# Chinese Society and Culture

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<th><strong>Course Code:</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Course Title:</strong></td>
<td><em>Chinese Society and Culture</em></td>
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<td><strong>Credit:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Instructor Name:</strong></td>
<td>YU Hai, Hu Anning</td>
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## Staff of the Course

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**Time:** TBA  
**Classroom:** TBA
Objective of Course

This course aims to familiarize students with a number of themes about Chinese society and culture. As the rapid development and comprehensive social transition in China has increasingly been a global foci, it is necessary, for both native Chinese and foreigners, to better understand the social, cultural and political forces that underpin China’s unique development trajectory and the current situation. In turn, such an understanding would further call for a process of learning an array of key notions and conceptual tools that will be methodically introduced and explicated throughout the semester.

Course Description

The content of this course consists of two components:

The first component, which occupies most lectures, addresses various aspects of Chinese society and culture. Specifically, we address some particular topics that relate to Confucian teachings, guanxi practices in Chinese’s daily life, historical transition from Confucian to Maoist, and the comparison between Mao Era and Deng Era, the spiritual world of traditional Chinese society, and introduction to some major religions in Reform-Era China. These topics concern the most significant ones in the general sociology of China, thus serving to familiarize students, both domestic and international ones, with the present cultural, political, economic, and societal states of China.

The second component involves lectures focusing on Shanghai. By all measures, Shanghai is a unique place in China and to better understand Chinese society, especially the potential future development path, it is always necessary to learn more
about this metropolis. In this part, lectures will introduce the native Shanghainese culture, the formation and features of Shanghainese identity, and anecdotes pertaining to the history of Shanghai, to name a few. To be sure, these topics cannot exhaustively cover every aspect of this big city, but could set the stage for deeper explorations and investigations.

Course Evaluation

- **Attendance and class participation—10%**
  
  Attendance to lectures and fieldtrips is required for all students. Please inform the TA in advance if you want to ask for a leave due to eligible excuses.

- **Yuhai’s assignments: (1) a 1500-word essay titled “Shanghai Impression”—20%**. Based your own observation, critical thinking and reflection in the field work in Shanghai. Empirical experiences are highly valued throughout the course. By fieldwork as well as observation, students will see the city through your own eyes. The reflection over first hand empirical experiences will be included in the paper. (2) **Pictures during your stay in Shanghai—20%**. You may take a lot pictures during your stay in Shanghai, please pick 10 of them and tell us what the most impressive things in Shanghai are. Write at least 50 words of explication below each picture.

  Instruction: You can choose any scenes, any people or any aspects of the city life. But you will have to tell us 1. Why you choose these pictures. 2. (If you are a foreign student) What kind of difference or common point between Shanghai and your city you’ve got from the picture? 3. (If you are a Chinese student) What aspect of the city life does this picture remind you? 4. Any pictures you provide as
the assignment must be taken by yourself. The pictures from other resources would be taken as plagiarism ones.

- **Hu Anning’s assignment: a 2000-word essay-50%.** Each student must choose one subject about Chinese religions and write an essay of about 2,000 words. This paper does not have to follow the structure of a formal academic article. Students can choose a topic such as explaining a terminology in Chinese religions, describing a particular Chinese religious phenomenon, addressing an international comparison of religions between China and other civilizations, etc. You may choose one of the reflection questions listed below, but it is not required. The due time of this assignment is listed in the time table.

- **Hard copies are required for all three assignments.**

**Reading materials**

You can download some reading materials at:

1. email account: luckylaoyao@126.com  **Password**: ssdpp2016
2. http://pan.baidu.com/s/1pKrSVjH  **Password**: ipvy

Some other reading materials can be accessible via the library serve. Call numbers are provided.

**Teaching Schedule**

*Lecture 1 by Yu Hai: Course orientation and theme lecture: From Confucian China to Maoist China.*

**Reading List**


Reflection Questions

Confucian China or Maoist China, which period has more influence on the temporary China?

Do you think Confucianism still have appeal to ordinary Chinese? How do Confucianism influence on China?

Lecture 2 by Yu Hai: Globalizing Shanghai (Field Study).

Reading List

Tingwei Zhang: Striving To Be A global City From Below: The Restructuring of Shanghai’s urban Districts. From Xiangming Chen, Shanghai Rising, 2009


Reflection Questions

*How do you think about the strategy of Globalizing Shanghai as a national strategy?*

*Is it necessary to preserve the tradition of a city? What is the feasible way to preserve the tradition of a city?*

**Lecture 3 by Hu Anning: Understanding Shanghainese Culture.**

**Reading List**


Reflection Questions

*What do you think about the gentrification in Shanghai? Do you think gentrification is a global trend (e.g. the gentrification of the capital cities in your country)?*
Nostalgia can be witnessed in many parts of China. Did you notice similar nostalgia in your country? What are the concrete activities?

Lecture 4 by Hu Anning: Understanding Shanghainese.

Reading List


Yu, Hai. The Production of Space and the Distribution of Right-of-way.

Reflection Questions

Do you think identifying with hometown city or metropolis common in your society?

The stereotype of Shanghainese might not stand for the individual cases, what do you think about the characteristics of Shanghainese based on your personal life?

Lecture 5 by Hu Anning: Guanxi and Confucianism.

Reading List


**Reflection Questions**

*Do you have a counterpart of Chinese guanxi in your country?*

*What are the similarities and differences between Chinese guanxi and the Western counterpart?*

*What are the positive and negative social functions of guanxi in your mind?*

*Confucianism appears to be more and more popular in Western societies, do you think so? If yes, why?*

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**Lecture 6 by Yu Hai: Modern China: From Zedong Mao to Xiaoping**

**Deng.**

**Reading List**


Reflection Questions

_How to evaluate the contributions of the two leaders toward the development of China?_

_How to evaluate the relationship between China and the outer world in The Post-Mao China?_
Lecture 7 by Hu Anning: The Spiritual World of Traditional Chinese.

Reading List


Reflection Questions

How do you understand the meaning of soul in Chinese culture?

What are the differences and similarities between the Western understanding and the Oriental understanding of religion?

Do you think it possible for a religious follower to study religion in a neutral way? Why?

How do you understand the theory of Yin and Yang and the theory of the five elements?

Lecture 8 by Hu Anning: Native Religions I.

Reading List

[Library Call No.: B928.2 /R382R]


[Library Call No.: B928.2 /O96 /E]


[http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=3&sid=a77a78b9-569e-4944-a976-595c05a8abec%40sessionmgr4003&hid=4104&bdata=Jmxhbmc9emgtY24m c2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl#db=aph&AN=87441559]

Reflection Questions

What are the positive effects of Taoist practices in the modern world?

Is Taoist practices popular in your home country/hometown? What are the reasons for its popularity / non-popularity in your opinion?

Is traditional Chinese medicine popular in your home country/hometown?

What are the reasons for its popularity / non-popularity in your opinion?

If you have some experience of Chinese Taoism, please describe it.

Why is Daoism not as popular as before in China?

Lecture 9 by Hu Anning: Native Religions II.

Reading List


Reflection Questions

*How would you comment on the commercialization of Chinese Buddhism?*

*Is Buddhism popular in your home country/hometown? Why?*

*If you have some experience of Chinese Buddhism, please describe it.*

*In your opinion, what role Buddhism might play in China?*

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**Lecture 10 by Hu Anning: Christianity in China.**

**Reading List**


**Reflection Questions**

*What are the social functions of religion in your society?*

*What are the similarities and differences between Chinese folk religion and commonly practiced Tarot, Fortune-telling using a crystal ball, and horoscope?*