



Beginning Chinese

CHIN 1003-1503 (3 Credits / 45 hours)

SIT Study Abroad Program:
Malaysia and China: International Relations and New Economies

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus represents a recent semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This course is designed to develop student proficiency and communication in the Chinese language. While emphasis is placed primarily upon oral comprehension and conversational skills (i.e., listening and speaking), reading and writing are highlighted as crucial to the reinforcement of those skills. Thus, the course is designed not only to help students acquire speaking and listening skills, but also to grasp cultural practices in Malaysia and China. The *Beginning Chinese* course begins the second week of the program, and continues throughout the semester students are encouraged to apply their language skills in all facets of the program, especially during homestays and excursions, and the Independent Study Project period. Cultural context is built into the course and introduced through experiential activities accompanying the textbook. Beginning Chinese introduces students to pronunciation and writing systems of basic grammar, basic vocabulary and sentence structure. Emphasis is placed on the functional use of the language to enable students to participate in basic conversational exchanges, understand native speakers of Chinese accustomed to dealing with non-native Chinese language speakers, complete written compositions describing daily events or personal experiences, and to read basic texts on familiar topics such as weather, seasons, food, family, studies and friends.

Language Levels and Placement

Non-beginning participants are placed into appropriate language course levels based on oral proficiency interviews and written exams (placement tests) conducted during orientation in Malaysia.

Learning Outcomes

The *Beginning Chinese* course comprises 45 class hours of instruction (3 credits). Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Acquire basic grammatical structures necessary for rudimentary conversation;
- Communicate information about daily functions;
- Ask for directions including how to get around local modes of transports;
- Negotiate simple transactions in the homestay, at the chemist, in the market, etc.;
- Tell some facts about themselves and also to ask for information from others.

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Course Requirements

Methodology

Trained Chinese language instructors, who are native speakers of the language and who use an oral-proficiency based approach, will conduct all language classes. The classes will be taught in small groups. Students will be immersed in a more informal environment for language classes and enjoy more time interacting with community members. Students will also have opportunities throughout the semester to speak with local students from the program's partner university in Malaysia. As much as possible, language instruction will continue during excursions.

Textbook

Li Xiaoqi et al., 2003. *Kuaile Hanyu 1*, Beijing: Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe.

Ma Jianfei, 2010. *Great Wall Chinese 1*. Beijing: Beijing Yuyan Daxue Chubanshe.

This textbooks focus on intensive use of the Chinese language both informal and formal, in and outside the classroom. The textbook is supplemented with audio files with which students practice their speaking and listening skills with a series of exercises.

Daily Class Schedule

Classes are scheduled from 08:30-10:15 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

- Every class will begin with a warming-up exercise and discuss homework of five basic sentences of common expression for daily uses.
- Students will be required to participate in Chinese language lunches with student ambassador language partners one day per week.
- Students are responsible for one short quiz a week on Fridays.
- Students are expected to meet teachers one-on-one for 30 minutes/student every Wednesday to practice their speaking skills and to correct and improve their pronunciations.
- There will be one written mid-term exam. There will be one oral final exam before ISP and one oral exam post-ISP period.

Classes start promptly at 8:30 AM on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

8:30 – 9:15	Warm-up and grammar class
9:15 – 9:30	Tea/Coffee Break
9:30 - 10:15	Drill session for improving speaking skills

Office Hours by appointment

Office hours are by appointments and the teachers may have additional office hours for students who need further support.

Exercises and Assignments

For the most effective ways of learning the Malay language, we carry out many exercises that integrate language and thematic course content by sending the students to the field to enhance and practice the subject they've learned in the classroom. For example: after learning their numbers and colors in the Malay language in the classroom, we send the students to the local market to purchase some cultural items to be brought back to the classroom for a discussion and debriefing.

While staying with the homestay families, we ask the students to conduct informal interviews with the homestay family members in order that the students get familiar with their homestay family members.

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During the excursion, we sing Chinese songs in the bus and play some Chinese games like “I spy with my little eye....,” the students must answer in Chinese language.

The students are also assigned to conduct cultural observations focusing more on social and natural environments in Malaysia. The outcome of the observation, the students must write a short essay based on the topic that interests them most. There will be a discussion in the class about students’ observation in the field so that all students can gain a variety of knowledge from their peers.

Additional Information

Homestay

As a complement to the language classes, homestays provide students with the opportunity to learn from different people and to use their language skills continually in a multilingual learning environment. Our goal is to help students develop the necessary communication tools that they can use with their host families, neighbors and Chinese Malaysians on the street or in other public spaces.

Field Exercises

Once a week, through field assignments, students enrich their classroom learning experience and their ability to function in real life language situations, assimilate everyday life issues and immerse in the host culture. Field assignments are done both individually and in groups.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Instructors evaluate students’ performance based on observation, written exercises, quizzes and exams given throughout the course. Final grades are assigned by the Academic Director in consultation with the language instructors on the basis of the instructors’ evaluation, the students’ own self-evaluation, and the Academic Director’s observation of the students’ participation in classes and their efforts to use the language outside of the classroom.

Methods of Evaluation

Quizzes/Written Homework

Quizzes and daily homework exercises are part of each class. This includes a short essay and five basic sentences checked daily in the classroom.

Written Exam

At the end of the term, students take a written exam based on written work to date.

Oral Exam

SIT Study Abroad–Chinese language instructors are certified Chinese language instructors. The oral exam is given by each teacher for 30 minutes long to assess their communication skills, which include the pronunciation, grammar and the appropriate cultural understanding. The students are also evaluated on their fluency and accuracy in the conversation.

Language Use Outside Class

Students have to be very active and creative in using the language in and out of class. The language instructors observe and keep track of the students’ use of the language in various setting out of class (e.g. during homestays, during long hour car drives, interaction with community members and professional staff at study sites, etc.). These notes are taken into consideration for the final evaluation of the student’s linguistic progress.

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Attendance and Classroom Participation

Regular attendance and active participation in all classes and other language activities is vital to language learning. Participation should be positive, consistent and productive.

<i>Quizzes/Written Homework</i>	25%
<i>Written Exam</i>	20%
<i>Oral Exam</i>	30%
<i>Language Use Outside Class</i>	15%
<i>Attendance and Classroom Participation</i>	10%

Grading Scale

The grading scale for all classes is as follows:

94-100%	A
45-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-
77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Grading Criteria

An “A” grade for an assignment entails superior (not just “very good”) performance in terms of structure and organization of assignments, analysis, logical argumentation and consistency, and the provision of factual, numerical and/or historical evidence. In terms of class participation, an “A” grade refers to full attendance, punctuality, attentive listening and active engagement in lectures, discussions, field trips and other activities. It also means polite and respectful behavior. The level, frequency, and quality of student participation will be monitored and taken into account.

Expectations and Policies

Show up prepared. Be on time, have readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.

Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that the assignments are returned in a timely manner.

Examinations. They are given examinations covering the major content of these lectures, field trips and readings.

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Attendance. All students are required to attend all lectures and to participate in all bi-weekly discussion and analysis sessions. All excursions are mandatory and students must discuss absences with the Academic Director before the planned departure.

Participation. Participation is not the same as attendance. All students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of the course. This means asking pertinent questions to the course's guest lecturers, engaging in discussion and analysis during lectures, group discussions and on excursions. Students are expected to complete the required reading in a timely fashion, and to demonstrate their understanding of texts through reflection, writing, and discussion.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process.

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