

RST 262-02
Regional Studies: China
“The Diversity of China”

Dr. Laura M. Luehrmann
Office: 313 Millett Hall
Phone: 775-3197
Laura.Luehrmann@wright.edu



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Tuesday, Thursdays: 10:25-12:05
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays
12:30-2:00
and by appointment

Course Description:

In our increasingly interdependent world, it is becoming more important than ever to understand other cultures and societies. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to aspects of life in the world's most populous state: the People's Republic of China. RST 262 is an introductory survey of Chinese history, politics and contemporary culture. Through the course readings, classroom discussion, videos and activities, students will be able to gain a deeper appreciation of the world's oldest continuous society. This course will also provide adequate preparation for students interested in pursuing additional course work on East Asia.

Texts: We will use two textbooks and an online newspaper for this course:

1. Robert E. Gamer, editor, *Understanding Contemporary China --- 2nd Edition*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers: 2003).
2. Da Chen, *Sounds of the River: A Young Man's University Days in Beijing*, (Perennial: 2002).
3. Students will also be required to follow an English-language Internet newspaper from the PRC, *People's Daily* on-line), located at <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/>

Student Responsibilities:

Attendance, Readings and Participation:

Regular attendance, reading and participation are **essential** for your success in this course. If you must miss a class, it is up to you to receive the lecture notes from another student, and to take upon yourself the responsibility of finding out any changes made in the schedule for class readings, exams, or assignments. Students should complete all readings prior to the class session for which they are assigned.

Students will also be required to participate in the classroom studio for RST 262-02, available on the University's WINGS portal (<http://wings.wright.edu>). After entering your WSU username and password, go to the "Academics" Tab and then find "Academic and Student Services." By clicking on "Access My Courses" you can find each of your WSU courses. Click on "RST 262-02" to open our course studio.

The instructor will post review and reading guides, internet links, handouts and other important material to the WINGS studio. Prior to each exam, virtual office hours will also be available through this service. In order to use WINGS, **students must use their Wright State University e-mail account**. For questions about your WSU account, password, etc., please contact Computing and Telecommunications Services (CATS) at 775-4827.

Exams:

There are two exams in the course: students will be responsible for information from the readings, lectures, and class discussion (including news and current events). Exams will consist of multiple choice, true-false and short answer questions. The final exam will not be cumulative. Please note that the final exam time is set by the university and this date can not be changed. Students need to arrange their travel commitments accordingly.

Make-up Policy:

Make-up exams will be administered only in consultation with the instructor. Acceptable documentation of reasons why the student is unable to take the exam at the regularly scheduled time will be required.

Academic Honesty:

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Please consult the student code of conduct for academic integrity at <http://www.wright.edu/students/judicial/integrity.html>. Violations of academic honesty, including plagiarism or failure to cite sources, will result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the university committee on academic misconduct.

Memoir Response (*Sounds of the River*):

Memoirs are powerful records of individual experiences -- they provide us a unique window on life in different eras and countries. In RST 262, we will use Da Chen's highly acclaimed book, *Sounds of the River* to gauge life in China from a college student's perspective. Reading guides highlighting background information and explanations of terms are available via the WINGS Course Studio.

For this writing assignment, students will use a theme highlighted in Chen's memoir to discuss a particular aspect of life in China as portrayed by this young man. What does reflection on this theme tell you about life in China in the 1980s? From what you have learned in RST 262, how has life changed (or stayed the same) since Chen's university days?

Suggested themes include the following (although a student can suggest other themes for instructor approval):

- * coming of age/identity
- * leaving home (both Yellow Stone and China)
- * family and friendships
- * regional variation: North/South; rural/urban
- * corruption, bureaucracy and "back doors"
- * combining worldviews: foreign + Chinese perspectives
- * pursuing a dream/journey
- * religion (both indigenous and foreign)
- * attitudes toward the Chinese Communist Party

The response should be approximately 5 pages, focusing on what you learned about Chinese history, society, culture or politics. References to specific events and people in the memoir will be required. It is also important to connect your response to topics that we have discussed in class. This review will be due during the last week of classes, and 5 points a day will be deducted for each day that it is late.

Restaurant or Movie Review:

Whether or not we realize it, Chinese culture (both historical and contemporary) surrounds us in many ways. Since the late 1980s, world celebrated directors Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige, along with other lesser-known artists, introduced the world to Chinese themes and styles beyond the propaganda films of the 1950s and 1960s. Additionally, people living in the Dayton area now have more opportunities than ever to sample native Chinese foods, thanks to the proliferation of Chinese and Taiwanese-owned restaurants and groceries in the area.

For this assignment, students will choose to review either a Chinese-made movie or a Chinese-themed restaurant. (Lists of suggestions for both will be distributed in class.) The review should be approximately 5 pages, and should include a summary of the experience, focusing on what you learned about Chinese culture or history as a result. **It is important to connect the object of your review to some of the topics that we have discussed in class.** Please pay close attention to the due date -- 5 points a day will deducted from the grade for each day that it is late.

Participation:

Students will be encouraged to actively participate in this course, especially during classroom discussion time. We will begin each class period with discussion of current events in China. (By the way, attendance is a necessary but insufficient portion of your participation grade: it is hard to participate if you are not in class! ☺) Students with more than 4 unexcused absences will receive a zero for this part of the final grade.

Assistance:

Please do not wait until the end of the quarter to voice concerns about your performance or understanding of the material: if you have any questions about the course material, please let me know! There will be ample time provided during our class meetings for students to ask questions and clarify any points of confusion.

Grading: Final grades for the quarter will be based on the following:

Exam 1:	25%
Memoir Response (<i>Sounds of the River</i>)	20
Exam 2:	30
Restaurant or Movie Review:	15
Participation:	10
Note: all assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.	

Tentative Schedule of Assignments

Week One:

Tues Jan 2: *First day of class* Overview and Introduction

Thurs Jan 4: Gamer Ch 1, "Introduction"; Gamer Ch 2, "Geographic Preface"