To improve writing skills through the repeated writing of brief reflection papers

Grades:
20% Class preparation and participation
30% Group project (assigning readings, facilitating discussion, etc.)
30% Reflection papers (one 3-4 pages reflection paper every week)
20% 15-20 pages final paper or final project (a 5 minute film for example)

Class Preparation and Participation:
You are expected to come to the class and participate in discussion. In order to contribute to class discussion, you are expected to finish assigned readings before you come to the class. If you can’t come to the class because you are sick, you have family emergencies, or you have important interview, please email me beforehand.

Group Project:
Each of you will join a group of three or four students to do a case study. Each group will take turn to be in charge of one class, in which the group will help the rest of the class understand the issue of national identity and nationalism in a chosen nation. The group project includes the following steps:
1. Begin the research about the chosen nation three weeks before your class.
2. Discuss with me about your choice of reading assignment and teaching methodology 10 days before your class.
3. Post assigned readings (and guiding questions, if you have any) on Moodle one week before your class.
4. Teach the class. As a group, you choose how to teach. You can do presentations, facilitate discussions and debates, or conduct interviews. Think about what you want your students to learn from this class and how you want to engage your students.

Reflection Papers:
Each student will write a 3-4 page reflection paper after each week’s class. In each reflection paper, you will answer the following questions regarding previous class:
1. What have you learned from the readings and class discussions?
2. What are your comments and suggestions on the methodology of teaching?
Email me your paper on Monday by noon. Also bring the hardcopy of your paper to the next week’s class for discussion.

Final Paper or Project:
For final project, you may write a paper or make a short film (5 minutes) or perform a play. The topic of your paper, film, or play is of your choice, but it has to be related to national identity. We will discuss your paper/film/play topics and give each other feedback in week 7. The paper/film/play is due on June 5, the Tuesday of week 11.
Code of Conduct:
Plagiarism is forbidden. If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you will fail the course.

Weekly Schedule:
Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Theories of nationalism

Week 3: Theories of Nationalism

Week 4: Case Study 1: Taiwan’s National Identity

Week 5: Case Study 2

Week 6: Case Study 3

Week 7: Case Study 4

Week 8: Case Study 5

Week 9: Case Study 6

Week 10: Case Study 7