The Chinese Marketplace: Globalization and Local Transformations

Spring 2011
Dr. Tianshu Pan

Wednesdays 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Office Hours: Tuesdays 8:45 - 9:45 in 1108 Wenke Bldg. or by appointment

Course Objectives

Drawing upon an interdisciplinary approach, this course addresses several major themes in the dynamics of China’s unprecedented socioeconomic transformations. Topics covered will include the implications of globalization for everyday life in local contexts, the cultural dimensions of international business, and the rise of entrepreneurship and consumerism in contemporary China. One important goal of this course is to provide a set of conceptual tools and new perspectives to help you better describe and understand the social world around you. This course is designed to replace your common sense understandings of interpersonal interactions with an uncommon sense about the links between individual experiences, structural forces, and particular marketplaces. It is hoped that you will develop a critical, even skeptical view, toward superficial explanations or practices taken-for-granted.

I plan to use a variety of pedagogical techniques to help you learn: readings, lectures, video, and ethnographic analysis. It is my hope that we can work together as a learning community to explore issues of general interests. Well-documented case studies and business ethnographies will be woven into class discussions of the major themes as a way of grounding theory in marketing practices. Readings are arranged in weekly units around specific thematic issues. Discussions of the case study materials will be accompanied by presentations of the instructor’s research on a range of topics related to the application of anthropological/sociological methods of inquiry to business practices in different field settings.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to read all the listed materials and be prepared to discuss them during the weekly seminar meetings. The instructor is available in office hours and by appointment. Details on the content and grading standards for the writing assignments will be distributed and discussed in class.

The three components of the grade are combined as follows:
Participation (attendance and in-class discussion) 20%
ONE analytical paper (due May 11) 30%
Term project: proposal (due May 26), presentation, and write-up 50%

Course Readings
All course readings will be made available to you in Shanghai.

**Required:**


Online articles from the *WSJ, Business Week, Harvard Business Review, Fortune*, and other news magazines will be used to supplement required readings.

**Recommended:**


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**Lecture Outline and Reading Schedule**

*Week 1 (March 10) Course Overview*

- Why Culture Matters: the Validity of “Soft Data”; What is the marketplace?
- *Business Week*, “Business Education Under the Microscope” (12/26/07) and “The Millennials Invade the B-Schools” (11/13/08);
- NYT, “American Graduates Finding Jobs in China” (08/11/09)
- Skim Chapters 1 & 2, *The Cultural Dimension of International Business*

*Week 2 (March 17) Challenges and Prospects for China’s Sustainable Growth (1)*

“China 2009: The Confidence Deficit” (12/31/2008); 
WS, “China’s Bright Past Belies a Hazy Future” (08/25/2008); 
Business Week, “Can China Keep the Lights On?” (06/09/2008); “China’s Factory Blues” (03/27/08); China Losing Luster with U.S. Manufacturers (11/26/2008); 
NYT, “China’s Route Forward” (01/23/2009) and “For Shanghai Fair, a Famous Fund-Raiser Delivers”; The Sydney Morning Herald, “East does not meet West on China’s Self-image” (07/24/2008); 

Week 3 (March 24) Challenges and Prospects for China’s Sustainable Growth (2) 
K. Lieberthal and G. Lieberthal. The Great Transition, HBR Review on Doing Business in China 
Introduction and Chapter 1, Doing Business in China.

Week 4 (March 31) Entrepreneurism 
Ming Zeng and Peter Williamson, “The Hidden Dragons,” HBR Review on Doing Business in China 

Week 5 (April 7) Rules and Etiquette 
Reeves-Ellington. “Using Cultural Skills for Cooperative Advantage in Japan” 
Chapters 2 & 3, Doing Business in China 
Skim Chapters 3, 4, 5, The Cultural Dimension of International Business

Week 6 (April 14) Cross-cultural Negotiation 
John Graham and Mark Lam, The Chinese Negotiation, HBR Review on Doing Business in China 
Chapter 7, Doing Business in China. 
Skim: Chapters 6 & 7, The Cultural Dimension of International Business

Week 7 (April 21) Consumerism (1) 
Rick Yan, “To Reach China’s Consumer’s Adapt to Guo Qing,” HBR Review on Doing Business in China 

Week 8 (April 28) Consumerism (2) 
James Watson, Golden Arches East, “Introduction” and Yan Yunxiang, “McDonalds in Beijing” 

Week 9 (May 12) Branding and Marketing
Noreen Janus, “Advertising and Global Culture”
Charles Skuba, “Branding America”
Skim: Chapter 4, Doing Business in China
Harriet Evans, “Market Femininity”

Week 10 (May 19) Contrasting Cultural Values
Katherine Xin and Vladimir Pucik, Trouble in Paradise, HBR Review on Doing Business in China
Chapter 8, The Cultural Dimension of International Business
Skim: Chapter 2, Doing Business in China

Week 11 (May 26) Strategies and Approaches
Rick Yan, “Short-Term Results,” HBR Review on Doing Business in China
Wilfried Vanhonacker, “Entering China,” HBR Review on Doing Business in China

Week 12 (June 2) The China Price
Chapter 6, Doing Business in China

Weeks 13-14 (June 9 & 16) Student Presentations

Term Project

Students will be instructed to delve into a particular area of interest over the course of the semester as part of their academic work. The instructor will help students refine their ideas and plans fitting to the course.

The Term Project is intended as a research project that makes use of more than academic readings and secondary source materials (such as published research data and other findings). While these are potentially very important components of any research project and should be part of your project here, your Term Project is more importantly intended to be one in which you take advantage of being in China. Shanghai is China’s largest, richest city and biggest port, which is arguably also the focal point of the country’s move towards globalization. The city’s extraordinary development over the past 150 years has been inseparable from globalization, even if the term itself had not yet come into being. Shanghai has a special place in the sociological imagination, particularly at this juncture of history. Your work will not only be more interesting because of your location but you will learn a great deal by using the resources that you would not have access to at your home university. Think of ways to incorporate interviews, participant observation, and other methods to inform your final paper and presentation. In the end, we hope that you can develop this project as part of a senior thesis or broader research project in the future.

Grading of the Term Project will be comprised of the following components:
Project proposal of 800 words (10%)
   The proposal should include main issues/arguments, theories addressed, conclusions of the
topic, as well as the greater implications or questions that the topic draws or suggests.
In-class presentation (15%): required to present in Week 12, 13, or 14.
Final paper of 3,000 words (25%)

POSSIBLE TOPICS for the term project:

Ex. 1: "Global failure."

Pick a company or brand that you know has encountered some problems (such as cross-cultural
misunderstanding) in globalizing. Using available data pertaining to China describe the problems
encountered, analyze the causal factors, develop alternative solutions, evaluate them, and give your
recommendation.

Ex. 2: "Global success."
For a successful global product of your choice, describe and analyze its success story. Try to find the
critical points or events that ensured the success and attempt to identify whether the success is due to
superior management, superior product quality, weak competition, or simply good luck.

Ex. 3: "Global coordination."
For a product or service of your choice, one already available in many countries, analyze the potential
and pitfalls of global coordination. Analyze the extent to which the marketing activities are
decentralized between regions and countries, the potential for a standardized approach, and
recommendations for the administration of the centralized marketing effort. The project will be
relatively difficult without good access to the company.

These are only possibilities. Other ideas are welcome. Let your imagination run wild.