

**Graduate Student Group Discussion**  
with CSDE Seminar Series Speaker Yun Zhou, Ph.D.,  
Assistant Professor, University of Michigan

**WHEN:** Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 1:30–2:30 pm PST

**WHERE:** Raitt 221

**RSVP:** to June Yang (jyang32@uw.edu) to join the student discussion

Please join the **Graduate Student Group Discussion** with **Dr. Yun Zhou** after her CSDE seminar on February 16<sup>th</sup>, titled “Riding the Leviathan: Gender, Fertility, and Selfhood in Autocratic China”. What does it mean to be independent and “lead a life of one’s own,” when the state holds considerable power over individuals? Drawing on the



deep theoretical tradition that connects large-scale demographic changes and the “pursuit of individualism,” I approach this question by examining individuals’ fertility ideations and behavior in contemporary China. Marshaling a mixed-methods design that combines 115 in-depth interviews and six waves of national surveys, I ask: How do urban Chinese women and men formulate fertility aspirations and make decisions about parenthood, as they construct visions of selfhood? Findings demonstrate that among men, transition into parenthood is frequently viewed as integral to the making of an independent self, marking the beginning of becoming legible as an individual person with a family of his own. Women, on the other hand, largely view parenthood as the harbinger of the breaking of an independent self and the end of individual autonomy. I further elucidate how such sharp contrast is rooted

in the gender and family systems of contemporary China that entangle the sometimes-contradictory scripts of authoritarian pronatalism, on the one hand, and market-centric neoliberal development, on the other.

**[Click here for more information and to register](#)**

**After the seminar**, CSDE Trainee June Yang will facilitate a graduate student discussion with Dr. Zhou. Students will have the opportunity to discuss research collaborations, professional development, academic publishing, and interdisciplinary research, among other topics.

**Dr. Yun Zhou** is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan. Zhou's research examines social inequality and state-market-family relations through the lens of gender, marriage, and reproduction. Intersecting the studies of population and politics, Zhou's current project investigates the demographic, political, and gendered consequences of China's evolving reproductive governance. In addition to her academic publications, Zhou's research and commentary has been featured in BBC, the Guardian, New York Time, NPR, Reuters, and the Washington Post, among others. Zhou received her PhD in Sociology from Harvard University in 2017. She completed her postdoctoral training at the Population Studies and Training Center, Brown University.

**June Yang**, the moderator of the graduate student group discussion post-seminar meeting, is a PhD candidate and NIH T32 fellow in the Department of Sociology and CSDE. She is interested in using computational methods to study values around union formation and childbearing.

