
**Chinese Culture
CLTR 4999**

Course Description:

China has a 5000-year history, and a rich tapestry of geographic, climatological, and ethnic diversity. As a result, Chinese culture is exceptionally varied. Migration to the capital city has made Beijing a melting pot of both Chinese and western cultures. Walking the streets one will see traditional marketplaces coexisting with western chain restaurants, glass skyscrapers beside traditional Chinese architecture, and rickety bicycles sharing the streets with European sports cars. We will sample this culture through lectures on topics such as art, music, literature, business, innovation, language, politics, economics, history and nationalism. At the end of the course, students will complete a group oral presentation to the class on one of these or related topics.

Instructor: Karlis Rokpelnis

Prerequisites: None

Method of Presentation: The course will be a seminar course with occasional lectures and weekly field trips to important historical and cultural sites around Beijing.

Language of Presentation: English, with introduction of relevant Chinese terms

Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Identify the major geographic regions of China and their differences.
- 2) Understand social and politico-economic effects of the opening and reform era, including the effects of modernization and urbanization on the Chinese people.
- 3) Identify some important people in Chinese culture and politics, understand the impact of personal choice on social and economic development.
- 4) Discuss the position of modern China in the world economic, business, and social environment.
- 5) Explain their views on one of these topics in depth.

Required work and form of assessment:

- 1) In-class participation (30%). (all weeks)
- 2) Homework assignments (30%) (Weeks 1-3)
- 3) Final reflections (10%) (Week 4)
- 4) Group presentation (30%)

Week 1 Assignment:

First Impressions: Report on observations in daily life relating to material presented in class.

Week 2 Assignment:

Report on how economic reforms have affected specific groups of people (e.g., women, migrant workers).

Week 3 Assignment:

Changes in modern China: Report on effects of technology, urbanization, and increasing worldwide commerce on the culture and environment.

Final Reflections Assignment:

Report discussing how the student's views of China have been reinforced or modified as a result of 4 weeks in Beijing.

Final presentation:

A group oral report (approximately 2 students per group) on some aspect of Chinese culture, to be chosen in collaboration with the faculty.

Content:

Week 1

Day 1: Course Introduction: What is Modern China?

Mitter, Rana. "What is Modern China" in *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 1-16.

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey. "Imperial China" and "Revolutions and Revolutionaries" in *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford University Press, 2010, 19-66.

Day 2: Twentieth Century Turmoil: Imperialism, Revolution and Maoism

Yu Hua, "Introduction," "人民 People," "革命 Revolution," in *China in Ten Words*, Pantheon Books, 2011, vii-14 and 113-141.

Recommended:

Mitter, Rana. "What is Modern China" in *Modern China: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2008, 40-73.

Day 3: Field trip to Beijing Urban Planning Museum, Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, and Jingshan Park

Day 4: Chinese Political Organization: The Organic State;

Cheng Li, "China's Communist Party-State: The Structure and Dynamics of Power," in *Politics of China: An Introduction*, William A. Joseph, ed. pp. 165-177

Richard McGregor, *The Party*, (2010), "The Red Machine: The Party and the State," pp. ix-34

Week 2

Day 5: 1978: Market Transition: Economic and Social Consequences of Reform

Naughton, Barry. *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007, pp. 85-125.

Day 6: Urbanization and Migrant Workers

Economist Intelligence Unit. "Supersized Cities: China's 13 megalopolises," 2013.

Loyalka, Michelle Damon, *Eating Bitterness: Stories from the Front Lines of China's Great Urban Migration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012, 182-205.

Pai Hsiao-hung, *Scattered Sands: The Story of China's Rural Migrants*. London: Verso Books, 2012, 207-223.

"China's Great Uprooting - Moving 250 Million Into Cities," *New York Times*, June 15, 2013.

"Who Speaks for China's Workers?," *Labor Notes*, May 29, 2013.

Day 7: Being Ethnic in China: Ritual and other modes of production

Field Trip to China Ethnic Minority Cultural Park

Gladney, Dru. *Dislocating China: Muslims, Minorities, and Other Subaltern Subjects*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2014, 1-89.

