

2015 UM-SJTU Joint Institute Summer Program

VZ102 Chinese Culture Course Syllabus

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Course Description

This course will introduce students to the basics of Chinese and Shanghai culture. No prerequisite is required. There are 12 sessions with a total of 24 hrs class-based sessions and additional 2 field trips (8 class hours in total)

Course Textbook

- 1) *A Glimpse of Chinese Culture* by Liao Huaying (2007)

Details of the In-class Schedule:

Session 1: Course Introduction, May 11

In this session, we will look at the content and structure of the course and what you're expected to deliver in terms of in-class participation, homework, individual report, and group project. Some distinctive Chinese cultural features will be introduced and the challenges that foreigners might encounter understanding Chinese culture analyzed.

Session 2: An Overview of China and Shanghai, May 13

Following the course introduction there will be an overview of China, including its language, geographic features, political structure, population distribution and ethnic diversity. In the second half of the session, we will look at Shanghai's footprints and its unique culture. With a history of 1,000 years, Shanghai is a young and vigorous Chinese city, a flourishing cultural crossroads which brings people around the world together.

Session 3: Social Norms and Etiquette, May 18

We will talk about dos and don'ts in daily life as well as business etiquette. You will get to know the common behaviors of Chinese people in different social or non-social circumstances, which might help you understand and cope with the difficult situations known as "culture shocks". Moreover importantly, we'll discuss where these behaviors and attitudes come from.

Sessions 4: Chinese Food, Tea and Traditional Chinese Medicine, May 20

For many years, Chinese cuisine has played a critical role in promoting Chinese culture. When people from other parts of the world think of China, the first thing coming to their mind is very likely to be Chinese food and restaurants. In this session, I will introduce to you typical foods from different parts of the country and major types of Chinese teas. Some distinct features of traditional Chinese medicine and Chinese views toward food and medicine will also be discussed.

Sessions 5: An Overview of Chinese History-Part I, May 25

In this session, you will learn about the history of China beginning some 3000 years ago, from the Zhou Dynasty until the end of the Qing Dynasty, the studies of which will help you appreciate the sophistication of Chinese culture. The ups and downs in the long history of imperial China have left an indelible imprint on Chinese culture and influenced how Chinese people see themselves as well as the rest of the world.

Session 6: An Overview of Chinese History-Part II, May 27

Chinese history continues from the collapse of the last imperial dynasty until the modern days. After the prolonged period of political, social and economic disturbances, where Chinese people had gone through two major wars, the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. However, China's road to modernization was not a smooth one and the country faced many challenges from both inside and outside.

Session 7: Chinese Arts and Architecture, June 1

In this session, you will get to know a good variety of traditional Chinese arts, including paintings, calligraphy, seal carving as well as performing arts like Peking Opera and Chinese Gongfu. Architecture is an important building block of Chinese culture. In the last part of of this session, we will look at different Chinese traditional architectural structures,

and explain the inextricable links between some of the distinctive architectural features and Chinese culture.

Sessions 8: Chinese Festivals and Folk Customs, June 3

In this session, you will get to know Chinese traditions and major festivals including Spring Festival, Tomb Sweeping Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Qi Xi and Mid-Autumn Festival. We will discuss what people do during the festivals and how these came into existence.

Sessions 9: Chinese Cultural Roots, June 8

Some of the greatest thinkers and scholars in Chinese history, including Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi, will be introduced. Stories and writings from different periods in Chinese history will be interpreted and analyzed to provide different angles to look into how traditional thoughts and philosophies have influenced the Chinese way of life and shaped Chinese culture.

Sessions 10: China Today: Education, Sports and Entertainment, June 10

We will start the session by discussing Chinese educational system and how it's evolved over time. Dominant examination system in the imperial China, Keju, as well as modern nationwide college entrance examination system, Gaokao, will be examined. We'll also explore the world of sports and recreational activities in China, including China's state-owned sports system, popular media programs and social platforms.

Sessions 11: Chinese Culture and Globalization, June 15

With the advent of internet and an increasingly globalized world, Chinese people have more opportunities to get in touch or work with foreigners. On one hand, this globalization helps Chinese learn about different cultures and ways of thinking; on the other hand, this also means that Chinese people have to face and resolve cultural differences directly. In this session, we will look at some newly emerged trends in Chinese society.

Sessions 12: Final Group Presentation and Course Wrap-up 24

In this class session, each student team will lead a 15-minute class discussion on the topic of "Which direction is Chinese culture going to move in the future?" The teams are expected to make a strong case of their viewpoints and stand ready to defuse counter arguments.

Details of the Field Trip Schedule:

Field Trip 1 –Chinese Martial Art

Field Trip 2 –Chinese Cooking Workshop

Grading Guidelines:

Your grade for this class consists of three components as follows:

1) Classroom Participation (20%) – In general, your grade depends upon your attendance as well as your good behavior and active contribution to the learning in the classroom and field trips. Each unexcused absence in one class session would reduce your final grade by 2% (each field trip is counted as 2 class sessions). Arriving late in class or departing early is generally considered disruptive and may affect your grade negatively unless valid reasons are provided. You are expected to be called on to answer questions related to the reading materials. Therefore I strongly encourage you to go through the course readings before coming to class.

2) Take-home Exercises (30%) – For each class session, you will be given a list of reading and you may be asked to answer in writing the questions related to assigned readings. Please keep each writeup to a limit of one page in an MS Word document (with a font size no less than 11 pt). A writeup should be sent to the instructor by email before the deadline given for a particular set of exercise questions posted on SAKAI. (Please make sure that you get an email confirmation from the instructor acknowledging the receipt of the file). Handwritten copies will not be accepted.

3) Group Writeup (20%) –At the beginning of the course, students will be divided into a number of 3 or 4-person teams. Each team will be asked to write a formal report on the topic of “which direction is Chinese culture going to move in the future?” and give a 15-minute presentation in class (each team needs to prepare **10~12 Power Point slides** and bring the file to class **on the day of presentation**). The report must be sent to the instructor by email in an MS Word document with a minimum of 2,000 words (allowance of 200 words over limit) **before 8:00pm on June 23, 2015**. (Please make sure that you get an email confirmation from the instructor acknowledging the receipt of the report). Handwritten copies will not be accepted.

4) Individual Final Report (30%) –Each student is required to write a final typed paper of minimum 1,000 words (allowance of 100 words over limit), sharing your most important findings of Chinese culture with a friend your age who is about to take his or her first ever visit to China. Given the word limit, you must carefully choose your topic and focus on the things you think your friend would most appreciate and least likely to get from other sources. You are strongly encouraged to show what you have experienced and learned during your stay in China, both inside and beyond the classroom. The report must be typed and send to the instructor by email **before 8:00 am June 24, 2015** (Please make sure that you get an email confirmation from the instructor acknowledging the receipt of the file). Handwritten copies will not be accepted.

Each component will be graded on a 100-point scale and the final score will be converted into a letter scale as follows:

A+= 95-100 A= 90-94 A-= 85-89 B+ =80-84 B= 75-79 B-= 70-74 C+=67-69 C=65-66 C-=62-64 D=60-61
F(Failure)=below 60