

## CHIN4006 Syllabus

### Sino-Americans Interactions – an Intercultural Perspective

#### Course Description

Through a survey of the Sino-U.S. journey shared, this course examines how and why Chinese and Americans often misunderstand or misinterpret each other in their verbal and nonverbal communication and interactions. We seek to identify the distinctive patterns of thought and action that account for the particular configurations of Chinese and American cultures. The goal is to foster students' understanding of the importance of cultural factors of one's own as well as others in shaping people's lives, businesses, society, policies and politics. The course is taught in Mandarin Chinese.

#### Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to

- 1 identify significant cultural differences between Americans and Chinese, focusing on the 13 intercultural communication elements – intercultural communication theory in general;
- 2 articulate how stereotyped views of Chinese and Americans affect their daily life, Sino-American business transactions, and the broader Sino-American relationship, such as telling the truth versus being polite; straightforwardness versus being rude; individual freedom versus anarchism; ego-centrism versus empathy; modesty versus hypocrisy; nationalism versus xenophobia; democracy versus central governance, etc.;
- 3 explain from various angles how cultural perceptions play out and how conflicts – distrust, frustration, anger, hostility, even war – become apparent in the course throughout the history of the “love-hate relationship” between China and the United States,;
- 4 analyze some of the numerous examples of misunderstanding or misinterpretation due to the cultural differences in everyday encounters between Chinese and Americans based upon students' personal experience.

#### Course Materials

In addition to the text *A Journey Shared*, there will be chapters from books *Dynamics of Intercultural Communication*, *Turning Bricks into Jade (Pao Zhuan Yin Yu)*—*Critical Incidents for Mutual Understanding among Chinese and Americans*, and articles from American and Chinese media. Video materials will be shown either in or outside Class. Extensive visual materials will be used to explore Sino/American institutions, values, and traditions. These will include the award-winning documentary *Misunderstanding China*; and *Nixon's China Game*, *Feng Shui*, *The Enduring Heritage*, *The Manchu Rule*, and *The Chinese Revolution*, episodes from *In Search of China*; and selection of movies such as *55 Days at Peking*, *A Great Wall*, *Good Earth*, etc.

## **Course Activities**

In addition to readings, viewing media materials, students will also conduct research via internet. The format will include 1) lectures to provide background information; 2) discussions based on readings and visual materials; 3) written assignments and class presentation; and 4) pop quizzes and final project. Students are expected to conduct research and deliver “mini-presentations” on topics covered in the course as well as participate actively in classroom discussions.

Students are expected to abide GT Honor Code.

## **Course Policies**

**Excused Absences:** Proof in writing is required. If a student is ill, he/she will bring a doctor's note. Doctors' offices typically have a standard form they provide for patients. Asking for a note may seem burdensome but this is the only way to be fair to all students.

**Late Submission of Assignments:** Late submission of assignment is discouraged since the due date is conducive to your learning of the course subject and to the class discussions. If a student turns in an assignment late, 10% will be taken off the score for each calendar day that the assignment is late.

## **Course Evaluation**

Attendance & Discussion Participation	20%	
Quizzes (3)	15%	
Assignment (3)	30%	
Final Project (Written & presentation)	35%	(Written 20%; presentation 15%)
Total	100	

Final grade will be computed as follows:

**A** -- 91-100 points; **B** -- 76-90 points; **C** -- 60-75 points; **D** -- 45-59 points; **F** -- Below 45

The evaluation will be drawn from all aspects of the course: readings, media viewings, classroom discussions, and more importantly students own China experience.

**Participation** will be based on the quality and quantity of students' contribution to class discussions. Attendance is required because much of learning in this course will take place in class. If a student misses a class, it is his or her responsibility to get the notes from another class member and to make arrangements to view the missed materials.

