

**J-term in Shanghai: History, Culture and Art  
January 7-24 2008**

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**Course Description**

This course introduces modern Chinese history through Shanghai's important role as a sea port in the 19th century, as a city occupied by Western and Japanese forces in the 20th century, as the seat of the first Chinese Communist party, and as a contemporary art and business center. We will begin our discussion in Chicago during the first week of J-Term, and then depart for Shanghai. We will visit temples, tea-houses, Art Deco buildings and modern skyscrapers; talk to gallery curators, visit Modern Art Museums and schools, as well as enjoy performances by cutting-edge musicians and dancers.

**Learning Objectives**

The students will receive rich and in depth first hand experience of modern Chinese history, culture and art and have a full immersion into Chinese life, language and traditions. The students will also learn about modern and contemporary arts and media. The students will acquire important critical skills by pairing written works on Chinese contemporary art with the exposure to works by contemporary artists, galleries where they are shown, and scholars who write about those works. By producing an academic written account of these interactions, they will learn to move easily from one to the other. Also, by producing a different, unique account of their experience through photography, video, painting or any other creative medium, the students will be able to elaborate as well as show the impact this trip has had on their artistic process.

**Liberal Arts and Sciences credit:**

This course bears LAS Core Credits in Humanities. By taking this course you will complete three of the 48 semester hours of General Education credits required for graduation from Columbia College. In addition, the course will assist you in achieving one of the fifteen outcomes that are the basis of the General Education program. The specific outcome to be realized through completion of the course is "becoming familiar with the rich cultural heritage of the human race evident in the arts, music, philosophy, religion and foreign languages."

**Prerequisites**

One of the following courses: Eastern Humanities, Asian History, Modern Asian History Eastern Philosophy **or** other relevant courses and/or experiences at teacher's discretion. Also, successful completion of letter of intent demonstrating interest.

**Readings**

See bibliography and reading packet information at the end of the syllabus.

**Requirements and Assignments**

-30 % Attendance of and active participation in ALL activities and lectures in Chicago and Shanghai

-40 % Academic journal. This journal will contain:

- a. three two-page reports selected readings
- b. notes on the rest of the readings
- c. 1 page responses to ALL the daily events in Shanghai
- d. Articulation of 5 questions spurred by your readings
- e. Responses to 3 questions generated by the teachers

It is due on January 24<sup>th</sup>.

-10% Blog entries

-20 % final visual project. A one page artistic proposal will be due on January 19<sup>th</sup> together with the academic journal. The final project is due sometime by mid-term of the spring quarter.

## **Chicago: Introduction**

### **Monday January 7th**

**Morning:** 9-11 Lecture on Chinese culture and Shanghai History.

**Afternoon:** 11.30-1.30 Visit to the Chinese Art galleries at the Art Institute of Chicago led by a curator

**Evening:** Film presentation.

**Responses to reading as well as your own 5 questions due.**

### **Tuesday January 8th**

**Morning:** 9-11 Lecture by Natasha Egan on Chinese contemporary art and Shanghai artists.

**Afternoon:** 12-2 Visit to the Walsh Gallery, an Asian Contemporary Art Gallery in the West Loop. Chat with curator Julie Walsh.

## **Shanghai- History and Architecture**

*Visiting Shanghai is a great way to introduce a discussion of the last 100 years of Chinese history, and of China's relation to foreign powers. As the main Chinese port, at the end of the nineteenth century it was divided into several "concessions" where different European powers were free to rule. It was one of the main think tanks for the formation of the Communist future party leaders in the 1920s, it was the site of a fierce Japanese occupation in the 1930s and 40s. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it has been the epitome of "Communist with Chinese characteristics", which today means Capitalism. Shanghai combines tradition and innovation, business and art. Its architecture features turn of the century art deco buildings side by side with stunning turn-of-the-millennium sky-scrappers and thousands of cranes. We will be*

visiting the French and the British Concessions, where, at the beginning of the twentieth century, architects from all over the world flocked there to get commissions to build innovative architecture, making Shanghai an experimental ground for world art deco: it is the only city in the world that has examples of art deco architecture from France, Germany, England, Italy, Spain, Russia and America side by side. We will also visit brand new constructions, as well as sites of religious valence and sites that portray evidence of local customs.

