

**University of International Business and Economics**  
**Chinese Business & Cultural Studies Program**

**China's Culture and Society from Cross-cultural Perspectives**

*Spring Semester*

*Class location: Guoji Xueyuan 102*

*Class meeting time: Thursday 16:15-18:45*

**Instructor:** *Xingsong Shi*

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**Course Description**

This course intends to provide an introduction to Chinese culture and society from cross-cultural perspectives. The approach is interdisciplinary and comparative, leading students to explore central ideas in Chinese philosophy, values, interpersonal relationship, communication patterns, thinking and behavioral norms, as well as other important topics pertaining to Chinese culture. It will equip students with critical understanding that is essential to thinking, analyzing, and talking about Chinese culture in an intelligent, articulate, and informed way. The course will combine theory and practice by leading students to analyze Chinese cultural phenomena in case analyses, group discussions, self-reflections, team projects and presentations.

**Course Objectives**

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- learn essential elements of Chinese ideology and cultural values, as well as their impact on Chinese communication patterns and social behaviors;
- recognize and articulate differences and commonalities in Chinese and western cultural beliefs and value systems;
- identify both challenges and excitement of intercultural communication with Chinese;
- develop basic skills needed to communicate with Chinese appropriately;
- progress from an ethnocentric toward an ethno-relative state of understanding and acceptance of cultural differences;
- apply what you have learned into practices by analyzing Chinese cultural phenomena.

**Required textbook**

Weilin Dou 窦卫霖 (2017) Introduction to Intercultural Communication (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). UIBE press.

## **Course Requirements and Grading Procedure.**

### **Attendance and Participation: (10%)**

Attendance and participation is an essential and required part of this course. If you must miss a class session for circumstances beyond your control, please notify me by e-mail at least four hours prior to class and show me the excuse authorized by the clinic or administration office afterwards. In order for the class to be more productive and interesting, everybody is supposed to contribute to group discussions and involve in impromptu in-class activities.

### **Self-reflection paper and presentation on cross-cultural experience and adaptation in China: (30 %)**

You are supposed to write a cross-cultural self-reflection paper and present in class (each person 10 minutes) on your cross-cultural experience and adaptation in China (Ten-page or so, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 font, A4 paper). In the paper and presentation, you will make self-reflections on the following topics:

1. How do your own socio-cultural beliefs, values, and norms affect your cross-cultural understandings and behaviors in China?
2. What are the major cross-cultural shocks you have experienced in China?
3. The process and current status of your cross-cultural adaptation in China.
4. What went well? What could have been improved? What could you, others, or the school, specifically do to facilitate your cross-cultural adaptation and improve your cross-cultural communicative competence?

The paper should be written in APA format and will be evaluated based on your demonstrated level of insights and quality of writing and presenting.

### **Final Project: (60%)**

During the course you will work with your classmates, together with a group of Chinese students, on a team project. In this project, you are supposed to apply key concepts and theories learned in this class to discussions, reflections and presentations on a Chinese socio-cultural phenomenon. Procedure and tasks of the team project will be:

Phase I: Each team in this class, together with the instructor, discusses and determines a specific research topic.

Phase II: Each team in this class conducts library research (in books, journals, website, etc.) on the topic you chose.

Phase III: Each team contacts their Chinese counterparty and discusses face to face with them about their comments and understandings on your preliminary findings based on library research. Do further qualitative or quantitative research together, if necessary.

Phase IV: Each team, based on their findings, comparative and contrastive analyses, and conclusions, gives a 20-minute presentation that includes a discussion of the cultural components, stories about the investigation of that cultural issue, and conclusions that the group has drawn. Group members will then answer class questions for up to 10 minutes. Your group presentation will be evaluated

based on the quality of the information you present to the class as well as the quality of the presentation itself. Further details will be discussed in class.

Your individual grade for this portion of the course will be based on the points earned by your entire team for each aspect of the project. Those students who achieve the most success in this project are those who accept the nature of group responsibility and who prepare, communicate, and perform effectively in their group work.

### **Grading Scale**

The work of students is evaluated and reported in terms of the following scoring scale:

A=92-100      A<sup>-</sup>=89-91      B<sup>+</sup>= 85-88      B=81-84      B<sup>-</sup>=77-80;  
C<sup>+</sup>= 73-76      C=70-72      C<sup>-</sup>= 60-69      F=failure (below 60)

### **Academic Integrity**

*Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty.*

The University expects students to be honest in their academic work. Academic dishonesty is viewed as a serious violation of university rules and such misconduct is not accepted by academic community. In particular, students must refrain from plagiarism, cheating and collusion in connection with submitting substantially the same piece of work to different classes and must fully acknowledge all the sources of ideas and all assistance received in work submitted to the instructor for evaluation. Violation of the rules of academic honesty may lead to suspension or disqualification of the student from further study at the University.

### **Tentative Schedule**

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Topic</b>                             |
|-------------|--|
| <b>1</b>    | Introduction                             |
| <b>2</b>    | Collectivism in China                    |
| <b>3</b>    | Harmony in China                         |
| <b>4</b>    | Other Cultural Dimensions in China       |
| <b>5</b>    | Other Cultural Dimensions in China       |
| <b>6</b>    | High Context Culture in China            |
| <b>7</b>    | Language and Thought Patterns in China   |
| <b>8</b>    | Cross-cultural adaptation in China       |
| <b>9</b>    | Education in China                       |
| <b>10</b>   | Chinese business etiquette               |
| <b>11</b>   | Negotiation with Chinese                 |
| <b>12</b>   | Marketing and consumer behavior in China |
| <b>13</b>   | TBD                                      |