



CULTURAL COURSES: MANDARIN UNIVERSITY COURSE YANTAI, CHINA



China: One of the most ancient civilisations on earth. Shrouded in mystery and revered for centuries, China is a treasure trove of diverse cultures, absolutely *brehtaking* scenery and historical & cultural wonders! Sip green tea in ancient pagodas, press your way through hectic crowds under the neon lights of the big cities or calm your soul atop the snow capped mountains of the Tibetan Plateau...

Polarity & disparity, an endless array of mouth watering food, night markets where weather-worn men watch over flatbreads and spring rolls over a smouldering fire... Whether you want to silently join tai chi practitioners in parks at dusk or share a friendly smile and a few words over a bowl of noodles with someone as eager to learn about your life as you are theirs... China is both calming and frantic, modern and ancient...China is easy to fall head over heels in love with, and it's a country and an experience that you'll never, ever forget!

Emerging from under its communist veil, China is powering forward towards the future at breakneck speed. Yet simultaneously, the Chinese are devoutly proud of their cultural background, and these two ways of living - ancient and modern, seem to merge in bizarre and wonderful contradiction of each other! China is absolutely another world – it has to be seen to be believed!

Chinese people are infamous for going hugely out of their way at the drop of a hat to help you out with absolutely anything you might need. Picking up a little Mandarin will definitely help with your exchanges with the locals, and you will find yourself really relishing your small exchanges with the local people and your relationships with both teachers and students at the school.

During your placement, you'll have the opportunity to take a peek under the veil of this mysterious, ancient and fascinating culture, and see life from a local person's perspective!

ABOUT YANTAI

Our language course is based in Yantai, a coastal town in Shandong province, North-West China. Yantai is a large and busy port, and the fact that it is seldom visited by foreign tourists makes it an absolutely wonderful place in which to live and study.

Yantai is thoroughly and authentically 'Chinese', creating a wonderful sense that you are living in a real Chinese city and experiencing life and culture from a local person's perspective. Its size makes it easy to access every amenity you might need, and often at a cheaper price than the other major cities in the country. Yet its relative isolation from the tourist industry will make you feel as if you are really participating in a segment of Chinese life, instead of simply being an onlooker.

The Chinese people are, in general, supremely caring and helpful, and will go hugely out of their way to help you out with absolutely anything you might need. As a Westerner, people will be fascinated by you to such an extent that you will be stared at constantly and won't be able to step onto the street without someone shouting 'hello' at you with a huge smile on their face.

The Chinese interest in foreigners is absolutely unremitting, as so few of the people are able to leave the country, but all this curiosity presents itself in a friendly, extremely unthreatening way. You will probably be told you are 'piao liang' – beautiful, at least several times a day! This warm inquisitiveness is especially evident in Yantai, as so many of the locals are unaccustomed to seeing a foreign face.

Yantai University, where the course is based, is located 10 minutes from the city centre by bus. The University area is a vibrant and buzzing part of town, as it is home to a great many students, both Chinese and from elsewhere in the world. The building itself faces long stretches of beach on one side and Shandong's stunning mountainous landscapes on the other.

There are many small shops and street stalls, a busy market and a selection of Chinese and Korean restaurants running along the coast.

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Yantai is easily accessible internationally and domestically and there are daily flights into Yantai airport from Hong Kong, Osaka and Seoul. Domestically, Yantai is connected to many major Chinese cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Nanjing and Xi'an by frequent daily flights. The ferry, railway and freeway systems also link the city to destinations throughout the country and it is a relatively short (in Chinese terms!) journey to the Capital by any method.

ABOUT THE LANGUAGE – MANDARIN

WHY LEARN MANDARIN?

Learning Mandarin will be of huge benefit to you both during your life in China and afterwards. Within the country, very few people outside the education system speak English, and while travelling around China there are frequent opportunities to strike up conversations with people who are as curious about you as you are about them!

Learning Mandarin will enable you to speak with these people, thus enriching your time here immeasurably, as you find out things about the culture and the way of life that someone without language skills simply would not have access to.

On a larger scale, Mandarin is one of the 5 major UN Languages, and is the most widely spoken language in the world. One out of five people in the world speaks Chinese as their native language! China is changing faster than just about any other place on Earth; even a short stay in Yantai will demonstrate this fact. The recent entry into the WTO has only accelerated this trend.

