COURSE SYLLABUS
CHN441: Fourth Year Reading and Writing: Advanced Topics II
Web-based advanced Chinese course
PURPOSE / OBJECTIVES OF COURSE

This course is designed to strengthen student skills in reading and writing at the Advanced level of the ACTFL language proficiency descriptions, and to push students toward the Advanced High (emerging Superior) level. Students will gain reading and writing skills in standard (Mandarin) Chinese through work with advanced authentic texts with carefully designed exercises designed to guide comprehension and to strengthen reading strategies. Specifically, students will, as a result of this course:

1. Become aware of the skills and strategies available for improving reading ability in Chinese.
2. Be able to understand main ideas, most supporting details, and argumentative structure in expository and lightly analytical Chinese newspaper and magazine reports, opinion pieces, and other texts on advanced topics directed at an educated general readership.
4. Become acquainted with aspects of Chinese culture and social behavior that relate to the texts.
5. Develop the ability to engage in analysis and argumentation in Chinese by making substantive contributions to asynchronous text-based discussions with peers and instructor in Web-based forums.
6. Develop the ability to compose grammatical and organized essays in Chinese related to the above topics through a process of peer publication and editing.
7. Develop the ability to assess the level of a selected article in Chinese, and analyze the argumentation and other features of the article using techniques that one has learned in this course.
8. Contribute original written posts and essays of quantity and quality sufficient to meet Writing Intensive (WI) course standards, the equivalent of 24 total pages or approximately 7200 characters.

TEXTS & MATERIALS
A series of specially authored reading lessons based on authentic materials, developed under the sponsorship and guidance of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), comprise the text of the course. These lessons and all required materials are integrated into the course Web site.

TOPICS (Course Content)
1. Introduction and Orientation
2. Space Technology
3. Say “No” to Luxury
4. A Nostalgic Look Back at Spring Festival
5. China’s “Fierce Dragon” Jet Fighter
6. The Adultification of Children
7. The Emergence of the Middle Class
8. Final Project

The articles to be covered in the course are characterized by a mix of linguistic functions at the upper end of the Advanced proficiency level. In these materials, Advanced language functions such as narration, description and comparison feature relatively technical, low-frequency vocabulary and complex syntax featuring a distinctly written (书面 shùmiànyǔ) style; students will learn strategies to approach language of this type. Some of the texts make forays into linguistic functions at the Superior level including exposition of abstract/hypothetical argument.

COURSE WRITING REQUIREMENTS
This course requires a significant amount of written production. Text is the only means of communication in the course; students use Web-based forums to discuss course texts and the associated online exercises they have completed. Many of these exercises focus on the usage, language patterns, and argumentative structure of the source texts, bringing those features to students’ attention as potential expressive tools to use in their own writing. The instructor participates fully in the online discussions, offering answers to
student questions and challenging students to support their positions. In order to receive full marks, students must make substantive contributions to the discussion in each unit.

One of the chief learning outcomes of the course targets the development of the ability to write native-like argumentative essays approximately three pages in length. Students compose essays using the Draft Book function in the BRIX courseware, which allows them to work on the essay over time. Each essay requires the submission of at least two drafts. When the first draft is handed in using the Draft Book, it is automatically published as a thread in the Essay Discussion Forum in the current unit. Students are required to read and respond to the first drafts of at least two of their peers, offering comments and questions. In addition, the instructor offers each student individual feedback on the draft, giving suggestions on usage, argumentation, and grammar, and publishing the feedback in the same thread. The student author returns to the Draft Book to perform revisions, and when s/he hands in the second draft, it is published inline in the original thread. A second round of commenting follows. Following this iterative process through five units, students are able significantly to improve their written expression in Chinese at the Advanced level.

WEB/COMPUTER LITERACY

Based on our experience, we feel it is necessary at the outset, during the Welcome and Orientation unit, to review and/or familiarize the students with computer literacy involving Chinese. See course Web site for information regarding input and display on computers running Windows XP or later. We also encourage students to use the Web as a resource for research, e.g. for finding cultural resources.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Participation and Punctuality: The course is designed to take place exclusively on the Web. Students can visit the class Web site from any computer of their choice, with the important qualification that they use computers properly equipped with Chinese language software (see below). Students must log in at least 5 times a week, ready to read and write in Chinese. Students must read the instructions in the Class Schedule for each unit thoroughly and be prepared to interact with classmates. The class will progress through a series of task-based activities. Punctuality in submitting assignments is of vital importance. Points will be deducted from late assignments.

Essays: The Essay is the culminating assignment in each unit. It represents a carefully considered reaction to the lesson text, published on the course Web site for the benefit of the whole class. Response to at least two classmates’ essays in each unit is an essential element of the course. Each essay should be about 1000 characters in length.

Final Project: Students search the internet and select one article in Chinese. Students need (1) to assess the text level and provide a simple analysis of the elements that determine its level; (2) describe the processes and strategies that one has applied while reading the article; (3) Outline the main idea, structure and/or organization, and summarize the main idea for each section/paragraph; (4) In Chinese, write a 后感 duhougan (reaction to/reflection on the selected article). Students should start work on their final projects by the beginning of the prior instructional unit (by the latest). The last week of the semester is set aside for students to finish this project.

GRADING

Criteria differ from unit to unit, depending on the items there are to complete in the unit. Roughly speaking, web-based exercises count for approximately 30% of your grade and written contributions (including essays and comments on essays) count for approximately 70%. Generally speaking, the most important criterion for receiving points is whether or not there is ample evidence of student participation through text-based postings, without reference to accuracy. Accuracy develops over time in the course, and improvement, rather than high accuracy at any given point, is the goal. In awarding points, the instructor will pay attention to features of discourse and argumentation appropriate to the higher-order cognitive skills requisite for discussion of the reading material in the course, and will provide appropriate written feedback. Discussion must be rigorous and argumentation supported, rather than being a simple statement of personal opinion. Points will be assigned for all activities, and a student's final total will roughly determine his or her course grade, using the traditional formula 90-100=A, 80-89=B, etc. For those students who have chosen the CR/NC grading option, work that would receive a grade of "C" or better is needed to receive credit.
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
Students should have basic knowledge of how to use a computer with Chinese language applications, including how to surf the Web and how to input Chinese text.

**Hardware:** any computer with Web access and Chinese language input capability.

**Software:**
1. Operating System: Windows XP (SP 2) or Mac OS 10.1 and above
2. Chinese viewing and inputting capabilities: PC software such as the Global IMEs built into the Windows operating system or the International keyboards built into the Mac OS.
3. Web browsers: A recent version of Firefox or Chrome is recommended. Microsoft IE not recommended.
4. Internet Connection: dial-up is OK, but a cable-modem or DSL connection, or better, is recommended. Networked computers are available in the College of Language, Linguistics, and Literature's Multimedia Computer Lab during open hours in Moore 153 (Mac Lab and PC Lab), as long as no class is scheduled. Computers in both locations have the requisite software.

PREREQUISITES
Students must have earned credits in CHN401 or 402 (or equivalent). Please contact the instructor if you have questions.