Day 8: Women of the Country

Fong, Vanessa L., "China's One-Child Policy and the Empowerment of Urban Daughters." *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 4 (2002): 1098-1109.

Branigan, Tania "China's great gender crisis," *The Guardian*, November 2, 2011.

Zhang Yajun, "Amid family pressures, gays in China turn to marriages of convenience," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 13, 2010

Andrew Jacobs, "For Many Chinese Men, No Deed Means No Dates" *New York Times*, April 14, 2011.

The Economist, "The Place of Young Women: Girl Power Up," June 27, 2012.

The Economist, "Women in China: The sky's the limit," November 26, 2011.

Weekend field trip to "wild" Great Wall at Jinshanling and Simitai.

Stay overnight in an isolated rural village in Hebei Province.

Week 3

Day 9: Religion in Contemporary Chinese Society

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey. "Schools of Thought" in *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 1-18.

Ebrey, Patricia Buckley ed. "Confucian Teachings," "Daoist Teachings," "Legalist Teachings," in *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*. New York: The Free Press, 1993, 17-37.

Vala, Carsten T. and Kevin J. O'Brien. "Recruitment to Protestant House Churches" in *Popular Protest in China*, Cambridge, Harvard University, 2008.

Doctoroff, Tom. "Modern China's Spiritual Crisis: Does it Exist?" Huffington Post, January 22, 2012.

Day 10: Field Trip to Confucian Temple, Imperial College and Lama Temple

Day 11: Media and Censorship

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey. *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 80-102

Susan Blum, "Why Does China Fear the Internet?" in *China: In and Beyond the Headlines (2012)*

Rebecca MacKinnon, "Inside China's censorship machine," *National Post*, January 29, 2012

Link, Perry and Xiao Qiang, "In China's Cyberspace, Dissent Speaks Code," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2013.

Economist. "The Machinery of Control: Cat & Mouse" March 2013.

Day 12: Buying a home and Driving A Car : Globalization and Consumerism

Field trip to 798 Art District

Hessler, Peter. "Wheels of Fortune." *New Yorker* 83, no. 37 (2007): 104-114.

Hessler, Peter. "The Wonder Years." *New Yorker* 84, no. 7 (2008): 68-76.

Week 4

Day 13: Organizing for Change: Civil Society

Sang Ye. 2006. "Looking ahead: the founders of a private orphanage" and "Getting Organized: the parents of a stolen child." In *China Candid: the People of the People's Republic*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Lu, Yiyi. "NGOs in China: development dynamics and challenges." In *China's Opening Society: the nonstate sector and governance*. London: Routledge. 2008.

Sun, Yanfei and Dingxin Zhao. "Environmental Campaigns" in *Popular Protest in China*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Day 14: Pessoptimist Nation(alism) & the Future of China

William A. Callahan, *Pessoptimist Nation*, pp. 31-59

Shirk, Susan. *China: A Fragile Superpower* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, 1-12, 255-269

Geramie Barmé, "China's Promise," *The China Beat*, January 20, 2010.

The Economist, "[Rising power, anxious state](#)" June 23, 2011.

Bishop, Bill. "[For China's 'Great Renewal', 8 Trends to Keep an Eye on.](#)" *New York Times*, December 11, 2012.

Osnos, Evan. "[The Top Ten Myths About China in 2012](#)," *The New Yorker*, December 3, 2012

Day 15: Field trip to 圓明園 Yuanmingyuan ("Old Summer Palace")

Broudehoux, Anne-Marie. *The Making and Selling of post-Mao Beijing*, "Selling the Past: Nationalism and the Commodification of History at Yuanmingyuan." London: Routledge, 2004, 94-147.

Skim any **two** of the following articles

- "[China Seeks to Stop Paris Sale of Bronzes](#)," *NY Times*, February 17, 2009.

- "[Chinese Reactions to Auction of Stolen Bronze Relics](#)" *ChinaSmack* February 26, 2009.

- "[Chinese Bidder of Looted Sculpture Refuses to Pay](#)," *China Daily*, March 2, 2009.

Day 16: Field trip to "Bird's Nest" Olympic Stadium and Water Cube

Day 17: Final Presentations