

**Curriculum Project:** Doing Ethical Business in China: Human Resource Management

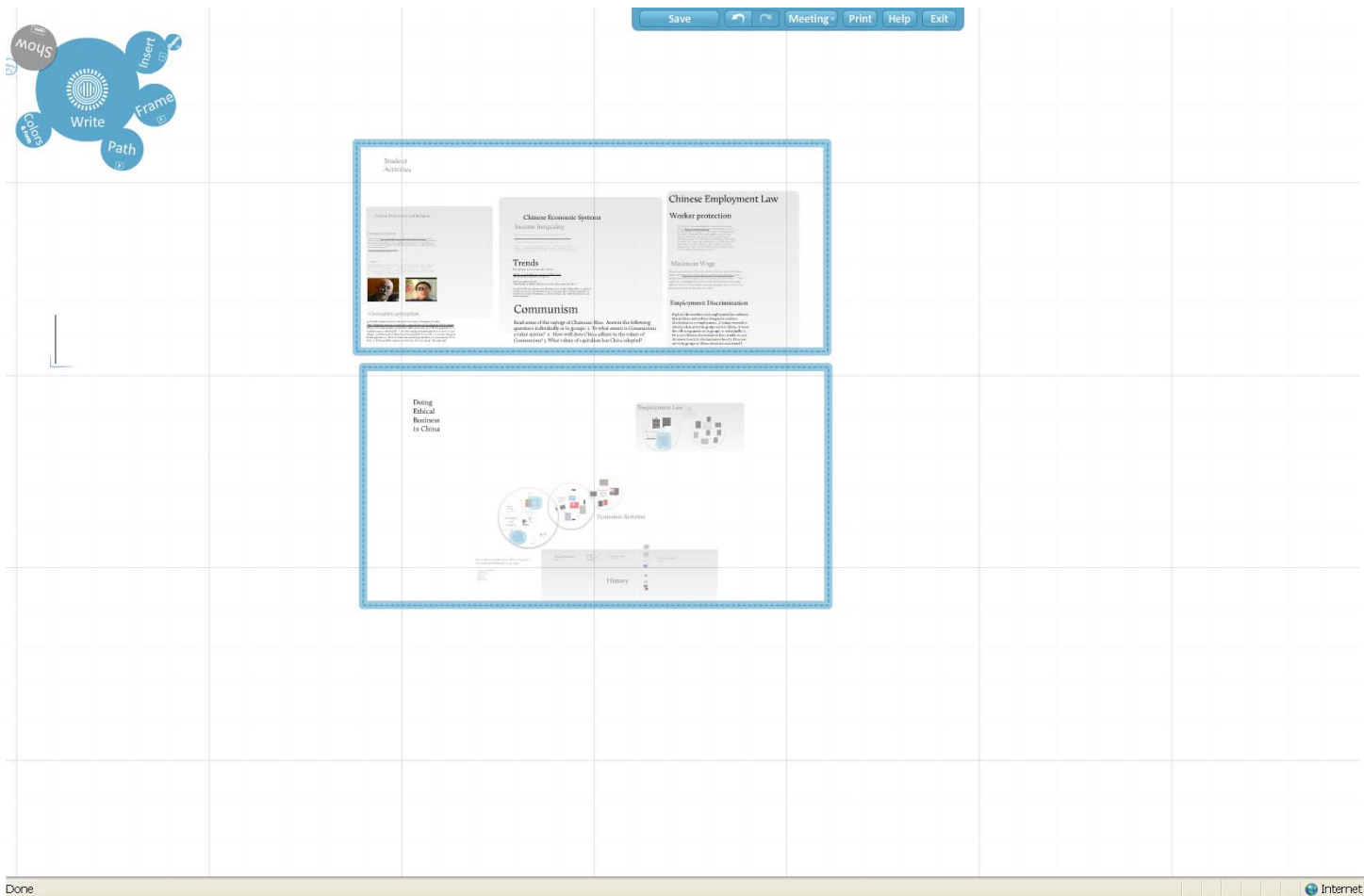
**Developed by:** Elizabeth D. Scott, participant, Fulbright-Hays Seminar Tour, China 2010

**Established Goals:** Students will be able to identify values that are emphasized in China and articulate how those values affect business decision-making with respect to employees.

**Understandings:** Students will understand how Chinese national culture affects human resource management decisions.

**Essential Questions:** What are the values that Chinese people share? How do those values manifest themselves in national and local employment-related laws and organizational practices?

