

Notes from China Semester Fall 2008 Orientation Session

Wednesday, April 16, 2008

These notes supplement the PowerPoint presentation given by Adam Arthur. Please see both for the complete orientation material.

TRAVEL TO CHINA

- You need a passport that is valid until at least May 14, 2009 (six months after the end date of the program). If you do not yet have a passport, or if your passport will expire before May 14, 2009, you need to apply for a passport or renewal as soon as possible. It is also important that your passport have at least two blank pages where your visa can be inserted.
- Your expected date of arrival is Friday, August 29, 2008. If you will be arriving in China before this date, please let Adam Arthur know, as there are visa implications.
- If you are interested in participating in a group flight to Shanghai with students from Miami and from Rollins College, please contact Sarah McNitt.
- On the day of your flight, expect to be at the airport AT LEAST three hours before your flight is scheduled to depart. Between check-in lines and security, airline travel can take longer than you'd expect.

COURSES AND CREDIT

- There are no prerequisites for any of the elective courses offered.
- Students can earn 8 credit hours for Beginning Chinese and 6 credit hours for Intermediate or Advanced Chinese. Students are permitted to take a total of 14-18 credit hours, which means that students at the Beginning Chinese level can take the language course plus TWO elective courses and students at the Intermediate or Advanced levels can take the language course plus either TWO or THREE elective courses, depending on their preference. **This is a change from what was discussed at the meeting, based on a message we received Thursday morning from the Department of German, Russian and East Asian Languages.**
- In order to determine how a course will be counted toward your major, minor, Miami Plan, etc. you should talk to the Chief Departmental Adviser of your department. You should take with you the syllabi for the courses so that the CDA can compare the course to other courses offered here on campus.
- If you want to complete a Thematic Sequence requirement while studying in China, please contact Sarah McNitt. We will be filing the paperwork in our office and need to know which students it applies to.
- There will not be an option for *for-credit* internships. If you want help finding a non-credit internship, contact Adam Arthur.
- The Mandarin language boot-camp will not be included in the program in fall 2008. However, if you would like to study intensive Mandarin in the summer before participating in the program, Adam Arthur can help you find and enroll in a direct-enroll program at Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

LIVING IN CHINA

- You will be housed in residence halls. You have the option of a single room with communal bathroom, or a double room with attached bathroom. There are more double rooms available than singles. You will most likely be rooming with another Petters EducAsian student from Miami University or Rollins College. In the case that they have to house you with another international student, they will check with you first.
- The weather does not get as cold as Ohio's, and you will have left before it gets to the coldest part of the year. However, Shanghai is mainly heated with forced-air heat and this is not as efficient as steam heat. It's not uncommon to see people wearing coats inside. It's recommended that you plan to buy a coat in Shanghai rather than carrying it with you, as it adds extra bulk/weight to your luggage and a coat can be bought for approximately \$30-50 in Shanghai. In summer it can be muggy.
- The air quality in Shanghai is cleaner than in Beijing, but there is still big-city pollution.
- Health issues: People usually get sick while traveling from one very different climate to another, so expect colds and other minor complaints. You should also expect diarrhea or stomach issues when you first arrive and your body is getting used to a new climate, new foods and new germs. Stay hydrated and if you can, avoid taking medicine, as this will help your body build up resistance. Adam does not recommend drinking the water, although it is safe for tooth-brushing.
- The most convenient kinds of money to use are ATM cards (to draw cash from your home bank) and credit cards (to make purchases). Travelers' checks are recommended only as a back-up.
- Petters EducAsian will supply each student with a Chinese SIM card and a certain amount of pay-as-you-go phone credit. If you would like to use this, you will either need to have your US cell phone unlocked or buy a local cell phone

over there (approximately \$50). If you are bringing a phone from the US, check with your provider or with the manufacturer to make sure that it will work in China. Blackberry service is apparently rather iffy.

- The time difference between Ohio and Shanghai is 12 hours during our Daylight Savings Time and 13 hours outside of DST.
- If you will be bringing appliances or electronics, you will need plug adapters in order to plug them into Chinese sockets. These can be found at most electronics stores. Some electronics may also require a current transformer. Laptops generally do not require this transformer, as it's already built into the black box on your power cord. Check the owner's manual of your other electronic devices (or consult the manufacturer) to see whether the transformer is needed in addition to the plug adapter. Hair dryers are generally not worth bringing. It's usually a better deal to buy a cheap hair dryer on site. (If you're really concerned about the cost, you may be able to arrange to sell appliances/electronics to a student going abroad in spring 2009.)
- Laptops are recommended but not required. There are computers available on campus.
- If you are concerned about bringing expensive electronics like laptops or mp3 players, you may want to take out some additional insurance. You can do this through the Office of Lifelong Learning in McGuffey Hall.
- Many toiletry/hygiene products that you're familiar with are available in Western-style supermarkets. It's recommended that you adopt new Chinese toiletries as one way to immerse yourself in the culture, but if you have very particular needs, you may want to bring a US product with you. Adam should be able to advise you on individual products and their availability.
- Petters EducAsian is looking into buying and shipping textbooks to Shanghai so that you will not have to transport them yourselves.
- It is common to experience an emotional "U curve" while studying abroad (in China or anywhere else). Usually this means that you start out with lots of enthusiasm and excitement about being in a new culture, then later feel frustrated because your own cultural assumptions are being challenged, you may have communication problems, or things just "aren't as EASY as they are back home." Once you work through these challenges, your emotions lift again and you are able to enjoy the rest of the semester. The best way to get through these "Bad China Days" is to talk to a classmate about it. Everyone experiences different highs and lows at different points, so you may be able to point out some good things to a friend who's at the bottom of the U curve, and they may later be able to do the same for you. If you feel that your depression is more than just a normal nostalgia for "the way things are SUPPOSED to be" please talk to the resident director in Shanghai. Studying abroad can be an emotionally stressful time with GREAT highs and also some lows, and if you need more than a conversation with a classmate to help you deal with it, that's normal and you can get that help as long as you ask for it.

TRAVEL

- The end-of-semester excursion will not include Hong Kong, as listed on the Powerpoint. Tibet may or may not be included, depending on the political situation at that time. If Tibet is not included in the excursion, it will be replaced with another destination.

COST, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

- The estimated costs are available on the website. However, the fall 2008 tuition rate for study on the Oxford campus has not yet been released and the enrollment of this program currently is at the minimum number of students. If enrollment changes, the program cost (\$5700) may increase marginally.
- All federal financial aid and Miami scholarships apply to this program. It is a good idea to talk to your financial aid adviser if you do not know how much financial aid you receive.
- If you have filed a FAFSA and have been determined to have ANY amount of financial need, you are eligible for the Study Abroad Airfare Grant (\$600 grant toward your airfare, and up to \$600 more in the form of an interest-free loan). See http://www.units.muohio.edu/sfa/study_abroad.htm

MORE INFORMATION

- If you would like some more information about living in China, there are many useful links to the State Department, the Centers for Disease Control, etc. here: <http://www.muohio.edu/international/sa-cn.php>.
- If you would like some more orientation information, especially regarding health and safety (and with a question and answer panel of returned students), you are invited to attend our general Study Abroad Orientation Session on April 28. More information is available here: <http://www.units.muohio.edu/internationalprograms/events.php> This could also be an opportunity to meet other students studying on other programs in China or elsewhere in Asia, if you would like to meet up while you're studying abroad.
- Here is the website for Shanghai Jiao Tong University: <http://www.sjtu.edu.cn/english/index/index.htm>
- If you would like to correspond with Miami and Rollins College students participating in this program, the Facebook group is here: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=14833368948>