

## **CHINESE HISTORY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW**

*(final proposal – course designed by Dr. Yusheng Yao, Rollins College)*

### **Description of the course:**

This course provides students an overview of Chinese history and culture, tracing the evolution of Chinese history and culture from ancient times to present. The overview of Chinese history delineates a clear story line from ancient times to present, which serves as a contextual framework for discussing major themes and topics of Chinese culture. The themes and topics on Chinese culture include formation and evolution of Chinese identity, Chinese political, economic and social systems, Chinese philosophical and religious traditions, Chinese education system, Chinese literature and arts and major Chinese customs and habits. As the course is conducted in China, a strong field study component is added to supplement the classroom teaching.

### **Extended description:**

As China is looming large as the next world superpower, it is to our national as well as personal interest to understand its history and culture in order for us to live and work cooperatively and constructively. This course is designed to provide students an overview of Chinese history and culture from ancient times to present. The history overview provides students a story line and contextual framework for discussing major themes and topics of Chinese culture. The themes and topics of Chinese culture include formation and evolution of Chinese identity, China's imperial system and modern party dictatorship, China's social system including family, lineage, gender relations, China's economic system, Chinese philosophical and religious traditions, Chinese education system, Chinese literature and arts and Chinese major customs and habits. Taking advantage of the venue for this course, the course has a strong field study component in Shanghai and Beijing to enrich students' learning experience of Chinese history and culture.

**The main goals** of this course are: (1) to familiarize students with general trends and features in Chinese history; (2) to acquaint them with major features of traditional Chinese culture and its change in modern times; (3) to help them to develop a perspective on features of China's modernization and on continuity and change in Chinese culture.

### **Outcomes:**

- 1) Summarize the general trends and features in Chinese history
- 2) Articulate the main components and features of traditional Chinese culture
- 3) Articulate the trajectory of China's modernization and cultural change in modern times
- 4) Identify the cultural norms that still affect contemporary Chinese life.

### **Instructional Methods:**

These skills and abilities shall be acquired through reading, lecture and class discussion, through field study, through doing research and writing papers, and through preparation for examinations.

### **Field Study Experience:**

To enhance classroom study, field trips in and out of Shanghai will be organized. Field study represents approximately 3 weeks' class hours. While the bulk of the culture and history field study will rely on the rich resources of Shanghai, a trip to Beijing (*partnering with the classes on politics/society and business*) would be a strong addition, reflected in the choices in the outline. Visits and interviews with the people of various walks of life will enable students to learn about Chinese life and society firsthand. Choices and timing of field study will be worked in coordination with other courses during the semester.

## Graded Events:

- Three essay exams
- Group presentations
- Class participation
- Two papers: reports on topic related to Chinese traditional culture and its modern transition. One will be a research paper; the other may be a field study report.

## Outline of Major Topics:

### I. Chinese History Overview (5 Weeks' Class Hours)

1. Periodization of and Approaches to Chinese History
2. **Ancient China:** Shang, Zhou Dynasties
3. **Imperial China:** Unification of China and Centralized Bureaucracy (Qin and Han Dynasties)
4. **Imperial China:** Division, Reunification, and Improvement on Centralized Bureaucracy (Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui and Tang Dynasties)
5. **Medieval Economic Revolution and Conquest Empire** (Song and Yuan Dynasties)
6. **Late Imperial China:** Third Commercial Revolution and Consolidated Autocracy (Ming and Qing Dynasties)
  - 🌿 **Field trip:** Visit Shanghai Museum for arts and artifacts in ancient and Imperial China)
7. **Dynastic Decline and Western Intrusion:** 19<sup>th</sup> Century
8. **Fall of the Last Dynasty:** Reforms and 1911 Revolution
9. **Warlordism and Cultural Crisis:** May Fourth Movement
10. **Rise and Struggle of Political Parties:** 1921 to 1927
11. **Nanjing Decade and Communist Survival:** 1927-1936
12. **China in WWII and Civil War:** 1937-1945, 1946-1949
13. **China under Mao:** 1949-1976
14. **Opening Up and Economic Reforms** (1977-Present)
  - 🌿 **Field trip** for history of People's Republic of China: Partnered with the Politics and Society course and Business course for interviews and panel discussions with Chinese senior citizens, business people, educators and students

### II. Chinese Culture Overview (8+ Weeks' Class Hours + 3+ weeks in field study time)

1. **Formation and Evolution of Chinese Identity and View of the World**
  - 🌿 **Field study:** Visit to Bund to illustrate of Western power and influence before 1949. Visit to Oriental Pearl Tower for Shanghai's today and tomorrow
2. **China's Political System: From Centralized Bureaucracy to Party Dictatorship**
  - 🌿 **Field Study:** Beijing visit to Great Wall, Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square ( Partnered with the Politics and Society course to explore the political significance, but also how the public spaces are used to deliberately as a cultural indicator)
3. **China's Social System: Family, Lineage and Gender Relations**
  - 🌿 **Field Study:** Groups discussions with elderly people who have experienced changes in both urban and rural communities about continuity and change in family and gender relations.
4. **China's Economic and Technological Revolutions and Stagnation**
  - 🌿 **Field Study:** Partner with the Business course to talk with selected business representatives in joint ventures, state-owned and private business, enterprise and village about the continuities and changes.
5. **China's Traditional Education and Civil Examination System**
  - 🌿 **Field Study:** Visit to Confucian Temple and the National University in the Ming and Qing Dynasties (Guozijian) in Beijing. Roundtable discussion with teachers, current students about the continuity and change

## 6. China's Philosophical and Religious Traditions

- ✿ **Field Study:** Visit Buddhist and Taoist Temples (if possible witness/participate in ceremony) and (class) visit with practitioners. Suggested: Jade Buddha Temple in Shanghai and the White Cloud Temple in Beijing

## 7. China's Traditional Literature and Arts

- ✿ **Field study:** Shanghai Museum visit for ancient arts, artifacts and calligraphy, view representative movies from 1930s to present to assess cultural change; attend an Opera or other Chinese musical event. View modern art at Museum of Contemporary Art-Shanghai.

## 8. China's Major Customs and Habits

- ✿ **Field Study:** Participate in Chinese major holidays, life-cycle ceremonies. Observe and discuss social hierarchy and interactions.

### Suggested textbook:

Fairbank and Goldman, *China: A New History*

### Potential Course Materials:

Zhang Dainian and Fang Keli, *Zhongguo wenhua gailun* (Introduction to Chinese culture)

Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture*

Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*

David N. Keightly, *Origin of Chinese Civilization*

Frederick W. Mote, *Intellectual Foundations of China*

Chow Tse-Tsung, *The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*

Hanchao Lu, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century*

Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China*

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Perry Link, *Evening Chat in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament*

Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics and Ideology in Deng's China*

Jiangying Zha, *China Pop: How Soap Operas, Tabloids, and Bestsellers are Transforming a Culture*

Perry Ling and et al, *Popular China: Unofficial Culture in a Globalizing Society*

### Credit Hours:

These course credit assumptions are based on the standard Carnegie Hours/Units requirements:

16 Week Format, 4 Units, 4 Credits

(Basic formula: 1 unit equals 1 hour of lecture, or 2 hours lab with homework, or 3 hours lab without homework)

When design is complete, this course will meet approximate to one of the following scenarios. It is preferred that students experience 1 hour of content for 4 days (Monday through Thursday). It is acceptable to have activities replace these hours and Friday is also open to host activities. As necessary, it is possible to include a weekend excursion that begins on Friday and ends Sunday afternoon.