**Learning Activities:** The instructor begins the lecture using the Prezi created for this project. It is found at <http://prezi.com/lygmezr8kd95/doing-ethical-business-in-china/>. A suggested path is outlined, but the instructor may vary the path to exclude aspects not relevant to the particular course or to include additional background material. The lesson plan is designed for one three-hour session in a semester-long course, “Doing Ethical Business in China,” so it presumes that the students will have many chances during the semester to revisit these topics and will have had a broad introduction to Chinese business history before this session. However, the plan can be used on a stand-alone basis within a course on a related topic, such as International Business or Human Resources Management. In that case, the instructor may wish to devote more time to each of the sub-sections, to choose one focal point, or to extend some of the student activities into homework or group projects. The lesson can easily be divided into two or three segments to accommodate other class schedules. Students who have Internet access may use the Student Activities portion of the Prezi for assignments and may be asked to review additional resources on the Prezi. (See screenshot of the Prezi below. The lower box supports the faculty member’s lecture and has a path the instructor can follow or modify. The top box contains student activities identical to the ones below.)



**Activity one:** *Sources of values: Philosophies and Religions in Chinese Culture.*

Instructor will introduce students to the three major influences on Chinese values (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism) and will explain the role of other major religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) in China.

Student activities:

Visit the website <http://www.froginawell.net/china/2008/04/east-meets-west/>, and view graphics comparing Chinese culture to Western Culture. Answer the following questions in small groups or individually: 1. Can you identify reasons in the philosophy or religions of China that might explain any of the differences identified in the graphics? 2. What might these differences suggest for business relationships? 3. How would American employee expectations that certain rights and benefits will be provided to them fit with the Chinese view of duties and obligations?

View the YouTube videos on *guanxi*. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qingy5JA8w>, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj\\_18XEHeMI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj_18XEHeMI) Answer the following questions in small groups or individually: 1. Do you have any relationships that exhibit the properties of the Chinese concept of *guanxi*? 2. How do you think policies on nepotism, conflict of interest, and equal employment opportunity would be received in a culture that values *guanxi*? 3. Have you ever given someone a job or interview (or received a job or interview) because of the recommendation of a friend, family member, or friend-of-a-friend? Do you think this is an acceptable practice? Why or why not?

Look at Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index ([http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2010/results](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010/results)). Examine the data used to create this index and answer the following questions in small groups or individually: 1. Are the measures biased against or in favor of any religion or philosophy of ethics you have studied? If so,

how? 2. Are the measures biased against or in favor of countries embracing capitalism or communism? If so, how? 3. What possible reasons are there for China's rating? Hong Kong's?

**Activity two:** *Economic systems: Communism and Capitalism.*

Instructor will introduce students to the history of communism in China and current Chinese views of capital and private property, using the Prezi.

Student activities:

Income Inequality

Examine the maps of Income Inequality at one of the following websites:

<http://www.mint.com/blog/trends/mint-map-global-wealth-distribution/?display=wide>

<http://www.visualeconomics.com/income-distribution-by-country/>

Answer the following questions in small groups or individually: 1. Is there more or less income inequality in the US as compared to China? 2. What effect might Chinese values and the history of communism have on views the average Chinese citizen would have of having a large disparity between rich and poor?

Trends

Examine trends in income inequality over time:

<http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2007/gini/>

(Be sure to step through the 3-year period.)

<http://www.gapminder.org/>

(Select Wealth and Health of Nations and click on China, then click "play.")

Answer the following questions in small groups or individually: 1. What effects do you think changes in income have on attitudes towards income inequality? 2. If the current trend of increasing income and life expectancy does not continue, what will be the attitude towards income inequality?

Read some of the sayings of Chairman Mao. Answer the following questions individually or in groups:

1. To what extent is Communism a value system? 2. How well does modern-day China adhere to the values of Communism? 3. What values of capitalism has China adopted?

**Activity three:** *Employment law: Safety and Minimum Wage*

Instructor will introduce students to the Chinese views of labor and employment law, using the Prezi.

Student activities:

Visit the site of the Beijing Children's Legal Aid and Research Center (<http://www.chinachild.org/>) and the Beijing Legal Aid Working Station for Migrant Workers (<http://www.zgnmg.org/>). Find articles about child labor and workplace safety (Google translate will translate the text to English.) Visit the site <http://iso.china-labour.org.hk/en/node/100011> and review common types of employment law cases in Hong Kong. Answer the following questions in small groups or individually: 1. How often do similar cases occur in the United States? 2. What laws in the United States would be relevant to these situations? 3. What relationship do you see between Chinese values and the way the case was addressed in the legal system?

Read about Kentucky Fried Chicken's violation of the minimum wage laws (<http://iso.china-labour.org.hk/en/node/38856>) and answer the following questions in groups or individually: 1. Why might U.S. managers fail to follow the existing minimum wage laws in China? 2. Why might Chinese managers fail to follow the existing minimum wage laws in China?

Explore Chinese labor and employment law websites. Identify laws and policies designed to address discrimination in employment. Conduct research to identify what minority groups exist in China. Answer the following questions in groups or individually: 1. How are Chinese anti-discrimination laws similar to and different from U.S. anti-discrimination laws? 2. How are minority groups in China identified and treated?

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