



SOCI0331: Chinese Society and Culture (Online) --Summer--II 2011



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Course Description

This course is about the basics of Chinese society and culture. As we all know, among the five earliest and oldest human civilizations, the Chinese civilization is the only one that has survived countless internal conflicts and external invasions in the duration of more than five thousand years and lasted from the very beginning of recorded human history all the way to today, without major destructions. How could this unique feat be achieved? What have been the structure and dynamics of Chinese culture and society?

This course sets out to decode the mystery of the Chinese civilization, examines how Chinese society's basic characteristics have developed as a result of the interactions of historical, geographic, economic, philosophical, political and religious factors. It also considers how those factors are reflected in the contemporary Chinese society and culture. The thematic overview in the course focuses on the development of a civilization-- how it has developed over the centuries and how it reveals itself in its contemporary form. For this purpose, we'll watch a lot of movies, documentaries, and TV news excerpts, in addition to weekly readings and lecture notes.



Course Objectives

Although topics stretch across disciplines, we will mainly explore the following major themes:



Geographical Background

Land

- territory and boundaries
- climate and environment

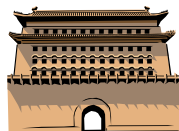
People

- population
- ethnic groups
- language
- tensions and challenges



Historical Context

- overview of Chinese history
- the modern era since 1840
- the revolutions since 1911
- the reforms since 1978



Political System

- political patterns of the past
- Confucianism and its political impact
- Chinese political system today



Economy

- economic system in the past
- revolution and economic change
- economic reform since 1979
- managing economy in a new way
- economic power



Family

- family
- kinship
- marriage
- sexuality



Women's Liberation and Development

- subjection of women
- ideal of womanhood
- education of daughters
- emancipation and social change



Religion

- Chinese humanism
- Confucianism
- Taoism
- Buddhism
- Christianity



Required Text

Understanding Contemporary China (2008), 3rd edition, edited by Robert E. Gamer.
ISBN:978-1-58826-594-4 Publisher: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
(available at WSC bookstore)



Online Technical Assistance

If you have any question about how to use the PLATO system,
Please contact the CIT—Center for Instructional Technology at Wilson Hall 114



Requirements

1. Discussions: Following the required readings, you will have the opportunity to participate the class discussion by composing ONE-page essays, discussing and reflecting thoughtfully and critically on the reflection questions posted each week. You will earn up to 15 points for completing each essay. You are required to do 10 essays total in the semester.



2. Three Presentation Drafts

We'll watch three movies. Based on examining each movie, you are required to prepare a PowerPoint presentation and post the draft on the online classroom. The presentation is supposed to use the knowledge we will have learned to interpret and discuss the movie. General requirements for the presentations are as follows:

1. Theme, theme, theme—you must know what you are talking about
2. Creatively use the most fundamental concepts in the required reading
3. Successfully integrate class lecture and the movie

4. Creatively use visual instruments and online resources in order to attract serious attention among the audience and receives profound questions
5. Logically organize the materials including both theories and supporting evidences
6. Sensitively address counterargument(s).

The theme for all three presentations will be distributed to you one week before the due date. To do the presentation, I would suggest you list the factors that highlight the theme as they are reflected by the episodes in the movies; then use the theories we'll have learned to discuss the rationale behind your list. It will be helpful if you do a series of internet research about the key terms and therefore formulate your argument for or against the theories in the textbook. It is also important to look for counterarguments for a purpose of further establishing your position. Due date is strictly enforced and no make-up will be granted.



3. A Final Exam: You will have opportunity to answer ten questions at the end of the semester. The questions will be posted in the online classroom two weeks before the due date.



Grading

Final grade will be based on a possible total of 400 points.

Essays = 150 points for 10 essays. Each essay will be graded on a perfect score of 15.

Presentations = 150 points for 3 of them. Each presentation can earn you up to 50.

Final Exam= 100 points for 10 questions.



Integrity of Scholarship

Honesty in all academic work is expected from every student. Written material is to be the student's original composition. Appropriate credit must be given for outside sources from which ideas, languages, or quotations are derived.



Detailed Course Outline will be posted in the online classroom.