

**Biology 4607/5607:001 – Comparative Biogeography – Summer I 2019**  
**China Field Trip: June 2-24**  
**Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Dr. Chris M. Ritzi

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Office hours: Most afternoons or by appt.

**Class Website:** <http://sulross.blackboard.com> & <http://faculty.sulross.edu/critzi/>

**Text:** There are no official textbooks for this class, but we will be utilizing a variety of field guides for plants and animals for the Big Bend region of Texas and the south tropical region of China.

**Course Description:** This main focus of this course is to provide students with an intense field experience that will compare and contrast two distinctly different parts of the world. Students will be expected to make acute observations, form hypotheses to try to explain their observations, and seek to learn if these hypotheses are true. They will need to be able to effectively communicate their ideas and findings. Due to the nature of this course being based on a cultural exchange program, it will focus more on gardens and habitat associated with human communities rather than remote pristine habitat. That said, trip are planned to visit some of the remote regions for both habitats being explored, so the extremes should be more evident. Finally, students will be expected to maintain a field journal of their experiences and thoughts, for the comparison and contrasts of these different areas.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

The graduating biology student graduating with a BS in Biology should be able to:

- 1) The student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of basic biological concepts, including but not limited to evolution via natural selection, cell theory, and the role and function of DNA.
- 2) The student will be able to demonstrate utilization of various field techniques toward addressing scientific questions in the specific discipline. These field techniques can include, but are not limited to, plant collection and processing, various animal collection techniques, ecological surveying and sampling, and biodiversity indexing.
- 3) The student will be able to use biological instrumentation to solve biological problems using standard observational strategies.
- 4) The student will develop writing skills by summarizing and critiquing recent relevant biological literature.

The biology student graduating with a MS in Biology should be able to:

- 1) Understanding and implementation of scientific methodology.
- 2) Utilization of field techniques toward addressing scientific questions.
- 3) Be able to utilize statistics toward the analysis of data within the discipline.

- 4) Be able to effectively disseminate scientific findings using both written and oral communication.

**Course Objectives:** Over the course of this class, I hope the following objectives will be met:

1. To instill a sense of awe and excitement about the diversity of plants in animals within the Chihuahuan desert and Tropical South China.
2. To train the student in the skills necessary to make accurate and educated interpretative comparisons between desert and tropic niches.
3. To familiarize the student with the student with the scientific method, and approaches used in the development of theory in biogeography.
4. To improve the student's skills in communicating and explaining biological concepts to others.
5. To train the student in the identification of various plants and animals encountered, and their roles in the environment.

**Field Trip Participation:** The trip and participation with is mandatory. As this is a 6 cr hr class, we will treat the 3 week trip to China as being active class time over the period of Jun 2- 24.

**Course Structure:** In order to accomplish the above objectives, the following activities will expected of everyone. First and foremost, we will be in a foreign country as guests, so we should always be pleasant and courteous to others. Communication is an important aspect of this course, both from the biological sciences side and the cultural exchange side. Lack of participation, a bad attitude, or unnecessary dissention will result in the deduction of points. Whining, complaining, backtalk, or just being a hurtful person will not be tolerated. Any major offenses (ie. Physical confrontations, constant verbal or emotional abuse toward myself or another student) will result in failure of the class and being restricted to the dorms and the Talent Campus for the remainder of the trip.

**Grading:** Your grade will be assigned based on the percentage of points you get out of a total possible 500 points. (200pts from participation and conduct, 100 pts from demonstration of conceptions via oral discussion, 200 pts field notebook).

**Attendance:** Students missing 20% of lectures (5 lectures) shall be dropped from the class per the SRSU catalog. Any student dropped for excessive absences will receive an F for the course grade. Please notify your instructor BEFORE missing class for authorized activities, death in the family, or illness. Given the nature of this trip, the only excused absences from activities will be due to temporary illness.

**Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations. If you would like to request such accommodations because of physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator for Program Accessibility at 837-8203, FH 112.**

**Course courtesy:** The rules of expected behavior are below.

- 1) If you don't know what something is and have a question, please ask. That said, always be polite in doing so.
- 2) Show respect to your classmates, professor, and our hosts.
- 3) This is an international experience, so please experience it. Non participation is detrimental to your grade and your experience.
- 4) Remember to stay with the group, and if you go anywhere, travel in pairs and let others know where you are going. We don't want to lose anyone overseas.

### **Tentative Lecture Outline**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture topic</b>
Apr 19	Travel to Stillwell Campground and visit Big Bend National Park. Explore Dinosaur exhibit, Panther Junction, and the Chisos Basin. <b>Overnight camping</b>
Apr 20	Drive the Maxwell Scenic drive, visit Santa Elena Canyon, and Dugout Wells. Return to Alpine in evening
Apr 22	Visit advanced vertebrate lab for snake demonstration
Apr 24	Dinner at Ritzi house with Chinese cultural exchange students
Apr 27	Visit Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute to hike Modesta Canyon, Botanical Gardens, and Cactus Greenhouse
Jun 2	Travel from Alpine to El Paso, and then on to Los Angeles, <b>overnight hotel</b>
Jun 3	Travel from Los Angeles to Beijing and then on to Nanning, drive to Talent International in Qinzhou for lunch in Canteen shopping and dinner at restaurant
Jun 4	Register in PD at 9am, currency exchange, lunch in canteen, and campus visit at 3pm
Jun 5	Vocal music performance and music theory class at 8am, lunch in Canteen, visit Feng Zicai's former residence at 9 am

- Jun 6 Visit Mengyuan Park and Lui Yongfu's former residence at 9am, Chinese teaching class at 2:30 pm
- Jun 7 Dragon Boat Festival party and rice dumpling making
- Jun 8 Visit Dalu Village in Lingshan
- Jun 9 Old Street in Downtown at 8am, Lunch in Canteen, free time for afternoon
- Jun 10 Visit Beibu Gulf University in morning, Nixing Pottery Workshop visit
- Jun 11 Visit Quinzhou Port and Sanniang Bay
- Jun 12 English class of the American teachers at 8:30am, Activities in the Eldly University 2:30pm (conversational English presentation)
- Jun 13 Visit Quinhou Garden Park and Millennium Ancient Pottery City
- Jun 14 Pottery class in the morning, English class in the afternoon
- Jun 15 Set out for Nanning at 8am, Lunch in C, explore Qingxiu Hill Scenic Area, possible zoo trip, **stay overnight**
- Jun 16 Visit Guangxi Medicinal Botanical Garden
- Jun 17 Chinese Calligraphy class in the am, Chinese painting class in afternoon
- Jun 18 Visit Fangchenggang Wetland Park and Fangchenggang Egret Park
- Jun 19 Meet students in English major at 8:30am, lunch in canteen, meet students from Hanfu Club at 4pm
- Jun 20 Chinese Calligraphy class in the am, Chinese painting class in afternoon
- Jun 21 Visit Quinzhou Bazhaigou
- Jun 22 Visit Dongxing
- Jun 23 Shopping in Downtown at 8am, lunch at canteen, free time in afternoon
- Jun 24 Pack and leave in afternoon, drive to Nanning, fly to Beijing and Los Angeles, **overnight hotel**

Jun 25

Fly from Los Angeles to Phoenix and then to El Paso, drive back to Alpine – trip debriefing and field notebooks turned in for grading during drive back to Alpine

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Note – This outline is subject to change for reasons of course interest, time constraint, weather, or accessibility. Given that our transportation and arrangements are being handled by Talent International, we do not have full control over our schedule.