

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Chinese Cities and Chinese Culture

Course Number and Section:

CHINESE

2247F 550

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

Course Description:

The city is never just a physical fact, an economic organization, or a social institution; it is also a form of expression, or in Lewis Mumford's words, "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 significant role in the making of China's cultural identity, since zhongguo, the term now used in reference to "China" as a state, first appeared in a record of city building dating back to the 11th century BCE. This course will explore the city's form and function as "an aesthetic symbol" in Chinese culture, through case studies of ten major Chinese cities, five ancient and five modern. Discussion of each city will focus on a selected cultural icon, which particularly represents a theme of city life. Course materials will include historical documents, personal accounts, poetry, fictional narratives, as well as fine art, photography, and films.

This course is taught in Chinese. All texts will be read in Chinese and all class activities will be conducted in Chinese.

Learning Outcomes:

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:

Reading materials will be on OWL Brightspace and there will be no cost for textbooks.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Attendance		10%
Participation		10%

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Pop Quizzes		5%
In-class Exercises		10%
Midterm Exam	10/16/25	20%
Argument Outline	11/27/25	5%
Essay	12/04/25	40%

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

Thursday, August 14, 2025