

## **Digital Storytelling Abroad: Some Lessons Learned in Beijing**

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### I. The Course: "The Chinese City: Living Beijing" (Spring 2004)

#### A. Course Format:

- "Extended Study": One semester on-campus + three to six weeks off-campus
- "Living Beijing": Once-a-week on-campus class meetings + three weeks in Beijing producing digital storytelling projects/documentaries

#### B. Course Goal: Understand the presence of the past in a globalized Chinese city.

#### C. Course Content:

- 1) Multidisciplinary: Expose students to the varieties of ways one can experience and imagine a city.
- 2) Historical: Course materials presented in more or less chronological order.
- 3) Final project: "Continuities in Transition"
  - a) On-campus: "Researched proposal."
  - b) On-site: Gather digital data and compose a digital story that explains "continuity in transition" as it relates to a specific topic.

### II. Lessons Learned: Some Dos and Don'ts

#### A. Things to Keep:

- 1) Preparatory research
- 2) Central location on site
- 3) On-site production schedule:
  - Week One: Getting oriented
  - Week Two: Intensive fieldwork and rough cuts
  - Week Three: Final fieldwork and intensive editing
- 4) On-site tech support (if you can get it!)

#### B. Things to Change:

- 1) More intensive pre-departure technical preparation: hands-on and project-oriented
- 2) Limit class size and number of projects
- 3) Project conception:
  - Site specificity
  - Ethical considerations
  - Local collaboration?
- 4) Build on past projects: student project archive

### III. Conclusion: Well Begun is Half Done

#### **Suggested viewing:**

Beijing 2004: Insight on the Student Process of Creating Beijing Documentaries  
(<http://computing.colgate.edu/itsl/beijing/>)