In 1997, as the rest of Asia slid into depression, China was forging a path forwards and has continued to develop steadily, embracing world trade in a way that few had predicted. As a result of all this change, it is predicted that China will continue to grow and become a major player in world affairs and business in the coming few years. The ability to speak Mandarin will be of great benefit to anyone hoping to participate in affairs of business or culture on the world stage.

Whatever your circumstances, the opportunity to learn more about this ancient and fascinating culture from an insider's perspective is one not to be missed!



ABOUT THE COURSE

The Mandarin Course for foreign students has been running at Yantai University for 15 years. A typical class size is 25 students, and the teaching staff are professors or lecturers who are accredited and experienced in teaching Mandarin to foreign students.

The course is designed to immerse international students in the Chinese language and culture through compulsory classes, conversation with native speakers and optional electives. All areas of the language will be covered in your course: reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, phonetics and vocabulary. These will be taught via a variety of topics which will relate to aspects of Chinese culture, society and history.

Each semester there are around 100 International Students enrolled on the course at various levels. Many of these students are from Korea and Japan, and there are also often students from the UK, France and the USA. This project will give you the opportunity to meet people from a variety of different cultures; not just from China, but from all over the world!

Some of the courses currently on offer include:

Compulsory - Spoken Chinese, Chinese Comprehension (Pinyin, Grammar and Writing), Reading, Chinese Listening Comprehension

Electives - Tai Chi and Calligraphy.

(Please note that these courses are subject to change)

Our organiser, Jack, is currently in the process of obtaining office space on the University Campus itself, so he will always be on hand for assistance. In the meantime, his office is located in the Zhifu District of Yantai, a short drive away.

There may also be the possibility of earning money through tutoring classes in English in your spare time! If you are interested in this option, please either let us know before you leave or speak to Jack, our organiser, once you are in China.

COURSE LENGTH

A full course lasts for a 4 month period, which is the length of a complete semester. You can, however, choose to take a shorter course, depending on your needs. The minimum course time is 1 month. We will discuss your preferred course length with you on application.

There are two semesters every year: **September 1st until early January, AND March 1st until early July.** You can begin your course at either of these times, regardless of how long you wish to stay

LEVELS OF STUDY

Classes are available at various levels, so no matter what your level of Mandarin is, there will be a class to suit you. We can offer beginner, elementary, intermediate or advanced classes. Around 50% of the students on the course are Beginners.

COURSE MATERIALS

All your course textbooks will be available to buy at the University. There are 12 books that are needed for one semester, and they cost 300RMB in total (which, at the time of writing, is approximately £20)

You will need to bring 8 passport sized photographs with you, which will be used for your visa and student ID card.

COURSE CREDITS AND QUALIFICATIONS

Regardless of how long your course lasts, you will obtain a certificate at the end of your study time.

Each semester you will also obtain around 20 credits, and these can often be credited to your university course in your home country. If you wish to take advantage of this option, you must check that your university will recognise this qualification before you leave, as it does vary between institutions.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The course takes place from Monday to Friday, running from approximately 8am to 3:40pm. You will have homework in the evenings, in much the same way as you would during a similar course in most countries, and you will be expected to complete this to the deadline set by your teachers. Your weekends will be free and this will allow some time for relaxing, travelling and sightseeing.

An example daily schedule, based on the Spring 2005 Semester, is shown below:

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Period 1 8:00am-8:45am	Comprehensive Chinese(Pinyin & Grammar)	Spoken Chinese	Listening Comprehension	Spoken Chinese	Comprehensive Chinese(Pinyin & Grammar)
Period 2 8:55am-9:40am					
Period 3 10:00-10:45am	Listening Comprehension	Chinese Reading	Comprehensive Chinese(Pinyin & Grammar)	Comprehensive Chinese(Pinyin & Grammar)	Chinese Reading
Period 4 10:55-11:40am					
Period 5 2:00-2:45pm	Comprehensive Chinese (Pinyin and Grammar)	Comprehensive Chinese (Pinyin & Grammar)	Tai Chi	Sports	Chinese Calligraphy
Period 6 2:55-3:40pm			Tai Chi	Sports	Chinese Calligraphy

“Thank you unreservedly for my time in China... I had an amazing time, and had to be dragged away by the end of it. What really made it for me was the contact with the people, whether in class or around the town... everyone there would go completely out of their way to help or just talk to me. What’s more, I gained a great knowledge of life in modern china, which is just what I wanted and needed for my Uni course!” – **Charles Corn, Teaching Project**

ACCOMODATION & FOOD

During your course, you will live at Yantai University Hostel with the other students who are on the course. The hostel is a four storey building located on Yantai seafront.

