

## **GEOG 4070 – China Field School**

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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.

### **Grading**

Grades are based on participation (30%) and a final project report (70%).

**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.

**Final Project:** Each undergraduate student will write a final report summarizing daily learning activities and discussions. Alternatively, an undergraduate student can 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 develop their own solutions to the environmental problems or issues in China. 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.

Day 0 (5/29, Fri): DFW → Beijing (PEK).

Day 1 (5/30, Sat): Afternoon arrival in Beijing. Transfer to hotel.

Day 2 (5/31, Sun): Cultural activities in Beijing: Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City, and Temple of Heaven.

Day 3 (6/1, Mon): Three steps of landforms in China: field trip to the Great Wall and the Ming Dynasty tombs.

Day 4 (6/2, Tue): 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 5 (6/3, Wed): Morning: Yunnan Ethnic Village (culture and architecture of 25 ethnic groups in Yunnan Province). Afternoon: Urban planning and environmental issues in Kunming – wetlands and water quality protection.

Day 6 (6/4, Thu): Free day in Kunming.

Day 7 (6/5, Fri): Himalayan tectonic belt, active faults, graben basins, and karst topography. Field trip to Yangzong Lake, Tangchi Hot Springs, and Stone Forest (karst topography).

Day 8 (6/6, Sat): Work with faculty and students at Yunnan University.

Day 9 (6/7, Sun): Work with faculty and students at Yunnan University.

Day 10 (6/8, Mon): Kunming → Dali (250 freeway miles, air-conditioned tourist bus). 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 (6/9, Tue): 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 12 (6/10, Wed): Dali → Lijiang (120 freeway miles, air-conditioned tourist bus). Graben basins and plateau lakes. Naxi Dongba culture and hieroglyphs.

Day 13 (6/11, Thu): Global climate change and glacier retreat. Field trip to the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain. Bus, cable carts, and walking. Highest elevation: 4,680 m (15,354 ft).

Day 14 (6/12, Fri): Free day in Lijiang.

Day 15 (6/13, Sat): Lijiang → Beijing. Stay in Beijing.

Day 16 (6/14, Sun): Beijing (PEK) → DFW.