

ISP 6010: Cultures, Organizations, and Stories

Section #981

Fall 2002

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Course Description

This interdisciplinary course examines the convergence of cultures, organizations, and stories in the United States and China. It uses literary theory to explore cultures and organizations as stories or narrative enactments. The course analyzes the way people use stories to construct an identity and constitute themselves as members of organizations. Stories are not separate from work, but, in fact, are the vehicle through which work is accomplished.

Stories are the primary way human beings have of organizing experience and making sense of the world. They provide a structure of coherence which allows the random flow of events to be placed in causal, temporal, and spatial order. . One thing follows another, logically. Things make sense. In stories, the world loses its chaotic quality. Sense and order are restored. Stories confer meaning upon raw experience.

In traditional societies, stories transmit culture. Oral societies pass down their beliefs and practices in narratives, stories of who they are, where they are from, where they are going, and how to live and die. Stories embody codes of survival for every aspect of

material and expressive life from building houses to treating pain and celebrating life events. They instruct people how to be a human being in this society.

In organizations, stories function in much the same way. They encode the instructions for survival in the corporate village: how to talk, dress, treat people, and, in general, how to be in the organization—all this knowledge is communicated in stories. Organizations also embed the grand narratives of the nation, like progress and democracy in the United States, what Joseph Campbell and Victor Turner call cultural myths, out of which arise social institutions and conventions of conduct. In China, there are corresponding narratives inside organizations. Grand narratives enact important cultural themes. *Guanxi*, or special interpersonal relationship (that exists outside of formal, bureaucratic structures,) or *mien-tzu* saving face or maintaining dignity in an embarrassing social context, are inflected in both society and organizational practices.

In this course, we will look at American and Chinese organizations and examine their organizational stories. We will identify the stories organizational participants are telling about themselves, their work, suppliers, customers, products, and the competitive market environments they work in. Understanding American and Chinese organizations as cultural entities whose business practices are embedded in narrative will help understand important differences and similarities between the two societies.

An additional opportunity in the course exists for those who choose the China Study Trip component. The last two weeks of the course will be spent in China, offering Wayne State University students the chance to witness first-hand the profound transitions occurring in the oldest continuous civilization in the world.

An educational global adventure crosses the tourist line. Students enrolled in the two-week China Study Trip will not simply be on a tour surrounded by other tourists looking at monuments. Rather they will step into Asian culture and meet the Chinese face-to-face in university and workplace environments. In doing so, they will have a special interdisciplinary and global experience.. During the second week of the Study Tour, students will visit significant cultural sites in the great cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou, including the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Confucius Temple, The Chinese Stock Market, the Old Marketplace, Silk Road Alley, cultural and art museums, tea and silk factories, and other places of fascination. In China, it is a time of new beginnings. The world's largest population, a billion 200 million people, China is moving toward democracy. After decades of isolation and centralized control, China is re-organizing its economic and social systems to participate in the global economy. . It has recently been admitted into the World Trade Organization and China is poised to enter into new alliances with the United States. At the start of 21st century we find ourselves with the opportunity to build bridges over the Pacific between people and cultures. The Study Trip is a step toward that bridge. Join us for an amazing adventure. For those who choose not to participate in the Study Trip, another assignment involving a field study in the metropolitan Detroit area will be made.

Syllabus

Class 1: Sept. 5 Introduction to the course

Cultures, Organizations, and narratives

How to study an organization as a narrative entity

Class 2: Sept. 12 Schwartzman Ethnography in Organizations

Class 3: Sept. 19 Martin Part I: Mapping the Cultural Terrain

The Culture Wars

What is Culture

Theories of Culture

Interests of Neutrality

Class 4: Sept. 26 Martin Part II: Doing Culture Research

Part III: Exploring the Edges of Cultural Theory

Class 5: Oct. 3 Schein, Chap. 1 Defining Organizational Culture

Chap. 2 Why Culture

Chap. 3 Functions of Culture

Chap. 4 Content and levels

Class 6: Oct. 10 Schein Chap. 5 Cultural Assumptions

Chap. 6 Ethical Problems

Chap. 7 Theory

Chap. 8 Observing Culture

Class 7: Oct. 17 Schein Chap. 9 Founders

Chap. 10 Cultural Transmission

Chap. 11 Organizational Change

Chap. 12 Leadership and Culture

Class 8: Oct. 24 Morgan Chap. 2 Organizations as machines

Chap. 3 Organizations as Organisms

Chap. 4 Organizations as Brains

Class 9: Oct. 31 Morgan Chap. 5 Organizations as Cultures

Chap. 6 Organizations as Polit. Systems

Chap. 7 Organizations as Prisons

Class 10: Nov. 7 Morgan Chap. 8 Organizations/Transformation

Chap. 9 Organizations as Domination

Chap. 10: Challenge of Metaphor

Class 11: Nov. 14 Chinese Organizations

American public relations networking encounters China's Guanxi.

China's Big Mac attack.

Starbucks in the Forbidden City.

Kentucky Fried Chicken in China.

Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, and Chinese cinema.

American firms in China: issues in managing operations.

Cultural influences on adaptation to fluid workgroups and teams

Class 12: Nov. 21

The great leap forward.

Chinese entrepreneurship in a cultural and economic perspective.

Constructive conflict in China: cooperative conflict as a bridge between east and west. (

Antecedent factors of international business negotiations in the China context.

The Chinese approach to international business negotiation.

Rhetorical moves in Chinese sales genres, 1949 to the present.

Determinants of managerial performance: a cross-cultural comparison of the perceptions of middle-level managers in four countries.

