

# THE N.C. SCHOLAR OF GLOBAL DISTINCTION PROGRAM



WORLD VIEW



Asia

HUM 220

## Human Values & Meaning

Ping Liang | Forsyth Technical Community College

This course presents some major dimensions of human experience as reflected in art, music, literature, philosophy, and history. Topics include the search for identity, the quest for knowledge, the need for love, the individual and society, and the meaning of life. Upon completion, students should be able to recognize interdisciplinary connections and distinguish between open and closed questions and between narrative and scientific models of understanding. This course has been approved to satisfy the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement general education core requirement in humanities/fine arts and is restricted to students in the AA, AS, and AFA programs who have completed a minimum of 40 credit hours.

There are 1.4 billion Chinese in Mainland China and Chinese in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Overseas Chinese in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia whose values and worldviews are entirely different from those of the western world. In order to interact better and avoid misunderstanding in personal, social and business relationships, it is of utmost importance to learn about the important values of the Chinese, and how they view life and the meaning of life.

This module will focus on the Chinese values of filial piety & the importance of family; the concept of face; education; the Chinese view of life; and how Chinese values affect their responses to Covid-19.

### Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Gain awareness and understanding of Confucius' influence on the Chinese values of filial piety (Xiao) and the importance of family in China
2. Describe the concept of face (mianzi) in Chinese culture, and provide examples of giving face, saving face, and losing face in Chinese culture.
3. Explain the value of education in China and the Chinese.
4. Explain and illustrate the ways Mainland Chinese look at life, life struggles and the meaning of life
5. Comprehend and understand how Chinese ideology and values affect their responses to Covid 19.

### Methodology:

Instructor will give lectures on a brief history of China, and the Chinese and show videos and films about the mentioned topics. A map of China in Asia and the world will be handed out to each student. For all five assignments in this module, students will research individually or work in groups.

Activity 1: Filial piety (xiao)

Activity 2: Face (mianzi)

Activity 3: Education

Activity 4: Life struggles & Chinese view of life

Activity 5: Chinese's response to Covid-19

### **Activity 1: Filial Piety**

A central concept in Chinese family values is the idea of "filial piety." Traditionally, children are expected to be obedient to their parents for their whole lives; parents are to decide which college they attend, the career they choose and who they would marry. Being disobedient to their parents was considered a crime.

Objectives:

At the end of this activity, students will be able to 1. Define filial piety 2. Give examples of what filial piety means in China 3. Compare their relationship with their parents and grandparents to "filial piety" taught in China.

Procedure:

Instructor will give a lesson/lecture about what filial piety is, and its place in Chinese culture. Students will also watch a video about filial piety. Students will conduct research about the topic and will prepare a 15-minute PowerPoint or Prezi or Google slides to share with the class, giving examples of filial piety practiced in traditional and modern-day China. Students will compare their personal experiences concerning their relationship between them and their parents and grandparents with those of the Chinese.

Resources:

NC Live

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owi8e8fclUs>

<https://medium.com/@lilydonawa/exploring-filial-piety-15e409cd6cdb>

### **Activity 2: Face**

China is a very collectivist society; Chinese people will go to great lengths to avoid losing face or gaining face in order to build their social status or level of respect in the eyes of others.

Objectives:

Students will 1. Discuss the concept of face, the importance of face, saving face, losing face. 2. Give examples of situations where people will lose face.

Procedure:

1. Students will watch a YouTube video:

The Importance of "Face" in China - The Art of Selling to Affluent Chinese Ep. 9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxkJOmCXIGM>

2. Students will conduct research on "face" and write a 500 word response to explain the concept of face, and be able to provide examples of giving face, saving face and losing face in Chinese culture.

Resources:

Gaining and Losing face in China

<https://chinaculturecorner.com/2013/10/10/face-in-chinese-business/>

The Cult of Face

<https://www.china-mike.com/chinese-culture/cult-of-face/>

### Activity 3: Education

Education is most highly esteemed in Chinese society. This value can be traced to the Confucian concept that "he who excels in learning can be an official." Teachers in China given highest level of public respect. Teaching is a respected profession in China.

Objectives and Procedure:

Students are to research the teaching profession in China and to read the article: "Teachers in China given highest level of public respect" (<https://www.bbc.com/news/education-24381946>) and to compare the respect given to the teaching profession in the United States, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, New Zealand and Singapore. Students will meet in small groups to discuss their findings and research.

Resources:

NC Live

<https://www.bbc.com/news/education-24381946>

<http://www.china.org.cn/english/China/42535.htm>

### Activity 4: The Chinese View of Life

What is the purpose of life? What is the good life? These are questions asked by people, no matter which part of the world they may come from. The Chinese stress the virtue of endurance, forbearance.

Objectives:

At the end of this assignment, students will develop a better understanding of the Chinese viewpoint of embracing suffering and hardship in the face of war, disaster and death, and never to lose hope.

Procedure:

Students will watch a movie, *To Live*, a Chinese drama film directed by Zhang Yimou in 1994, starring Ge You, Gong Li, and produced by the Shanghai Film Studio and ERA International. It is based on the novel of the same name by Yu Hua.

After watching the film, students will be divided into groups,

Group #1 will give the background history of China in the 1940's.

Group #2 will study the characters of the story.

Group #3 will look at and analyze the role of the wife & mother & gender roles.

Group #4 will look at and identify the themes of: suffering, endurance, loss of face, loyalty to country.

Group #5 will explore and discuss the belief in fate and providence in Chinese lives.

The group presentations will take place over 3 class periods, with Q & A on the last day.

Resources:

To Live DVD

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/to-live-1994>

### Activity #5: Dealing with Covid 19

Objectives:

At the end of this assignment, students will be able to describe how Wuhan, a city in China dealt with Covid-19, and compare the Chinese response to the US response.

#### Procedure

Students will watch the TED talk "How American and Chinese values shaped the coronavirus response" | Huang Hung, May 26, 2020

Students will answer questions:

1. What was the main point of the video?
2. How have the values of individual freedom and liberty in the United States shaped Covid 19 response as compared to the Chinese?
3. Do you agree with Dr. Huang that "the West really needs to move a step towards the East and to think about the collective as a whole rather than only think about oneself as an individual?"

Students will share their responses in class concerning the video and the Chinese response to Covid 19.

#### Resources:

America's response to the coronavirus is the most American thing ever

<https://news.mit.edu/2020/when-culture-clashes-covid-19-0625>

COVID-19 and Chinese Civil Society's response

[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/covid\\_19\\_and\\_chinese\\_civil\\_societys\\_response](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/covid_19_and_chinese_civil_societys_response)

What the world can learn from China's response to the coronavirus | Gary Liu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Klh2-S2jXls>

When culture clashes with Covid-19

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/19/us/american-individualism-coronavirus-trnd/index.html>

Understanding China's response to Covid 19

<https://www.stimson.org/2020/understanding-chinas-response-to-covid-19/>