

China

Language, Cultures, and Ethnic Minorities

Explore China's national language, Mandarin (*Putonghua*), and extraordinary cultural diversity in Yunnan Province with the option to earn up to 10 language credits in Chinese.

Coursework

Please note: This program will have credit distribution and/or other curriculum changes beginning in the fall 2012 semester. Please visit www.sit.edu/CHR for details.

Chinese Culture and Ethnic Minorities Seminar

ASIA 3000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

An interdisciplinary course conducted in English with required readings and relevant educational excursions. Students examine China's cultural complexity and the important social, historical, and cultural factors shaping and sustaining China's minority communities. Lecturers are drawn from institutions such as Yunnan Nationalities University, the Yunnan Arts Institute, the Yunnan Traditional Medicine Hospital, and the Lijiang Dongba Cultural Research Institute.

Seminar topics typically include:

History and Religions

China's entry into the modern era and the development of the People's Republic; political trends in modern China; Chinese foreign policy; China's "open door" policy; influence of religion on Chinese culture; traditional religious systems of Yunnan's minority nationalities; Confucianism; religious heritage of Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity in Chinese society, past and present.

Social Issues and Humanities

Regions, provinces, and autonomous regions of China; environmental systems management; recent economic reforms; the relationship between state and free-market economies; traditional Chinese medicine; *taiji*; social structures of daily life; women in the workplace; calligraphy, painting, and musical traditions; function and heritage of architecture in traditional Chinese cultures; China's reproductive policy; HIV/AIDS prevention in Yunnan; Beijing opera.

Minority Issues

Origins and classification of China's ethnic peoples; government policies regarding minority nationalities; education and assimilation; oral and literary traditions; customs and indigenous spiritual practices; shamanistic heritage of the Naxi; reemergence of Dongba culture; matrilineal systems among the Moso; women's

issues among China's minorities; influences of Bai and Tibetan culture in northwestern Yunnan; representation of China's "peripheral peoples."

Educational Excursions

Students are assigned a one-week Yunnan Exploration project, an empowering experience in negotiating travel to selected areas of Yunnan in small groups. The program also includes a two-week excursion to different minority regions, including the Bai areas of Dali and Shaxi, the Naxi ancient town of Lijiang, the Tibetan areas of northwestern Yunnan, and other seldom-visited communities.

Intensive Language Study: Mandarin

CHIN 1000–3000 / 6 credits / 90 class hours

Emphasis on speaking and comprehension skills, as well as reading and writing, through classroom learning, field instruction, and homework. Based on in-country evaluation, students are placed in a wide variety of language levels in small groups according to individual proficiency levels. Language instructors are certified in teaching Chinese as a foreign language and use a variety of interactive communication-based language teaching techniques. An additional four language credits are available by pursuing further intensive language in lieu of the Independent Study Project. The language course has a very high teacher-to-student ratio.

Field Study Seminar

ANTH 3500 / 2 credits / 30 class hours

A course in the concepts of learning across cultures and from field experience. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Material includes cross-cultural adaptation and skills building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in participant observation and interviewing; gathering, organizing, and communicating data; maintaining a work journal.



Credits 16

Duration Fall/Spring 15 weeks

Program Base Kunming

Language Study Mandarin

Homestay Kunming, 2 weeks

Rural Visit/Homestay Shaxi, 4–5 days

Other Accommodations Hostels, educational institutions, or small hotels

Independent Study Project or *additional intensive language study* 4 weeks

Prerequisites None

Independent Study Project

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours

Conducted in Yunnan Province or in another approved location appropriate to the project.

Sample topic areas: social customs of minority groups; evolution of the free-market system; philosophy and practice of *taiji*; investigation of family and religious practices of the Hui; Naxi Dongba shamanic practices; textiles and handicrafts of the Miao (Hmong); the structure of the extended family in the context of family planning; domestic tourism and its impact on Dali and Lijiang; the role of civil society in environmental management; calligraphy and brushwork. *Students may choose to pursue one month of additional language study for four additional language credits in lieu of the Independent Study Project.*