AS/US350 THE CHINESE METROPOLIS: SHANGHAI IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
IES Abroad Shanghai Syllabus

DESCRIPTION: Shanghai is one of the most powerful cities in China, in East Asia, and in the World. Its global stature is evident from the powerful architecture – a mix of cutting-edge contemporary designs and grand Western-style edifices dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. At the same time, it is distinctly Chinese and yet occupies a unique place with challenges and issues arising from its position as the financial lead in China’s rapid economic development.

Shanghai took shape after China was forced to open itself to the outside world in the second half of the 19th century, amidst the clash between, and interaction of, Oriental and Western cultures. Its history taken into consideration, there is no doubt that Shanghai presents an excellent case study concerning Western influence on Chinese cities in their modernization process and their adaptation and creation of local cultures in the past 160 years.

To researchers, Shanghai may best display the interaction of such elements as geography, economy, humanism and society. As the economic center of China, Shanghai's transition from planned economy to market economy is also worthy of further study. Many people are also impressed with the diversity of cultures that have left their imprints on Shanghai over the past 160 years, such as the Western colonial culture, the revolutionary culture (Shanghai is the founding place of the Communist Party of China), the city's own civic culture and the modern pop culture. Together they have molded the city's culture and made it a natural ground for metropolitan cultural study. The ability to critically assess current and future development mechanisms from a comparative perspective is essential in our increasingly interdependent global world.

This course combines theory with first-hand exposure to and research about Shanghai. The class will address seven different themes that touch on past and especially on contemporary Shanghai from both a local and global perspective. A highlight of the course will be a week-long field trip in the fall term to Taipei and in the spring term to Hong Kong. These two cities rival Shanghai as major economic and financial centers in East Asia, both with strong Chinese cultures and histories of foreign influence. They will allow for challenging and insightful comparisons to Shanghai. (3 credits)

INSTRUCTOR: Yu Hai

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: Guest lectures and seminar discussions, combined with site visits and independent explorations.

ADDITIONAL COSTS: None

LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English, with introduction of relevant Chinese terms

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT: The aim of the course is to provide students with Shanghai discourse and facilitate their personal experience in the city as well as Hong Kong and Taipei. Students will use their own first-hand observations, coupled with broad-based readings in a range of social science areas, to reach their own understanding about Shanghai and the rapid pace of China’s modernization.

Attendance and class participation (20%), 5 short papers (40%), Term Paper (40%). Students choose one of the themes covered in the course and write a 20-page term paper that combines primary and secondary research to compare and contrast some aspect of this theme between Shanghai and either Taipei or Hong Kong.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Describe first-hand understanding of the complexities of the social and cultural fabric of the city through independent observations and explorations
- Discuss Shanghai from a political, economic, and social perspective
- Consider China’s complex development more comprehensively and critically
- Discourse about their personal experiences in the city as well as in Hong Kong and Taipei
- Understand Shanghai through field experience

CONTENT:

Students will explore 7 themes:

1. History of Shanghai: from a cosmopolis to an eldest son of socialist China (1840s -1980s)
2. Renaissance of Shanghai: China’s future global city as a state strategy (1990s -2010)
3. Primary and secondary education systems and policies
4. Contemporary belief and practice
5. Finance and trade
6. Urban planning and urban social space
7. Shanghai: values and life style

PART 1
Lecture: History of Shanghai: From a cosmopolis to an eldest son of socialist China (1840s -1980s)

Required Readings

Recommended Readings

PART 2
Field exploration: Students will break off into small groups, each with an assignment to explore a specific section of Shanghai. Each group will be provided with a packet of background readings highlighting aspects of that section of the city and its particular relationship to Shanghai history in both modern China and Maoist China. Students will each explore their assigned section of the city, closely observing architectural details, patterns of traffic, and other aspects of life.

Assignment due: Write a 3-5 page essay describing specific features of this section of Shanghai and the ways in which it reflects a confluence of foreign and Chinese elements.

PART 3
Lecture: Renaissance of Shanghai: China’s future global city as a state strategy (1990s -2010)

Required Readings
- Shanghai: Remaking China’s Future Global City, in World Cities Beyond the West: Globalization, Development and Inequality, pp. 27-58, 31pages.

Recommended Readings
- Urban Construction for the People, in Shanghai Star, June 9, 2005
- An Environment that Nurtures Patriotism, in Shanghai Star, June 23, 2005
- A Better City Heeds of Its People, in Shanghai Star, June 30, 2005
- Shanghai: Transformation and Modernization under China’s Open Policy, Chapter 11, Pudong: Remaking Shanghai as a World City, pp273-298, 25pages.
PART 4
Lecture: Primary and secondary education systems and policies


PART 5
Site visits: Students will visit primary and secondary schools in Shanghai.