Class 13: Nov. 26

Bending with the culture.

Women on the move in China's new economy.

The People's Republic opens its doors to people management.

Does culture affect behavior and performance for firms? The case of joint ventures in China.

Internationalizing the family firm: a case study of a Chinese family business.

Managing overseas assignments to build organizational knowledge.

Constructive conflict in China: cooperative conflict as a bridge between east and west.

Organizational behavior: a model for cultural change.

Class 14: Dec. 5

Field Project for US students at home (To be announced)

Field project for US students in China:

All lectures will take place in the Graduate School of Business, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, and conducted by Professor Xiaobo Wu, chair, or one of his associates.

Monday, December 2am. Lecture/seminar; pm. ,Organizational on site visit

Tuesday, December 3am. Lecture/seminar, : pm.Organizational on site visit

Wednesday, December 4am. Lecture/seminar;pm.Organizational on site visit

Thursday, December 5amLecture/Seminar; pm.Organizational on site visit

Friday, December 6amLecture/Seminar; pm.Organizational on site visit

Writing Assignments: Three papers 10 to 15-pages in length on assigned topics.

On-Line Assignment:Each week you are required to write five lines of text on Blackboard's Discussion Board in response to a question.This assignment in conjunction with in class participationconstitutes 10%of your grade.

Grading:Following is the structure for grades.

Paper #130%

Paper #230%

Paper #330%

Participation10%

The Graduate School considers anything less than a 3.0 grade a failure.This means that a B- grade is a failure.

Scholarship Guidelines

- Attendance-Regular and punctual attendance is expected.In accordance with Graduate School Guidelines, missing more than two classes will automatically constitute a drop from the course.

- Plagiarism—All written work evidencing plagiarism will be considered unacceptable and will result in a failing grade.To avoid making errors that result in plagiarism, please review the "Definition of Plagiarism" in the *WSU Graduate Student Handbook*.

- Late/missed assignments—Students are expected to submit all work on time. Late assignments will be reduced one grade for every school day delayed.

Readings:

Books:

Czarniawska, Barbara. *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
Martin, Joanne. *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*. London: Sage, 2002
Morgan, Gareth. *Images of Organization*. London: Sage, 1997.
Schein, Edgar. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. London: Jossey-Bass, 1985.
Schwartzman, Helen. *Ethnography in Organizations*. London: Sage, 1993.

Journal Articles accessed on Blackboard

External Links

Current Location: Chinese Organizations

[American public relations networking encounters China's Guanxi.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0033-3700%28200122%2946%3A2%3C16%3AAPRNEC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[China's Big Mac attack.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0015-7120%28200005%2F06%2979%3A3%3C120%3ACBMA%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[Starbucks in the Forbidden City.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0036-8733%28200107%29285%3A1%3C34%3ASITFC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[Kentucky Fried Chicken in China.](#)

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8248%28200011%2F12%2965%3A2%3C44%3AKFCIC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, and Chinese cinema.](#) (

http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0009-4625%28199924%2F2000%2932%3A2%3C35%3AKFCMAC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[American firms in China: issues in managing operations.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=1525-383X%28200123%299%3A2%3C40%3AAFI CII%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[The great leap forward.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0951-3604%28200104%29141%3C10%3ATGLF%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[Chinese entrepreneurship in a cultural and economic perspective.](#)

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[Constructive conflict in China: cooperative conflict as a bridge between east and west.](#)

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http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0022-5428%28200122%2936%3A2%3C166%3AC1CCCC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT
)

[Antecedent factors of international business negotiations in the China context.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0025-181X%282001%2941%3A2%3C163%3AAFOIBN%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[The Chinese approach to international business negotiation.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0021-9436%28200007%2937%3A3%3C209%3ATCATIB%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT

)
[Rhetorical moves in Chinese sales genres, 1949 to the present.](#)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0021-9436%28200004%2937%3A2%3C156%3ARMICSG%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT

)
[Cultural influences on adaptation to fluid workgroups and teams.](#)

(<http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0047->

2506%282000%2931%3A3%3C489%3ACIO
ATF%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)
[Determinants of managerial performance:
a cross-cultural comparison of the
perceptions of middle-level managers in
four
countries.](http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0047-2506%282000%2931%3A3%3C489%3ACIOATF%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?
sici=0047-

2506%282000%2931%3A1%3C121%3ADO
MPAC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT
)

[Bending with the culture.](http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0002-2543%28200006%2937%3A6%3C82%3ABWTC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0002-
2543%28200006%2937%3A6%3C82%3ABW
TC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[Language, women, and cultural problems
in China](http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=8755-4550%28200121%2924%3A1%3C24%3ALWACPI%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=8755-
4550%28200121%2924%3A1%3C24%3ALW
ACPI%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

[The People's Republic opens its doors to
people management.](http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=1358-6297%282001026%296%3A21%3C16%3ATPROID%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=1358-
6297%282001026%296%3A21%3C16%3AT
PROID%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT
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Does culture affect behavior and performance for firms? The case of joint ventures in China.

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0047-2506%282001%2932%3A1%3C115%3ADCA BAP%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

Internationalizing the family firm: a case study of a Chinese family business.

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Managing overseas assignments to build organizational knowledge.

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Constructive conflict in China: cooperative conflict as a bridge between east and west.

(http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0022-5428%28200122%2936%3A2%3C166%3AC CICC%3E&dbname=WilsonSelectPlus_FT)

Organizational behavior: a model for cultural change.

(<http://firstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP?sici=0019-8471%28200107%2908%2943%3A4%3C6%3A>)

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us_FT\)](#)

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