You will share your room with another person, either a Travellers Volunteer or a student who is on the course with you. Each room has two beds, a bathroom, a table and chairs and a telephone and TV.

The hostel is in short walking distance of the University building in which you will take your classes.

There are 7 dining halls on campus, and meals are served throughout the day. On this project, your food is not included in the price of the placement, and you will pay in cash, at the dining hall, for every meal that you take. Food on campus is extremely cheap, and a meal costs between 2 and 5RMB (15RMB = approx £1)

There are also many restaurants and street stalls in the surrounding area, serving a variety of delicious Chinese and Korean dishes.



VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK



AMY SMILES : Mandarin University Course Project 2006

What experience do you feel you gained? I already believe that this placement has had a positive impact on me. The fact that I was able to do all this on my own, leave the comfort of my own country and fly half way around the world to learn one of the most difficult languages out there is no small task, yet I managed it. I have met here some really lovely people from all over the world whom I would never have met otherwise, and as I learn more of the language, the experience can only get better.

What was the best thing about your placement? The whole thing!! My room mate is fantastic, she's from Thailand, she seems to have taken me under her wing! She feeds me, cleans the room and helps me with my Chinese as she is at a much higher level than me, in return I help her with her English. Communication is slow but we get by with the help of a dictionary, phrasebook and sign language!

Would you recommend this placement to anyone else? Yes I would, but they have to be prepared for a huge culture shock. I knew things would be very different out here, but I never could have anticipated this!! China is so very different from anywhere else. Plus in Yantai they are unaccustomed to foreigners and so going out on your own can be daunting at first as people stand and stare at you, I've known people fall over and walk into things because they've been so busy staring at us westerners!!

What type of person do you think this placement would suit? Someone who is patient. Things tend to happen very slowly in China, they love paper work and this can get a little irritating after a while. You need to be open minded and realise you're in a place completely different to your own country.

Can you describe a typical day? (e.g Start time, morning duties, lunch hours, afternoon duties, any other duties?) Lessons start at 8am, so I get up around 6.45 to allow time for a shower and getting dressed. It's a 3/5 minute walk from the accommodation to the classroom. Everyday there is a comprehension class, usually first period, with a 15 minute break every 45 minutes. At 9.40 we get a 20 minute break till the second period begins, this is either reading, spoken or listening. Lessons finish at 11.40, at this point 28,000 students try to get food at 8 dining halls! we tend to eat off campus as it is nearly as cheap, but the places are slightly quieter plus the food is better! Afternoon classes are all optional and run between 2pm and 3.40 - the only one I'm taking is Tai Chi. On the other days, the afternoon is free. We use this time to study, catch up on homework, going shopping, or to the beach, sometimes we take a trip into town, or just stay in our room, watch TV, read etc.

I couldn't have done this without the help of Travellers, thank you for all your help. **Amy**

THE NEXT STEP

If you would like to join us on one of our exciting projects then please fill in either an online application form at our website (www.travellersworldwide.com) or one that is attached to our brochure. Once you have booked and confirmed your place we will send you detailed pack information regarding your placement and country.

I do hope you join us and please do call or email if you have any questions at all about this or any of our other projects – 01903 502595 or email info@travellersworldwide.com

If you would like to know more about Travellers in general, or about any of our other projects we run in over 18 countries worldwide, please visit our website at www.travellersworldwide.com

TRAVELLERS WORLDWIDE

7 Mulberry Close
Ferring
West Sussex,
BN12 5HY, England
Tel: +44 (0)1903 502595
Fax: +44 (0)1903 500364
Email: info@travellersworldwide.com



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