

Chinese Culture and Society

Course Description

The course aims at providing a compendium of the contemporary Chinese culture and society by means of a descriptive and analytic survey of chosen topics. While focusing on the cultural and social mainstream of contemporary China, the course also presents and analyzes various historic events, legends, traditions, ancient philosophies, religions and social norms in a sociological and economic perspective so as to enable students to have a better understanding of the evolution of and interactions between the Chinese culture and society.

Major topics include but are not limited to the following:

- Social Norms as Reflected in the Chinese Names
- Chinese Holidays and Traditional Festivals
- Chinese Ethnic Minorities
- Education in China
- Sex, Marriage and Family Life in China, Today and the Past
- Family Plan
- AIDS in China
- Cultural Revolution
- China's Economic Reform and Opening Up
- Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Their Influence on the Chinese Culture and Society

Textbook: Understanding China (*John Bryan Starr; Hill and Wang, New York 2001*)

Suggested Readings:

- An Introduction to Chinese Culture through the Family (Edited by Howard Giskin and Bettye S. Walsh, *State University of New York Press, 2001*)
- Portraits of Ordinary Chinese (*Liu Bingwen and Xion Lei, Foreign Language Press, Beijing 1998*)
- Cultural Background of China (*Li Ping, World Publishing Corporation 1999*)
- Urban Spaces in Contemporary China (*Deborah S. Davis, Richard Kraus, etc. Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press 1995*)
- Civil Society in China (*Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic, M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 1997*)
- The Paradox of China's Post-Mao Reforms (*Merle Goldman and Roderick Macfarquhar, Harvard University Press, 1999*)
- Sexual Life in Ancient China (*R.H. Van Gulik, Barnes and Noble, Inc., New York*)
- The Rise of Modern China (*Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, Oxford University Press, 1995*)
- China's Cultural Revolution, 1966 - 1969 ___ not a dinner party (*Michael Schoenhals, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, ©1996*)
- My Country and My People (*Lin Yutang, Halcyon House, New York 1938*)

Course Requirement

1. Attendance is mandatory and punctuality is required. Two excusable absences are acceptable. Starting from the 3rd time, 1 point will be deducted from the total points for each additional

absence.

2. No make-up exam will be granted without prior permission of the instructor.

Homework

Homework is assigned and must be submitted at the next meet time. Failing to complete and hand in the homework will negatively affect the final result of the course.

Exam

One exam for this course will be given in the last class of the semester. The exam is basically on the subject matters covered in the course.

Grading

Attendance & Participation: 20%

Homework: 40%

Exam: 40%

A (4.0)	A- (3.7)	B+ (3.3)	B (3)	B- (2.7)	C+ (2.3)	C (2)	C- (1.7)	D+ (1.3)	D (1)	D- (0.7)	F (0)
100-93	92-90	89-86	85-83	82-80	79-76	75-73	72-70	69-66	65-63	62-60	<59

Note:

1. The designated textbook is NOT available in China and has to be purchased by students themselves before attending the class.
2. There will be a 7 day- long holiday around China's National Day (1st of October). The schedule of the holiday will be confirmed by the university administration later.

CHINESE CULTURE AND SOCIETY COURSE SCHEDULE Autumn, 2007

The following course schedule is provided on a unit (subject) base rather than time sequence for flexibility.

UNIT I

(Introduction to the Course)

Social Norms as reflected in Chinese Names

Homework:

1. read the chapter “Geographical Inequalities” (P.19 - 41, Understanding China) and write an abstract of the reading (maximum words: 300)

UNIT II

Chinese Holidays and Traditional Festivals

Homework:

1. read the chapter “Patterns from the Past (P.42 - 57, Understanding China)” and write an abstract of the reading (maximum words: 300)
2. read “Traditional Chinese Festivals”, which is available on the following address
(<http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/Festivals/78131.htm>)
3. give a brief description of the following Chinese festivals: Spring Festival, Qingming Festival, Duanwu (dragon boat) Festival, Double-Seventh Day, Mid-autumn (moon cake) Festival, Chongyang (double ninth) Festival
4. What is the symbolic meaning of the following articles: year cake, fish, doufu (bean curd), the Chinese character Fu (good luck) put in an up side down way, bat, yuan yang (mandarin duck), bamboo, crane (bird), lotus
5. What holidays are the following dates in China?
March 8th, June 1st, July 1st, August 1st, October 1st

UNIT III

Chinese Ethnic Minorities

Reading: National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China (white book by the Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China)

<http://www.china.org.cn/e-white/4/index.htm>

Homework:

1. What are the 5 autonomous regions for minority ethnic people?
2. Summarize the main features of China’s government policy about the autonomous region (including prefecture, town and township)

UNIT IV

Education in China

Reading: Intellectual Freedom and Chinese Education (P.213 – 228, Understanding China)

Homework: write a short paper about the differences between education in China and in U.S.A. based on your observations and experiences. (maximum words: 300)

UNIT V

Sex, Marriage and Family Life in China

Lecture: Sex in China

Suggested Reading: *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (R.H. Van Gulik, Barnes and Noble, Inc., New York)

Homework: write a short paper about the social status of the Chinese women in the traditional Chinese society (maximum words: 300)

UNIT VI

Family Plan and Birth Control

Reading: One Billion Plus: Controlling Population Growth (P. 183 – 196, Understanding China)

Homework: Write a short paper about your comments on China's birth control policy. (maximum words: 300)

UNIT VII

AIDS in China

2005 Update on the HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Response in China

(<http://www.unchina.org/unaid/2005-China%20HIV-AIDS%20Estimation-English.pdf>)

Homework: Short paper on “What do you think should be done to prevent sexually transmitted diseases?” (maximum words: 300)

UNIT VIII

Cultural Revolution

Suggested Readings:

China's Cultural Revolution, 1966 - 1969 ___ not a dinner party (*Michael Schoenhals, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, ©1996*)

China's Political System: The Party-State and the Power Grid (P. 58 – 77, Understanding China)

Human Rights and the Rule of Law (P. 197 – 212, Understanding China)

Homework: write a short paper about your comments on the Cultural Revolution (maximum words: 300)

UNIT IX

China's Economic Reform and Opening Up

Readings:

1. China's Economy: Who owns What, Who Works Where, and Who Makes the Decisions? (P. 78 – 96, Understanding China)

2. Sources of Rural Discontent (P.114 – 133, *ibid*)

3. China's Cities: Unemployment, Corruption, and Inflation (P. 134 – 148)

Homework:

1. Why is China's planned economy featured by “*big cooking pot*” and “*iron rice bowl*”?
2. Is the “household responsibility” the best solution to the reform in the rural areas?

UNIT X

Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Their Influence on the Chinese Culture and Society

Homework:

1. How is “filial piety” practiced in the life of the Chinese people?
2. What are the main features of the religions in China?

Notes:

1. The schedule is flexible and subject to change so as to meet the needs of students.
2. The last meet time of the semester is for the final examination.