

Beginning Chinese
Chin 10a Summer Section
Course Description
Summer 2009

Welcome to Summer Chinese 10a! You are learning a language spoken and/or recognized by over one fourths of the total world population! And you are learning it in a revolutionary way!

Computerized Chinese Learning Makes Big Differences

As you may know, Chinese *was* one of the most difficult foreign languages for an American student to learn. According to the State Department of the United States, a true beginner will have to take about 7 times of time and efforts to reach the advanced level of Chinese than to reach the same level of Spanish. One of the main difficulties is the Chinese writing system. Instead of the alphabet system, Chinese people, for over 4,000 years, have been using a pictographic system that consists of thousands of Chinese characters. Writing these characters with pens (traditionally the brush pens), you will have to take a very long time to practice and then you will have less time to practice speaking Chinese and the characters you could write and recognize finally are still quite limited. Giving it up (In fact, a number of Chinese teachers in the United States have been teaching their students in this compromised way), you will become an illiterate, speaking some Chinese but cannot read and write any Chinese texts.

Now with the development of information technology, we can overcome the dilemma easily. You can learn Chinese with your computer and by inputting Chinese characters, you are practicing speaking, listening, reading and writing at the same time!

This course is revolutionarily designed to make your Chinese learning experience unprecedentedly efficient. Computers will be used for all the time: on class exercises, assignments, quizzes, and exams. In one week, you will be able to write your first Chinese email and by the end of the two semesters (this course plus Chin 20b) you will be able to communicate with a native Chinese speaker confidently both in writing and in speaking. To learn Chinese now is much easier than you and most people have imagined.

Do we need special computers and/or special Chinese software? The answer is No. Generally speaking, a computer, either a PC or a Mac, is Chinese ready if it is 4 years old or younger. You don't need to buy any additional software. For learning efficiency, however, we recommend computers with Windows XP or Vista because their inputting method is much faster than Mac OS system.

About the Instructor

Xiwen Lu

Xiwen Lu was graduated from Beijing Language and Culture University, the number one university in China for teaching Chinese as a second language. Before joining Brandeis faculty, she worked for Harvard Summer School in Beijing for two years and was one of the most successful Chinese teachers of the program with highest student evaluation scores. She is specialized in Chinese pedagogy and computerized teaching experiments.

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Class Meeting Times

4 credit hours

June 1 - July 3, 2009

M, T, W, Th 09:00 - 11:40 AM

About the Textbooks

Integrated Chinese (Level One Part One, 3rd Edition)

By Tao-chung Yao et al. Cheng & Tsui Company

You need both textbooks and workbooks. You don't need to buy the Character exercise book and the audio CD. After registration, you could sign in Latte and get access to the audio.

This set of textbook is rated the number one by American colleges and universities. The topics (including school life, travel, food, seeing doctor, etc.), the grammar explanations, and assignments are all very well designed. By the end of the two semesters you will have learned all the important grammars, about 750 most frequently used Chinese characters,

3,000 most frequently used Chinese words, and many useful sentences patterns and idiomatic phrases.

Following is a link to the introduction of this textbook:

http://www.cheng-tsui.com/store/products/integrated_chinese

Requirements:

1. Attendance: Students are expected to be in class on time. There unexcused absence in this semester will affect your final grade. Illness or emergencies are acceptable excuses, but adequate documentation must be presented.
2. Preparation: Students are expected to come to class well prepared. It means that you have to read the assigned text, and listen to the audio recording before the section. You are expected to answer questions from your required readings in class.
3. Homework: Students are expected to complete their homework on time; late homework will receive a reduced grade. **Each** homework assignment is worth 10 points. Any assignment which is not turned in on the due date will be marked down one incremental point per day, i.e. from 10 to 9. Any assignment which is one week overdue will not be accepted whatsoever.
4. Dictation: Students are expected to take dictation based on the new vocabulary that is covered in each lesson. You are required to do it with your computer. All character quizzes will be taken at the beginning of class.
5. You are required to bring your laptop computer to the classroom all the time. All the quizzes and exams are computerized.

Grading calculation:

Class participation: 10%

Homework: 20%

Dictations: 20%

Test1: 25%

Test2: 25%