

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Chinese Cities and Chinese Culture

Course Number and Section

CHINESE

2247F 550

Instructor Name(s): Guoyuan Liu

Instructor Email(s): gliu23@uwo.ca

Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

The city is never merely a physical construct, an economic system, or a social institution; it is also a form of expression—what Lewis Mumford called “an aesthetic symbol of collective unity”: “The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and is the theater.” Throughout history, the city as an aesthetic symbol has played a vital role in shaping China’s cultural identity. Notably, Zhongguo—the term now used to refer to the Chinese state—first appeared in an 11th-century BCE record of city building. This course explores the city’s form and function as an aesthetic symbol in Chinese culture through case studies of selected cities, both ancient and modern. Each city will be examined through a chosen cultural icon that exemplifies a central theme of urban life. Course materials include historical documents, personal narratives, poetry, fiction, fine art, photography, and film. Taught in Chinese.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to

1. have an overview of the cultural significance of Chinese cities;
2. gain a more in-depth understanding of Chinese culture;
3. become critical on taken-for-granted notions such as “city,” “nation,” “space,” etc;
4. develop interdisciplinary skills for analyzing cultural phenomena.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Please see the course website on OWL Brightspace.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance		10%
Discussion and Participation		10%
In-class Exercises		25%

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Quizzes		15%
Essay	12/07/26	40%

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

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For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.