



Alliance Capstone Abstracts

Alexandra Borden

Popular Culture and Social Change: Spring 2014

The Chinese Beauty Standard

The topic I want to explore through my capstone project is the beauty standard in China. I want to discuss the values Chinese people hold for beautiful women and what they believe denotes beauty. I will explore both body image and the ideal facial structure of Chinese women in my capstone. I want to focus on what facial features of body types Chinese people find most beautiful for women. I am interested to find out if Chinese and American people's beauty ideals are similar in any ways and also to find out in what ways they are different. I want to understand why Chinese people value white skin over tan skin and also if there is a dieting/eating disorder culture. I want to understand what kind of body types Chinese people value as most desirable and if they think the more voluptuous American body types are unattractive.

Kristen Prevost

Popular Culture and Social Change: Spring 2014

A Treblesome Battle: An Analysis of the Cultural and Political Factors Underlying the Birth, Bust, and Boom of Rock Music Performance in Beijing since 1990

In my capstone project, I intend to analyze the origins and development of rock music festivals in Beijing over the past 30 years and how certain social and political factors, if any, might have affected this development and why. The objective of this research is to ultimately explain a particular method through which such a notoriously controversial and seemingly chaotic genre of music was able to enter the mainstream music scene in Beijing. This question interests me due to the prevalence of two perceived notions of Chinese culture in particular: That Chinese state governments are quick to suppress large public displays of creative expression, particularly events that appear to unite large groups of people in the spirit of rebellious messages and chaotic themes, and the notion that Chinese people in general may be too reserved or cautious to find such themes appealing. If these western perceptions of Chinese culture were true, why would these festivals, and fandom for the genre, exist? Could they be in some parts true? If so, in what

ways did this challenge the rise of rock music performance? This research will hopefully not only answer these questions, but offer enriching insights on Chinese culture in Beijing as it relates to the trajectory of rock music and performance.

Claire Dennis

International Business in China: Spring 2014

The Bond Market in China: Why it is important and how it is changing

My capstone will explore the bond market in China, including past and future trends, the major players in the market, and current news. I will attempt to answer what all of this means for the future of China's capital markets and why it is important to have a well-developed bond market. I am majoring in finance and am interested in doing business in China someday. I want to try to have an understanding of other parts of the Chinese economy other than those that get the spotlight in the news. I have come to realize that while China is developing at a very fast pace, some things like the capital markets are getting left behind and will be difficult to be developed if they are continued to be. My capstone will focus on the dichotomy that is China, especially in Shanghai. Some parts are so advanced beyond their years, but others are lagging way behind.

Ashley Kareken

International Business in China: Spring 2014

Exploring China's Consumption of Luxury Goods

My capstone will look at the luxury good market in China and its consumers - who they are, what they're buying, and how China has developed into the largest consumer of luxury goods. I will look at what factors could change the luxury good market in China. In Shanghai, I have seen numerous high end stores around places like Xintiandi and Nanjingxi Lu and I have been hearing my professors at SUFE say that China was the number one consumer of luxury goods in the world, so I am interested in exploring this topic. So far, I found there was an interesting paradox between the older generations and younger generations. While China has one of the highest savings rates in the world, the younger generation is more willing to splurge to purchase luxury goods. This has become so common that the Chinese have come up with the phrase yue guang zu (月光族 or "spend everything within a month") to refer to these young adults. If they are the world's largest consumer of luxury goods, they are able to purchase more expensive products and are becoming an even bigger player on the world market.

Julie Ho

21st Century City: Spring 2014

“Are You the One?” the Shanghai Marriage Market and Dating Culture Reform

One of the most interesting social phenomena exists in Shanghai every weekend, the Marriage Market in People’s Square. This is also referred to as “Blind-date Corner”. My research will attempt to figure out how urbanization has affected the functionality of the marriage market and the availability of social resources has changed dating platforms as well in Shanghai. There have been many scholarly articles about significant changes in traditional marriage customs throughout China, and reporters going to People’s Square asking parents’ opinions about their children’s future, but my research focuses on a specific audience which are the most heavily affected by marriage customs and dating culture; college students and the younger generation who will soon be pressured by their families to marry. Through a survey of college students, an interview with a speed-dating promoter and ethnographic observation of the marriage market phenomena has led to my conclusion that there are significant obstacles between individual’s expectations and what their parents want for their children.

Katreena A. Casallo

21st Century City: Spring 2014

China’s Hukou System: Residual Effects on Housing and Education

With China’s bustling streets, growing economy, overpopulated cities, heavily franchised and western influenced nation, China is faced with a dilemma of the residual effects from the Hukou system that was installed over two decades ago to control population control and migration from rural to urban. It was the government’s plan especially enforced during the Great Leap Forward to increasing China’s economy by dividing the population into two groups: agriculture and non-agriculture. Through this process, the Chinese government failed to foresee the forthcoming of having a stratified nation. The Hukou system has indeed left its impact on the country by strictly discrimination against the rural residents. My research paper will focus on the effects of the household registration on housing and education. Through fieldwork conducted through interviews, ethnographic data, and surveys, it became evident that the hukou system has impacted education a lot more than housing in China. Finally, my research had further developed to a pressing issue on the importance and perception of the Hukou system in the 21st century China. Ultimately, my findings show that the Hukou system in the eyes of its own people has no importance as it did before. Thus, should the government abolish the Hukou system?

Petra Gaskins

Xi'an and the Silk Road: Spring 2014

Confucianism and Merchants in the Han Dynasty: A Strained Relationship

Who commands respect and why? Indubitably, those who work in important professions tend to command respect from peers, yet when initially researching about the Han dynasty the following quote continuously popped up; “trade and commerce were not respected, but were still very important.” (“The Han Dynasty of China- A Golden Age”) Indeed, when discussing the Han dynasty many sources note that the dynasty participated in trade along the Silk Road - several items imported were either vital to the welfare of the state such as horses or coveted by higher members of society such as jade - yet merchants remained low on the Han social class hierarchy. This posed an interesting question regarding how those responsible for conducting seemingly important work could simultaneously be deemed as unimportant in social circles. My research will attempt to reconcile this paradox by examining the extent of the importance of trade in the Han dynasty while illuminating how Confucianism and Chinese ethnocentrism impacted the perception of merchants.

Lauren Hsieh

Xi'an and the Silk Road: Spring 2014

Language along the Silk Road

I plan to study language and sociolinguistics along the Silk Road. I would like to analyze the possible causes and patterns (power, technology, loan words, etc.) for how Indo-European languages were so successful across such a large geographic area. Furthermore I'm interested in the similarities between Indo-European languages' terms referencing trade goods, technology, and/or agriculture in respect to their relevance to culture. Essentially I will analyze the movement of Indo-European languages and the culture carried along with it.