**Wednesday January 9<sup>th</sup>:**

**Morning** departure from Chicago.

**Thursday January 10<sup>th</sup>:**

**Afternoon** arrival in Shanghai.

**Dinner** together.

**Friday January 11<sup>th</sup>:**

**Morning** Architecture tour of the city.

**Lunch:** Eat *shengjian* dumplings, a Shanghainese specialty

Presentation at the studio of World Expo Architect.

**Dinner** together

**Reading to review** *In Search of Old Shanghai*

**Saturday January 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Morning** Rising early to witness exercises in the park  
Visit to the City Temple

**Lunch** at Local Restaurant

**Afternoon** Yu Gardens and a stop at the traditional tea house

**Dinner** together

**Sunday January 13<sup>th</sup>**

**Morning** Visit to Jade Buddha Temple, one of the few still active Buddhist temples in Shanghai.

**Afternoon free**

**Dinner Free**

### **The Contemporary Scene: Artists and Galleries**

*We will be partnering with the artist organization Bizart. Bizart was one of the first organizations to appear in the contemporary art scene in Shanghai, and therefore it is an ideal organization to introduce our students to Shanghai's art world. Since the beginning, BizArt has combined a business, service side and a non-for-profit artistic side. This unique set-up has allowed BizArt to be extremely wide-ranging and experimental in their support of young and up and coming artists. Furthermore, BizArt has always put much effort in promoting new media artists, artists who work with less traditional artistic tools, such as video, installations, performances, music, dance. The Bizart studio is located in Moganshan street, an artist community on the Suzhou river in the northern part of Shanghai. It is housed in renovated British built factory buildings with plenty of raw space and light. There they have offices, gallery and performance spaces, as well as a video library. Besides BizArt, all essential art galleries and artistic enterprises in Shanghai, such as Shangart, Eastlink, Art Scene China as well as many private artists' studios and art businesses have spaces here. We will have access to all those spaces. While in Mogan shan street, we will be able to experience art production at different levels: we will tour all the artistic spaces and galleries, meet the artists and curators on a more informal basis, and experience the current exhibits and/or performances. We will also be able to see first hand how an art-organization is run, how an exhibition is set up, meet artists from the artist in residence program that BizArt has organized together with the British Council, as well as international and Chinese visiting artists, who come regularly to the BizArt space.*

### **Monday January 14th**

**Morning 9-10** Davide Quadrio gives us an introduction to Bizart, discusses Bizart's role as a non-profit organization in the art world, and the challenges and rewards of promoting Chinese artists in China and abroad. Discussion of the organization of an exhibition from the selection of the project to its realization and presentation of offsite projects curated by Chinese artists.

**10-12** Viewing of Bizart's extensive multimedia library with recordings of past events with a presentation by a staff member.

**Lunch** together

**Afternoon** Visit to local art galleries and studios in Moganshan road.

Might include: Gu Wenda studio

Ofoto studio and Luo Yongjin

Painter studio

**Dinner** at local restaurant near Moganshan Road.

**Reading to review:** *Transience : Chinese experimental art at the end of the twentieth century.*

### **Tuesday January 15th**

**10 - 3** A comprehensive tour of M50 with Xhingyu Chen, including visits to established and emerging galleries. Most gallery directors and curators will be on hand to answer questions and give information about their artists and activities.

