This is an introductory course on the regional geography of China. Today, China is the largest country in terms of population. Everyday, the country is gaining more economic and international political powers. Therefore, developing a comprehensive understanding and learning about different aspects of this country are important, as this country affects us (U.S. and the world) today, and will affect us more in the future. The primary objective of this course is to provide students background knowledge of China in order to understand the current and future affairs related to China. A specific contribution of this course to such an understanding is to emphasize the roles of geography.

A desirable approach to learn about China is to use geography as the cross-cutting dimension to organize the study as every phenomenon has a geographical dimension. In a traditional regional geography course, the study area is divided up into sub-regions. Within each region, different aspects or topics are studied in detail. The current course will take a slightly different approach. We will combine the traditional regional geography approach with a topical approach. Some of the background topics will be discussed without specific reference to sub-regions within the country. For discussions on other topics, specific regions will be referenced to when necessary.

The course has no subject-specific prerequisite. To achieve the objective and goal, the course will rely on lectures presented by the instructor, in-class discussions, student-led presentations and discussions, and a review of a movie.

**Outcome:** After finishing this course, students will not become an expert in China study, but are expected to have a general knowledge of China to serve as the basis to a better understand of the current issues and development in China today. Therefore, students will be evaluated by how well they can understand and interpret current issues with China.


**References:**

Grading Policy

Chapter summary: 30
“Taste of Chinese”: 10
Class participation: 25
Video Review: 20
Mid-term: 15
Final: 20 (Take home)

- Chapter summary and presentation:
  Purpose: active learning
  Each student selects a chapter in the book (from chapter 3-9). After reviewing the chapter, the student prepares an approximately 30-60 minutes presentation/lecture, and lead the discussion of that chapter in class.

- “Taste of Chinese”
  Purpose: learn about relationship between geography/environment and food.
  Have a meal in a Chinese restaurant. Identify what region of Chinese gourmet the restaurant mainly serves. If it is not specialized on dishes of a particular region, order dishes that clearly have some regional flavor. Ask the server for dish information, special taste and why. Try to understand how dishes are related to the particular regional environment. Take a few pictures of the dishes and maybe the menus. You may also research further about that particular regional food. Prepare a 10-min presentation to report to the class.

- Video Review
  Purpose: active learning, learning several aspects of China from a documentary of a bike trip from Beijing to Shanghai by several American.
  Watch the video “Man Zou” (in-class and on your own) and write up a review of 4-5 pages (double-spacing). In your review, try to relate what you have learnt about China in class to what the movie shows.

Distribution of the total final scores will be used to determine the final grades. Percentages of students receiving the corresponding grades are approximately: 20-30% (A), 35-50% (B), 20-30% (C), ??? % (D) and (F).

!! All materials submitted to meet the evaluation criteria should be done in accordance with the student Honor Code (University Catalog). Also no “double dipping” of term paper/project is allowed unless permission is secured from all relevant parties.

Incomplete will be handled strictly according to the University policy. Make-up exams are not given unless under unusual circumstances such as serious illness. Proof (documentation) is necessary to be eligible for make-up exams. No early exams will be given. ? Final exam: 5/12, 10:30am ?
**Academic Integrity** (from the Provost Office)
Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

No class: March 15 & 17: Spring Break  
April 14: AAG at Seattle  
Last day of class: May 12 (make-up day)

**Outline:**

*Background topics:*

1. Why studying China?  
   Ch. 1*
2. Geography: Subdivisions, Approaches and Regional Geography
3. Data for Contemporary China
4. Geographical Overview of the Chinese Landscape  
   Ch. 2*
5. Chinese History, Politics, and Foreign Relations: An Overview  
   Ch. 3, 4, & 7
6. Important Cultural Traits: Languages, religious  
   Ch. 2*

*Systematic topics:*

7. Population: ethnic mixes and distribution  
   Ch. 8
8. Urban / City Systems  
   Ch. 8 / Instructor’s book chapter
9. Environment and Resources: composition and distribution  
   Ch. 9
10. Economic geography  
   Ch. 5
11. China’s “peripheral” regions  
   Ch. 6 / Instructor’s book chapter

* Not available for student review and presentation