Week 1 – January 24

I. Getting to Know Each Other – group activities

II. Preparation –
   a. Program overview and orientation session expectations. Questions?
   b. Common perceptions about China

III. Academic - Geography, climate, soils, and farming systems in China (power point) and students’ input on assigned topics

IV. Preparation -
   a. Course Registration – 6 credits total:
      i. Spring 2007: 3 credits in either NREM 496A, Section CN or ECON 496
      ii. Summer 2007: 3 credits in either NREM 496A, Section CN or ECON 496
   b. Travel Updates
      i. Airline tickets: The Ag Study Abroad office is working through a travel agency to purchase group tickets. Please let us know if you anticipate departing or returning from a city other than Des Moines, or if you anticipate extended travel beyond the dates of the program (May 15-June 9). We will keep you informed about the progress.
      ii. Passports: Bring passports to group leaders or to Ag Study Abroad Office, 111 Curtiss Hall, no later than Monday, April 2. Passports will be sent to Chinese Consulate in Chicago to obtain visas. You cannot enter China without a passport and visa!
   c. Immunizations
      i. Visit your regular doctor or student health travel clinic to obtain information about recommended immunizations.
      ii. Please review these websites:
          http://www.cdc.gov/travel/eastasia.htm
          http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/abroad.html

V. Questions?

VI. Cultural - Mandarin Chinese words of the week

VII. Weekly Warming-Up Activities - Research current events in P.R. China. Each week, each member of one group should be prepared to give a brief (1-2 minute) oral overview regarding one news article you found interesting.
   Suggested sources:

VIII. Spring/Summer semester Activities - To increase your knowledge of China and enhance your experience, we recommend that you read one book of your choice that focuses on China (fiction, nonfiction, biography, etc.) during the course of the program. If time permits during our weekly meetings in China, each student may give a 5-8 minute review of his/her book and discuss the similarities and differences between book and observations during the trip. Suggested book list is attached.
VI. **Next meeting: Wednesday, January 31, 6:00-8:30 p.m., 233 Science II**

a. Overview of History, People, Culture, and Languages

b. Introduction to case study methods

c. Questions to think about for next week (you might go to the web to develop answers.)
   i. How old is Chinese civilization and how was it ruled from its early history through 1911?
   ii. When did China become a communist country and who led that movement?
   iii. What was the government initiative known as “The Great Leap Forward” and what were its affects?
   iv. What was the government initiative known as “The Cultural Revolution” and what were its affects?
   v. In terms of U.S. perspective, why is Tiananmen Square in Beijing a well-known landmark?
China Ag Study Abroad 2007 -- Book Suggestions

(don’t feel limited by these choices)

Jung Chang. 1991. *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China.* A true story of how three generations of women in the author’s family fared in the political maelstrom of China during the 20th century. Chang's grandmother was a warlord's concubine. Her gently raised mother struggled with hardships in the early days of Mao's revolution and rose, like her husband, to a prominent position in the Communist Party before being denounced during the Cultural Revolution. Chang herself marched, worked, and breathed for Mao until doubt crept in over the excesses of his policies and purges. Born just a few decades apart, their lives overlap with the end of the warlords’ regime and overthrow of the Japanese occupation, violent struggles between the Kuomintang and the Communists to carve up China, and, most poignant for the author, the vicious cycle of purges orchestrated by Chairman Mao that discredited and crushed millions of people, including her parents.

Xin Ran. 2005. *Sky Burial.* The true story of a Chinese woman who spends 30 years searching for her husband in Tibet where he disappeared during the Chinese occupation of Tibet. They had only been married 100 days when he had to leave. She was a doctor herself and got herself posted in Tibet but was captured and then fled from rebels and spent many years as a native trying to find what happened to him. It is a fascinating story of a unique culture in a very harsh landscape.

Xin Ran. 2002. *The good women of China.* A fascinating story of the women who called in to a call-in show hosted by Xin Ran in the late 1980’s when Deng Xiaoping started opening up China. Not only did she talk directly to these women but many left stories on her answering machine.

Lisa See. 2005. *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan.* Another great story about women’s lives in China during the 19th century. It is the story of two women who shared all of their life secrets with each other through a language known only to women and written on fans.

Adeline Yen Mah. 1997. *Falling Leaves.* Story of a girl’s journey into adulthood during the 1930’s and 40’s – a tough time in China. I have not read this yet but it looks good.

Yang Erche Namu. 2003. *Leaving Mother Lake.* Story of a primitive area in China where a matriarchal society exists and there is no word for father and women make all the decisions and inherit property. Very unusual for China. Good read—exciting and interesting.


Peter Hessler. 2001. *River Town.* Story of a westerner who spends several years in the western China town of Fuling on the Yangtze River and his encounters with the people and their culture. A good read also.

Shu-min Huang. 1998. *The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese Village Through the Eyes of a Community Party Leader (Conflict & Social Change).* Written by a retired Iowa State Professor of Anthropology, this story is told through the eyes of a leading party cadre in a southeast Chinese village about events that affected individuals and families in the village: the downfall of the landlords during the land reform, the rise to political power of poor peasants, the political fanaticism of the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and efforts restore rational and pragmatic policies in China’s countryside.

Amy Tan. 1990. *The Joy Luck Club.* A story of four Chinese-immigrant women and their American-born daughters. Each of the four Chinese women has her own view of the world based on her experiences in China and wants to share that vision with her daughter. The daughters try to understand and appreciate their mothers' pasts, adapt to the American way of life, and win their mothers' acceptance. The book's name comes from the club formed in China by one of the mothers, Suyuan Woo, in order to lift her friends' spirits and distract them from their problems during the Japanese invasion. (Movie based on book.)

Pearl Buck. 1931. *The Good Earth.* This is a well known classic about a farm family in China in times of famine, flood, and prosperity. A farmer, Wang Lung, who lives with his widowed father, marries O-Lan, the homely former slave of a wealthy household, the Hwang Family.