Below is a tentative list of spaces to be visited:

ShanghArt  
Eastlink  
Art Scene Warehouse  
ArtSea Studio & Gallery  
MSG Gallery  
Ofoto Gallery  
Island 6 Art Center

**Dinner** together

**Evening** 7-9 Contemporary dance performance – *TBC*

**Reading to review:** *Parachute.*

### **Wednesday January 16th**

**Morning:**

9-10 Visit to local animal and antique markets  
10-12 Visit the Shanghai Gallery of Art at 3 on the Bund and meet with curator David Chan. Some issues discussed will include the growing local market and the development of a Chinese aesthetic in contemporary art. Other art spaces at the Bund include Studio Rouge and Contrasts Gallery.

**Lunch** at Crystal Jade (Cantonese food) in Xintiandi  
Visit to the Communist Museum on site

**Afternoon**

3-5 Visit to traditional Chinese massage parlor - Fanyu Lu 888 spa

**Dinner** together

**Evening:** Contemporary music venue

**Reading to review :** *Between Past and Future: A Brief History of Contemporary Chinese Photography.*

### **Institutional Art: Universities and museums**

*It is important for our students to experience not just how art is produced, but how it is taught and studied in China, as well as displayed in museums. In order for them to gain access to this information, we will organize meetings with art professors and, more importantly, with their peers, Chinese art and media students from the Film and Media Art Department of Tongji University. The Dean of this Department, Lothar Spree, has organized, with his students and in collaboration with BizArt, the Shanghai section of the internationally renowned German film festival for young film-makers Up and Coming. As part of their course, the students also put together video installations to showcase their works. We will also meet students from the China National Academy of Fine Art in Hangzhou, and Zhang Peili, a professor at the Media department of this institution, who is thought to be the first artist in China to use new media art; they will have a show at Bizart. We will visit the Shanghai Museum of Art and the Shanghai Duolun Museum of Modern Art, two institutions which present Chinese art in historical and contemporary perspectives. The Shanghai Museum of Art was first established in 1952 and it has one of the largest permanent collections of ancient Chinese artifacts, especially bronzes, jades and pottery, as well as an excellent collection of ink-paintings. In 1996, it moved to a new facility, which combines stunning architectural design, large galleries with top-of-the-line display techniques. It is one of the few museums in China that matches the standards of international museums. The Duolun Museum of Modern art is much more recent, but it is the nation's first professional Museum for modern art. It is entirely dedicated to modern art and especially new media art. We will also travel to Suzhou, to visit a newly built Museum designed by renowned architect IM Pei.*

### **Thursday January 17th**

#### **Morning**

9-12 Meeting with students and faculty of the Film and Media Art Department of Tongji University.  
Presentation of own work

**Lunch** together with faculty and students

#### **Afternoon**

3-6 Visit with Monte Singman of Radiance studios for an afternoon session focusing on animation and graphic arts, with a possible demonstration by his animation team.

**Dinner** free

**Reading to review:** *Parachute.*

**Friday January 18th**

**Morning:**

9-1 Visit to Shanghai Museum, which has one of the largest permanent collections of ancient Chinese artifacts, especially bronzes, jades and pottery, as well as an excellent collection of ink-paintings. Meeting with one of the curators.

**Lunch** local Muslim restaurant

Visit to bookstores and art-stores in Fuzhou road

**Afternoon**

-Visit to Zendai Museum

**Dinner** together

**Reading to review:** *Chinese art at the crossroads : between past and future, between East and West*

**Saturday January 19<sup>th</sup> Visit to Suzhou**

**Morning**

Departure to Suzhou

Visit to famous Chinese Gardens

**Afternoon** Visit to Silk Factory

**Sunday January 20th**

**Morning**

Tour with local expert Dvir on Jewish Shanghai.

**Afternoon** Free

**Dinner** Final party

**Monday January 21th**

**Morning**

9-11 Assessment of what has been learned. Discussion of personal projects.

**Afternoon** packing and departure; Arrival in Chicago in the evening

**Thursday January 24th**

**9-1:** 15 minutes presentations by students.

**Academic journals due.**

**Final project proposals due.**

## Readings

For general background on China:

*China: Empire and Civilization* ed. By Edward Shaughnessy, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000

--If you already taken Eastern Humanities, Asian History, or Modern Asia at CCC you've likely already read this book. There is a copy in the CCC library or you can purchase online.

