
CONTEMPORARY CHINESE HISTORY, SOCIETY, & CULTURE
Course Syllabus
4 Credits – Summer 2009
Tsinghua University

Course Description:

The Contemporary Chinese History, Society, & Culture Program in Beijing is a 4-week summer study program that is based at Tsinghua University, China's top-ranking institution of higher learning. The program is designed to help students develop an understanding of China's historic, economic, and social transformation, its emerging role as a world superpower, and the global implications of this transformation. It also seeks to promote understanding and appreciation of contemporary Chinese culture so that students can become bridge-builders between the American and Chinese people.

Tsinghua professors will begin with an overview of the historic and cultural foundations that shape contemporary China, including the early development of Chinese civilization, cultural exchange along the Silk Road, hallmarks of traditional China, early East-West exchanges, and the historic significance of China. The focus will then move to the modern development of China from mid 1800's to the present, with emphasis on understanding the worldview of the Chinese people as a result of China's interaction with the West in the last 150 years.

This interdisciplinary course also provides insight into China's contemporary social and cultural issues with an overview of its political and social systems, economics and philosophy, as well as the non-profit and religious sectors. Examining a broad range of topics from an historical and interdisciplinary perspective, students will begin to appreciate the profound socioeconomic transformation that China is currently undergoing and how these changes are impacting the Chinese people. The course offers a total of 24 lectures, integrated with 12 cultural and historic site visits, a service-learning project, and other experiential learning activities.

Lectures and discussion sessions will make up 72 or more hours of instruction in total.

Course Objectives:

1. Understand and appreciate the historic development of traditional Chinese culture, China's historic significance, and the impact of this history on contemporary Chinese society.
2. Explain the key themes in the political, cultural, social, and economic development of China, China's achievements, and China's present-day realities.
3. Understand the global dimensions and impact of China's socioeconomic transformation and her emerging role as a world power.
4. Compare the uniqueness of Chinese society with Western cultural ideas.
5. Demonstrate critical thinking in relation to "touring" or other field-based learning experiences outside the traditional classroom and confidence in the student's ability to learn from their cross-cultural experiences and direct interaction with the Chinese people.
6. Adapt regional knowledge and field experiences in a manner that will enable the student to work more effectively in future professional positions that involve Chinese interests or other cross-cultural environments and that will allow the student to become a bridge-builder between the American and Chinese people.

Reading Assignments:

Craig, A. (2006). *The Heritage of Chinese Civilization (Second Edition)*. pp. 1-99.
Gregory, J. (2003). *The West and China Since 1500*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 4-71.
Chow, G. (2007). *China's Economic Transformation*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
Gamer, R. (Ed). (2003). *Understanding Contemporary China*. London: Lynne Rienner.

Further selected readings for each lecture or site visit will be compiled in an supplementary course reader.

Course Requirements and Student Evaluation:

Student evaluation for this course will be based on their preparation for and participation in all the seminars, lectures, discussions and field trips, the quality of the journal they keep, and their written assignments. Students will also be encouraged to read newspapers and periodicals. Course requirements are as follows:

1. Attend all scheduled classes and program field trips and record lecture notes, field trip notes, experiences and insights according to course writing protocols.
2. Keep a journal (not a diary) of your observations regarding your experiences and how they relate to course material on the culture of China and its impacts and significance. Be sure to integrate course reading to other program experiences. The journal should clearly and overtly indicate a solid understanding of the reading and related program activities. Direction will be given as to what to comment upon.
3. Journal entries should consist of one's interactions and responses to the following: course reading + lecture material + videos + guides and professor's commentary + field trip observations = journal entry. Make your textbooks and classes come alive.
4. Student evaluation will be determined on the basis of the following factors:
 - (a) Full participation and attentiveness in all academic parts of the program including classes and field trips. High priority is given to a person's conscientiousness, promptness and on-time performance for all activities, desire to learn, and cooperation in the designated academic and required parts of the program. One's first priority should be the program's requirements. This should also be reflected in the journal. (10%)
 - (b) A complete journal of lecture notes, field notes, and at least fifteen (15) analytical, insightful journal entries integrating field trips with specific references to course readings and how the experiences amplify the readings. Further journal writing guidelines will be provided at the beginning of the course. (60%)
 - (c) A final presentation will provide an opportunity for students to choose one course-relevant theme from their journal entries and essays and synthesize this research into a fifteen-minute lecture or multi-media presentation. (30%)

Course Topics and Field Trips:

Tsinghua Faculty Lectures:

1. Chinese Ancient History & China's Role in the Cultural Foundations of East Asia
2. Birth of China's Core Cultural & Philosophical Traditions (e.g. Confucianism and Daoism)
3. Chinese Imperial History I (Han through Ming)
4. Buddhism's Impact on Chinese Culture
5. Chinese Imperial History II (Early Qing – Opium Wars)
6. Chinese Imperial History III (Late Qing – Boxer Rebellion)
7. The Republic of China – 1911 to 1949: May 4th Movement & the Rise of Nationalism

8. P.R. China – History from 1949 to 1979
9. P.R. China – History from 1979 to present
10. China’s Government and Political System
11. Economics Development 1: Reform and Opening of China from 1978 to 1992
12. Economics Development 2: Reform and Opening of China from 1992 to 2008
13. The Transformation of Contemporary Urban China (Sociological Perspective)
14. Transformation of Contemporary Rural China (Sociological Perspective)
15. China’s Ethnic Minorities
16. China’s Emerging NGO Sector
17. China’s Education System
18. Religion in China Today (Five Recognized Religions in Contemporary China)
19. Modern China through Film and Literature
20. Contemporary Nationalism in China

International Professional Lectures:

1. China’s Health Care System
2. U.S. China Trade - U.S. Department of Commerce
3. Economic Development – Microsoft & Lenovo
4. NGOs in China - World Vision China

Historic and Cultural Site Visits:

1. Beijing City Museum & Tiananmen Square
2. Confucian Temple & Imperial College+ Daoist Temple
3. Great Wall, Ming Tombs & Juyongguan Fortress
4. Buddhist Temple & Temple of Heaven
5. Old Summer Palace & Ruins - Yuanming Yuan
6. Ricci Tomb & City Wall Observatory
7. Forbidden City & Coal Hill
8. Beijing Migrant School
9. Beijing Contemporary Architecture & Olympic Village Tour
10. Ethnic Minorities Park
11. BP International & Lenovo
12. Art Galleries (798 Galleries + Song Zhuang Artist Village)

Elective Historic and Cultural Site Visits:

1. Summer Palace
2. Hutong Bike Tour & Prince Gong Garden

Instructors:

Cai Jiming, Professor, Department of Sociology, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (S.H.S.S.), Tsinghua University
 Jing Jun, Professor, Department of Sociology, S.H.S.S., Tsinghua University
 Li Qiang, Professor, Department of Sociology, S.H.S.S., Tsinghua University
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 Wang Xiaochao, Professor, Department of Philosophy, S.H.S.S., Tsinghua University
 Wang Xianmin, Professor, Department of History, S.H.S.S., Tsinghua University
 Wei Zhengxiang, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, S.H.S.S., Tsinghua University
 Yan Xuetong, Professor, Institute of International Relations, S.H.S.S., Tsinghua University