

Course Dates: June 20 - July 2, 2011

Instructors:

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Seminar Description:

This is a required online seminar for participants in AAD 488/688 “Public Culture and Heritage: A Beijing Based Field School.” The purpose of this orientation course will be to assist you in preparing for the field school both in terms of logistics and academics.

Our purpose is to orient you to:

China's cultural heritage and the ways in which this heritage is being preserved, sustained, and interpreted as facilitated by national and regional planning efforts overseen by government entities

A folkloristic method for cultural research and interpretation.

The use of multimedia techniques for both documentary and interpretive purposes.

ChinaVine.org's mission and orientation to interpretation.

Shared Responsibilities in a Learning Community:

All members of a learning community (i.e. our seminar) willingly share the responsibilities of gathering, synthesizing and building meaning. As your instructors we are responsible for giving you as much control as possible over your own learning experience within the boundaries of the course purpose and expected outcomes, clarifying expectations and helping you establish quality criteria for your work, and helping you achieve success in this course, demonstrating the value of this course, helping you access quality resources and clarifying concepts, guiding you in the completion of tasks to demonstrate your achievement.

At the same time, we expect you to take responsibility for your own learning by openly sharing your work and asking for feedback, relating concepts and skills to your real world experiences, gathering and synthesizing information from a variety of sources, making us aware of your individual learning needs.

Method of Instruction:

Our method for teaching this online seminar is to encourage the understanding and appreciation of course content by facilitating critical thinking and written/verbal dialogue. Emphasis is placed on thought rather than memorization. Our intent is to encourage the following:

Critical understanding of a topic and the controversies associated with it.

Generation of multiple responses and perspectives on issues of common concern.

Consideration of taken-for-granted assumptions in new ways.

Concentration on discovery.

A desire to know more.

Provocative and well argued discussion.

Seminar Requirements:

1. Review all assigned media and readings

2. Assignments:

A. China Today

In *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*, the author Jeffery Wasserstrom provides an insightful and far-reaching discussion of contemporary China and the histories behind it. Read this book and post two questions to the course site that help to contextualize the ways we might start thinking about Chinese culture, heritage, and tradition.

B. Orientation to ChinaVine.org

Participants in this fieldschool will be preparing materials for posting on ChinaVine.org. For this reason it is important for you to have an understanding of this website and the approaches used on the website for interpreting China's cultural heritage.

Please spend some time on ChinaVine.org and familiarize yourself with the materials that are posted.

Next read "Re-configuring Museums" by Peter H. Welsh. In this article he presents a model for understanding how museums position themselves in relationship to audiences, collections, and interpretation. While ChinaVine.org is not a museum, it does collect cultural materials for the purpose of interpreting those materials for children, youth, and adults.

After reviewing ChinaVine.org and reading the article by Welsh, respond to the following questions. Post your answers to the course site.

1. Welsh describes the domains of museums as materiality, engagement and representation. In your opinion are these domains applicable to ChinaVine.org? If yes, please provide examples from the website for each domain. If no, please support this response through references to the article and the website.

2. Welsh describes museums as repositories, educational, celebratory, stewards, learning centers, collaborative, conceptual, and reflexive. Describe how ChinaVine falls into each of these categories. Use at least one example for each supporting your opinion. If you believe that ChinaVine.org is not addressing one of these categories describe how it could do so.

C. Orientation to Conceptions of Culture

Each of the readings below in some ways addresses culture and conceptions of culture as influenced by formal and informal networks, organizations and institutions. As such, our experience in China can be informed by the points of view of these authors.

For each of these articles write two questions that you will keep in mind during the residency portion of the field school (i.e. when we are in Beijing). **Undergraduate students should choose 1 (one) of the articles to read, while graduate students will read all 3 (three) of the articles.**

Post your questions to the course site.

Readings for assignment C:

Baron, R. (2010). Sins of objectification? Agency, mediation, and community cultural self-determination in public folklore and cultural tourism programming. *Journal of American Folklore* 123 (487), 63-91.

Hufford, M. (1995). Context. *Journal of American Folklore* 108 (430), 528-549.

Pocius, G. L. (1995). Art. *Journal of American Folklore* 108 (430), 413-431.

D. Orientation to Field Work

While we are in Beijing we will be studying "local culture." In Gaobodien and Song Zhuang we will be studying and documenting local culture as it manifests in language, the arts, food, behaviors, beliefs, institutions, and interpersonal communication.

This assignment will prepare you for our work in China by asking you to reflect upon your own cultural setting. Because much of our work in China will pair oral narratives with images, parts 1 & 2 ask you to consider how you and your family represents yourselves in oral stories and photographs. Part 3 asks you to consider food within your family.

Post your response to this assignment on the course site.

Part 1. (500 words)

Please describe:

How does your family remember people, places, and events?

What are some of the objects in your home that have stories connected to them?

Does your family use photos to remember?

What is the oldest photo your family has?

Who takes pictures in your family?

Who takes care of the photos?

Where are the photos kept?

When does your family look at photos?

Part 2. (500 words)

Post a photo or video to the course site.

Talk with a family member about this photograph or video.

What stories are represented by the photo or video?

How does this photo or video represent the values, attitudes and beliefs of your family?

What symbols appear in the photograph or video that represent your family's culture.

Part 3. (500 words)

Food is another way that a family's culture is represented.

What distinctive foods did your parents, grandparents, great-greats eat?

Post a favorite family recipe and write about why you chose it.

Write a detailed account of what happens in your kitchen while food is being prepared.

What makes a good meal? How should it be served? Who should be there? Who cooks, sets the table, serves, entertains, does dishes?

Required Media

88MOCCA: Museum of Contemporary Chinese Art on the Web: <http://www.88-mocca.org/#/hom>

Art Speak China. <http://www.artspeakchina.org/>

Baron, R. (2010). Sins of objectification? Agency, mediation, and community cultural self-determination in public folklore and cultural tourism programming. *Journal of American Folklore* 123 (487), 63-91.

The China Beat. <http://thechinabeat.blogspot.com/>

China Digital Times. <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/>

Folklife and fieldwork: A layman's introduction to field techniques. <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fieldwork/>

Hufford, M. (1995). Context. *Journal of American Folklore* 108 (430), 528-549.

Pocius, G. L. (1995). Art. *Journal of American Folklore* 108 (430), 413-431.

Wasserstrom, J. (2010). *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*.

Welsh, P. H. (2005). Re-configuring museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. 20, 103-130.

Seminar Conduct:

Material presented in this course can be controversial and involve contentious discussion. A variety of opinions and ideas are encouraged and appreciated.

Participation in this seminar assumes that:

The dignity and essential worth of all participants is respected

The privacy, property, and freedom of participants will be respected

Bigotry, discrimination, or intimidation will not be tolerated

Personal and academic integrity is expected.

Documented Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make an appointment with me during the first week of the term. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities sends a letter verifying your disability. The current counselor is Molly Sirois at 346-1073.