For insight about the Cultural Revolution focused in Shanghai:

*Life and Death in Shanghai*, Nien Cheng, 547 pp. New York: Grove Press, 1988

An autobiography written by Nien Cheng from exile in the USA, in November 1987. Cheng was arrested in late 1966 after Red Guards looted her home as retaliation for her wealth; she worked as a senior partner for Shell Oil in Shanghai. The book tells the story of Cheng's arrest during the Cultural Revolution's first days and subsequent imprisonment for over six years. During that time, she was pressured to file a false confession that she was a spy for "the imperialists" (meaning the United Kingdom, as Shell Oil is a British company).

## Reading Packet and Writing Assignments

Please read entire packet before traveling and take notes in academic/visual/travel journal for discussions.

**Write a 2 page summary for *In Search of Old Shanghai*, *Shanghai Reflections*, and *Parachute, Shanghai***

**Write a 1 page summary of *Reaching for a Renaissance from the Economist*, *Chinese art at the Crossroads*, *Transience*, and *Money talks Mandarin in Art in America*.**

**Please e-mail summaries to Elena and turn in to Natasha and Liz on the first day of class.**

**Please turn in 5 articulate questions based on the readings the first day of class—you will be responsible for answering three essay questions due the last day of the course that we will provide based on your questions and interests. You will also turn in your journal at the end of the J-term for a grade—it will be returned to you quickly as we know the importance of this journal to you personally.**

# Reading Packet

1. *In Search of Old Shanghai*, Pan Ling, Joint Publishing (HK), 1984  
In packet: all chapters.  
Reading packet pages 3-72
2. *Shanghai Reflection. Architecture, Urbanism, and the Search for an Alternative Modernity*  
Mario Gandelsonas, ed. Princeton University, Hong Kong University, Tongji University,  
(Princeton Architectural Press), 2002  
In packet: Essays by Mario Gandelsonas, Ackbar Abbas, and M. Christine Boyer  
Reading packet pages 73-125
3. *Reaching for a renaissance: A special report on China and its region*, The Economist, March  
31, 2007  
In packet: entire special report  
Reading packet pages 126-141
4. Encyclopedia Britannica Articles “Cultural Revolution”, “Red Guards”, “Great Leap Forward”  
Reading packet pages 142-149
5. *Parachute, Shanghai*, Montreal, no. 114, April-June, 2004.  
In packet: collection of essays by Chantal Pontbriand, Stephen Wright, Ken Lum, Charles  
Merewether, Jing Feng, Ni Jun, Tang Maohong, Song Tao, Yang Zhenzhong, Alice Ming Wai  
Jim, Natalie de Vito, and Ingrid Chu.  
Reading packet pages 150-206
6. *Chinese art at the Crossroads: Between Past and Future, Between East and West*, ed. Wu  
Hung, New Art Media Ltd., Hong Kong, in collaboration with Institute of International Visual  
Arts, London, 2001.  
In packet: introduction and part one entitled The Cultural Revolution Revisited with essays by  
Britta Erickson, Kathleen M. Ryor, Francesca Dal Lago, Bronwyn Mahoney, Martina Koeppel-  
Yang, and Zhu Qi.  
Reading packet pages 207-221
7. *Transience: Chinese experimental art at the end of the twentieth century*, Wu Hung, David  
and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1999  
In packet: introduction.  
Reading packet pages 222-238
8. *A Cultural Revolution*, by Britta Erickson, The Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2007  
Reading packet pages 239-250
9. *China’s Fine Art Book: Discovering why the Country’s Fine-Art Photography Market  
is so Hot*, Kristine Feliciano, PDN, June 2007  
Reading packet pages 251-257

10. Money Talks Mandarin, by Richard Vine, Christopher Phillips and Barbara Pollack  
(Art in America), March, 2007, p. 49-53.  
Reading packet pages 258-263