GEOG 5075–China Field School
Summer, 2017.

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Prerequisites

GEOG 1710 (Earth Science) or GEOG 2180 (Geosystems, Environment, and Society), or consent of the department.

Description

6 hours. Students will develop skills in field observation, analysis, and interpretation for a variety of geographical, geological, and environmental problems, experience diverse landscapes and cultures in China, and visit Chinese national research institutes in geography, resources and environment, and geospatial technologies. The China Field School teaches field skills through visits to four sites: Beijing, Lijiang, Dali, and Kunming. Exercises emphasize the implementation of field skills in an applied geography context.

Objectives

Location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region are the five themes of geography. For undergraduate and graduate students, knowing about our planet and its people is an important aspect of geography education. With a rapidly growing economy and as the most populous nation in the world, China faces great challenges in addressing problems in population, resources, and environment. These challenges will impact many worldwide problems. As a study abroad program, the China Field School covers several topics in physical geography, human geography, and environmental science. The study site in Beijing will provide general information about China's landform, climate, natural resources, and population, while the study sites in Yunnan Province will allow students to develop field observation, analysis, and interpretation skills. Moreover, the geographical location of Yunnan Province will allow students to better understand several important issues in Southeast Asia, such as environmental protection, ecotourism, international rivers, water resources, and ethnic culture. It is expected that graduate students will choose an independent research project on a topic related to geographical, geological, or other environmental issues or problems identified in China. Students can apply different approaches including literature review, field observation and data analysis to complete the research project.

Grading

Grades are based on homework assignments (20%), participation (20%) and a final project report (60%).

Homework assignments will be provided after each classroom lecture. Participation will be measured by attendance in activities, inputs in group discussions and field observations, and responsibility and flexibility in relations with classmates and instructors. An individual final project report is required. After students return from China, they will have one week to complete their final projects.
Schedule

The schedule includes classroom instructions before the field trip, and daily discussions/meetings during the field trip.

Classroom Instructions:

May 15: 9:00 – 11:30 am, Introduction to China (Dr. Dong)

May 15: 2:00 – 4:30 pm, Geomorphological Landscapes of China (Dr. Dong)

May 16: 9:00 – 11:30 am, Climate of China (Dr. Pan)

May 16: 2:00 pm – 4:30 pm, Water Resources of China (Dr. Pan)

May 17: 9:00 – 11:30 am, Natural Hazards of China (Dr. Pan)

May 17: 2:00 – 4:30 pm, Population, Urbanization, and Ethnic Cultures of China (Dr. Dong)

Field Schedule:

Day 0 (5/27, Sat): DFW – Beijing (PEK).


Day 2 (5/29, Mon, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm): Urban planning, and cultural activities in Beijing: Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, and Temple of Heaven.

Day 3 (5/30, Tue, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm): Three steps of landforms in China: field trip to the Great Wall.

Day 4 (5/31, Wed, 8:00 am – 7:00 pm): Visit two research institutes at the Chinese Academy of Sciences: (1) Geography; (2) Remote Sensing and Digital Earth. Beijing – Kunming (3 hours 20 minutes flight).


Day 6 (6/2, Fri): 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, faculty-led group discussion. Afternoon: Free time in Kunming.

Day 7 (6/3, Sat, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm): Work with faculty and students at Yunnan University.

Day 8 (6/4, Sun, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm): Himalayan tectonic belt, active faults, graben basins, and karst topography. Field trip to Yangzong Lake, Tangchi Hot Springs, and Stone Forest (karst topography).
Day 9 (6/5, Mon, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm): Jiuxiang Field Trip.

Day 10 (6/6, Tue, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm): Kunming → Dali (250 freeway miles, air-conditioned tourist bus). Introduce the three parallel rivers originated from the Himalayas. Stop at Chuxiong and experience Yi ethnic culture. Stay at the Old Town of Dali between Erhai Lake and Cangshan Mountains. Bai ethnic culture.

Day 11 (6/7, Wed, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm): Geology, geomorphology and water resources in Dali. Fieldwork in the Cangshan Mountain, neotectonic movement, graben basins, high plateau lakes, alluvial fans, and rocks (marbles). Bai ethnic culture in the Old Town of Dali.


Day 13 (6/9, Fri, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm): Global climate change and glacier retreat. Field trip to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Bus, cable carts, and walking. Last class at 4,680 m (15,354 ft) above sea level.

Day 14 (6/10, Sat): 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, faculty-led group discussion. Afternoon: Free time in Lijiang.


Day 16 (6/12, Mon): Beijing (PEK) → DFW.