# Chinese language and culture

## Prof. Timon Gatta; Prof. Clara Galzerano

### Module 1: Prof. Timon Gatta

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The aim of this course is to introduce key aspects of modern Chinese language and culture to students **with no prior knowledge of China and the Chinese language**.

In regards to Chinese culture, China’s current realities will be analyzed in light of the country’s long history and deep-rooted civilization. A particular focus will also be placed on 20th century-China in order to follow the path of the historical evolutions and profound transformations that led the country to the achievement of its current status of a major global power.

At the end of the course, the students will be able to develop logical connections around the events and phenomena studied. In addition, they will develop critical and communicative skills through classroom discussions and presentations. They will be able to discuss topics such as: China’s historical, geographical, demographic, and administrative settings; issues related to Chinese traditional, modern, and contemporary culture; China’s society and social change; China’s economic development; and China’s Party-State system.

In regards to the Chinese language, they will learn elements of its history, evolution, and features as well as the fundamentals of language use (writing, reading, listening, speaking). They will practice daily conversations, covering the following communicative functions:

* How to say hello and goodbye
* Introducing oneself
* Asking someone’s name and surname
* Identifying people and using titles
* Asking someone’s nationality
* Asking polite questions
* Adjectives
* Possessives
* Using numbers
* Talking about dates
* Telling time
* Phone numbers
* Asking prices
* Asking what someone wants
* Asking for permission
* Looking for someone
* Asking for directions
* Expressing thanks
* Refusing politely
* Making comments and suggestions

At the end of the course, the students will be able to write, read, listen, and speak the fundamentals of the Chinese language at the basic level.

***COURSE CONTENT***

* Introduction to China: historical and geographical background; ethnic and linguistic variety.
* China’s traditional culture, philosophical systems, and values, and how they inform the present.
* Modern and contemporary China: cultural, economic, and political dimensions, and key institutions.
* Domestic and foreign policy challenges that China faces today.
* Characteristics of Chinese, Chinese dialects, and the languages of China.
* Chinese phonetic system and writing system.
* Basic Chinese dialogues and daily conversations.

***READING LIST***

K. Brown, *Contemporary China.* Macmillan International Higher Education, 2019 (Third Edition).

Language practice materials will be provided by the teacher.

Multimedia materials will also be used for language instruction.

In preparation for class discussions, attending students will be asked to:

read assigned papers and articles;

watch assigned movies and documentaries;

Additional study materials will be indicated during the teaching period.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Theoretical and practical lessons, lectures, and seminars.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Final oral exam for all, divided into two parts: one covering culture-related content and consisting in 2-3 questions; and one testing language and Chinese-English translation, and viceversa, through reading and speaking exercises.

Further information regarding the assessment methods and criteria will be given by the teacher during the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Attendance is highly recommended. The teacher’s office hours can be agreed upon with the students.

### Module 2: Prof. Clara Galzerano

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

***Course aims***

The aim of this course is to give the students with no prior knowledge of China an overview of the major events and trends in the political, social and economic history of modern and contemporary China. Following the path of the historical evolutions of 19th and 20th century China, it will be analyzed how these developments have shaped today’s China and have influenced literature, art, music and other cultural forms.

***Learning outcomes***

At the end of the course, students should:

* Know the main events, trends and personalities of modern and contemporary Chinese history;
* Know some of the key cultural forms in modern China, and be able to link their development with the political and social changes of the period;
* Have developed the basic skills for analyzing and discussing aspects of modern Chinese history and culture;
* Know a set of keywords regarding Chinese history and culture and be able to explain and situate them in the historical context.

***COURSE CONTENT***

***Program overview***

Introduction to China: historical and geographical background

The Making of Modern China: Qing Empire and the Opium Wars

*Tea, Porcelain, and Silk: Chinese Exports to the West*

The Republic of China: From Sun Yat-sen to Chiang Kai-shek

*Chinese cultural and national identity*

Political and cultural impact of May Fourth Movement: a landmark in Chinese history

*Chinese modern literature and language*

The People's Republic of China: Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution

*The origins and development of Chinese Communism*

Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese economic reforms

*China’s Opening up: Western influence on Chinese culture*

The China Miracle: From Jiang Zemin to Xi Jinping

*Rethinking Chinese cultural and national identity*

China and the World

*From the “Century of Humiliation” to the “New World Order”*

***READING LIST***

***Mandatory readings***

Kerry Brown, *Contemporary China*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 2019 (Third Edition).

***Optional readings***

[Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom](https://www.amazon.it/Jeffrey-N-Wasserstrom/e/B001IQWGPW/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1) (ed.), *The Oxford History of Modern China*, Oxford University Press, 2022.

Further readings will be suggested in class and provided by the teacher. Additional study materials, as documentaries and podcasts, will be indicated during the teaching period.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures with the support of PPT presentations.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Final oral exam for all. The exam will consist in 3 questions (English language). The exam will test:

* the student’s knowledge of the main events and personalities of modern and contemporary Chinese history;
* the student’s ability to contextualize events;
* the student's ability to identify the main factors that have influenced Chinese historical processes;
* the student’s knowledge of keywords and ability to explain their relevance in the context of Chinese history.

Further information regarding the assessment methods and criteria will be given by the teacher during the course.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

No pre-requisites needed.

Attendance is highly recommended: non-attending students are required to agree upon a specific program with the teacher.

***Office Hours***

The teacher’s office hours will be announced at the beginning of the course.