Assignment due: write a 3-5 page paper reflecting on the specific school you observed in regards to the following issues related to public education in Shanghai: What are the goals and priorities of the primary/secondary education provided at this school, compared to the general goals for China and specifically for Shanghai? What is the demographic of the student body of this school and how does it relate to the demographics of the city? Where does this school fit in the spectrum of educational options in the city – “elite” vs. “standard” vs. “special charity” (e.g. migrant workers’ children)? What did you observe being taught and how does that reflect on Shanghai’s process of modernization?

PART 6
Field trip: Taipei or Hong Kong Site visits. Lectures and activities include:
1. Observation of a school
2. City investigations aimed at discerning architectural evidence of foreign influence, as well as elements of urban design and city culture
3. Observations of religious institutions and ceremonies
4. Site visits to stock markets, businesses and other financial institutions
5. Briefings on history and politics
6. Meetings with local university students

PART 7
Contemporary Beliefs and Practices

Assignment due: Final term paper outline due

Required Readings
The Quest for Meaning: Religion in the People's Republic of China
The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics, (28 pages)
Religion in China Today, China Quarterly, Cambridge University Press, 2003 (30 pages)

Recommended Reading

PART 8
Site visits: Students will visit local churches and temples of different religions
Assignment due: Write a 3-5 page paper outlining your observations of religious activity and observance in Shanghai. Ideally, you would have had the opportunity to talk with individuals at the church, temple or shrine you visited, and in that case be sure to include these voices. Question to consider in your paper: What, in your observation, is the role of religion in the lives of the Shanghai people you met and observed?

PART 9
Lecture: Finance and Trade

Assignment due: Final term paper thesis statement due


Recommended Reading Chinese finance, Chapter 6, pp329-381, 52 pages.

PART 10
Site visits: Students will break into subgroups to visit either the Headquarters of the Shanghai Stock Exchange, a Major Chinese Bank or a major Foreign Bank. Guided tour and lecture will introduce students to the mechanisms of the stock exchange, official Chinese monetary policies, and the role of foreign investment in the modern Chinese economy.

Assignment due: Write a 3-5 page paper on an assigned topic related to Chinese trade and finance. Example: On the issues surrounding the valuation of the Chinese Yuan (RenMinBi) compared to the U.S. Dollar. What impact does the value of the Chinese Yuan have on the financial institution you visited and more generally on the pace of economic development in Shanghai?

PART 11
Field Work: Urban Planning and Urban Social Space
Students will break into small groups to observe public places in the city, such as a park, public green, or street space.

Assignment due: Write up a 3-5 page paper based on your observation in your field work. How spatial context shape people’s behavior and social relations, and how do people appropriate place into their own space, namely social space?


Yu Hai: Morning Exercise and Social Space.

PART 12
Dialog with Fudan University students. Students will develop in advance topics for discussion. The goal for this session is to identify from the studies done in the course issues on which students are eager to share and compare their views with their Chinese contemporaries. Topics might include religion, politics, gender relations, career choices, etc.

Assignment due: Final term paper source list

PART 13
Shanghai: Values and Life Style
Required readings

PART 14
Weekend homestay with a Shanghai family. Class discussion: what observations do you have about family life and community in contemporary Shanghai?

Assignment due: Final term paper due

REQUIRED READINGS:
Shanghai Daily

Y.M. Yeung and Sung Yun-wing (editor): Shanghai: Transformation and Modernization under China’s Open Policy

The Shanghai Model in Historical Perspective. The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1996.

“Yu Hai: A City Established From a Sense of Civics,” in Beijing Review, July 19, 200


Weiping Wu and Shadid Yusuf: “Shanghai: Remaking China’s Future Global City,” in Josef Gugler, ed, World Cities Beyond the West: Globalization, Development and Inequality, pp. 27-58.


Tu Weiming, The Quest for Meaning: Religion in the People’s Republic of China, The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics by Peter L. Berger (Editor), (28 pages)


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


Yu Hai: “Urban Construction for the People,” in Shanghai Star, June 9, 2005
Yu Hai: “An Environment that Nurtures Patriotism,” in Shanghai Star, June 23, 2005
Y.M. Yeung and Sung Yun-wing (editor): Shanghai: Transformation and Modernization under China’s Open Policy, Chapter 11


The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1996


SAGE Publication, Cambridge (29 pages)


Yu Hai: Morning Exercise and Social Space.

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

YU HAI is currently a Professor in the Department of Sociology at Fudan University. He completed his undergraduate work in Beijing, at Beijing Normal University. His graduate work was completed at Fudan University in the department of philosophy. His first teaching post was at the East-China College of Law, after which he joined the sociology department at Fudan University.