### **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #1: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION**

**ML Learning Outcome 1 :**  
Demonstrate oral and aural

**CHIN 4006:** *Students will demonstrate oral proficiency at the Advanced low ACTFL level*

proficiency in the target language	through readings, classroom discussion, related research, project development and presentations
<b>ML Learning Outcome 2:</b> Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the target language	<b>CHIN 4006:</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to present their final project in a 15 minute format with minimal notes
<b>ML Learning Outcome 3:</b> Demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language	<b>CHIN 4006:</b> Students will produce a final paper project at the advanced-Low level on the ACTFL scale
<b>ML Learning Outcome 4:</b> Demonstrate proficiency in comprehension of authentic written texts in the target Language	<b>CHIN 4006:</b> Students will demonstrate comprehension of authentic written texts, visual materials and web based research of syllabi topics
<b>ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #2: INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE</b>	
<b>ML Learning Outcome 5:</b> Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a <i>specific</i> target-language country or region	<b>CHIN 4006:</b> Students will learn to successfully research and discuss topics related to intercultural communications and Sino-Americans interactions drawn from readings, classroom discussion, and internet research.
<b>ML Learning Outcome 6:</b> Demonstrate the ability to analyze an issue from target-culture perspective(s)	<b>CHIN 4006:</b> Students will display the ability to analyze issues of how cultural perceptions play out and how conflicts – distrust, frustration, anger, hostility, -- become apparent in the course of interactions.
<b>ML Learning Outcome 7:</b> Demonstrate critical reflection on cultural complexity and context	<b>CHIN 4006:</b> Students will display the ability to analyze examples of misunderstanding of misinterpretation due to the cultural differences in everyday encounters between Chinese and Americans based upon students' personal experience, as well as throughout the history of the Sino-U.S. relations.

## Course Outline

### **Unit I Seeing the Stage**

#### **1 Why must we understand, and why understanding is so difficult**

Discussion: As the world gets smaller, the ability to interact with people from different cultures becomes a must; yet, the reality leaves much to be desired. Examination of opportunities missed in Sino-U.S relations due to the lack of

cultural and historical awareness; what lessons have we learned throughout the history of the Sino-American “love-hate relationship”.

## **2 A Bird’s-eye view of China & the U.S**

Discussion: What do you know about China and Chinese -- a survey of Sino-U.S history, geography, population; student reports to class of independent research. Seeing the stage for future discussion.

Assignment 1

## **3 Essentials of intercultural communication**

Discussion: Cultural history and geography, cultural personality, material culture, role relationships, non-verbal communication behavior, etc., all play important roles in understanding a culture. The “guanxi” and “middle-way”, concepts and how they work as social lubricants in Chinese society. Students are asked to identify significant cultural differences between Americans and Chinese.

1<sup>st</sup> Assignment due, presentation; quiz 1

# **Unit II Sino-U.S. Interactions**

## **4 First encounter -- the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Discussion: U.S. merchants look to China, American missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, early diplomatic contact, Chinese subjects in the United States

## **5 From the U.S. Open Door to the Chinese civil war**

Discussion: Religious and educational contacts, America’s learning about China, the Chinese in America, diplomacy and trade from the Open Door Policy to 1937

## **6 Military and wartime relations**

Discussion: Allies during the World War II; and how Chinese still remember and appreciate Generals Stilwell and Chennault nowadays.

Assignment 2

## **7 20<sup>th</sup> century relations**

Discussion: Korean War and Cold War. Lack of basic cultural understanding and appreciation can cause conflicts and disagreements. How cultural perceptions play out and how conflicts – distrust, frustration, anger, hostility, even war – come into play in the course of interactions.

## **8 Sino-US relations since Nixon and image changes over the recent years**

Discussion: Nixon’s China game and how Chinese and American people reacted. What has changed in Chinese perception of the United States and Americans, and vice versa. Ways of avoiding hostility between or among nations and peoples regardless of their differences.

2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment due, presentation; quiz 2

# **Unit III Developing Intercultural Communication Skills**

- 9 **Developing interpersonal and small-group communication skills**  
Discussion: Interpersonal level. Issues such as frankness versus courtesy; straightforwardness versus rudeness; individual freedom versus anarchism; ego-centrism versus empathy; modesty versus hypocrisy; nationalism versus xenophobia; democracy versus autocracy, etc.
- 10 **Free association -- Students' personal observations**  
Discussion topics: Everyday encounters between Chinese and Americans based upon students' experience. Mutually stereotyped views that affect daily life & business transactions. Personal experience of stereotypes Chinese hold about Americans and vice versa.  
Assignment 3
- 11 **Developing intercultural communication skills**  
Discussion: Simulation of case studies to enhance students' abilities and skills through role-playing: dos and don'ts. Is culture relatively stable or is it constantly changing? Mini class presentations cultivate the use of some frequently encountered cultural elements in interpersonal and small group communication skills such as manual gestures, body language, and eye-contact.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Assignment due, presentation; quiz 3
- 12 **Sino-US relations today and in the future**  
Discussion: Both China and the United States enjoy and value each other's friendship. Do you see the two as competitors or collaborators? Why? What are the problems and what are the hopes?  
Final project discussion
- 13 **Course project:** Examination of opportunities missed in Sino-U.S relations due to the lack of cultural and historical awareness; what lessons have we learned throughout the history of the Sino-American "love-hate relationship"? As an educated citizen in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what can you do to fulfill your personal, national, and global obligations?  
Final project topic due
- 14 **Research and project development; in class questions and answers**
- 15 **Class presentation/debate; final project due**