

**Yale 2012 PIER Summer Institute Global Movement**  
*Sponsored by the Yale Programs in International Educational Resources (PIER)*

**TITLE OF UNIT: Tradition in Transition**

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**School:** Greenwich High School

**Subject Area:** China Today

**Grade Level(s):** 11 and 12

**Time Frame to Allow for Unit:** About 5 lessons

**Introduction:** The unit introduces traditional Confucian values of Chinese society, and then examines how modernity, urbanization and globalization challenge traditional values. I have included guided questions and independent studies related to Lixin Fan's *Last Train Home*, a 2009 documentary about the complex cultural and economic struggles of migrant workers.

**Geographic Connections:**

What are geographic and economic push/pull factors?

How do these factors affect individuals, familial and/or societal values?

**Vocabulary:**

Confucius/ Confucianism: ancient Chinese philosopher. His teachings, based on the family system and proper relationships, became the basis for Chinese imperial education and government employment.

Li: Ritual, doing things according to ceremony and fulfilling proper roles

Filial Piety: Respect and deference for one's parents.

Migrant: a person who moves from one place to another. In this case, migrants within China move from the countryside to the cities.

Hukou System: A system of residence registration, which migrants defy when they move illegally. By leaving their homes in the countryside, migrants may risk rights to education and healthcare.

Special Economic Zone: After China opened to the world in the 1970s and 80s, special experiments in capitalism were allowed in different regions. These experiments were expanded over time and resulted in massive new cities.

<b>Stage 1 – Desired Results</b>	
<p><b>Content Standard(s):</b></p> <p>1.6 – Patterns of human movement across time and place.            1.12 – The interdependence of local, national and global economies.            1.13 – The characteristics of and interactions among culture, social systems and institutions.            2.2 Interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including electronic media (maps, charts, graphs, images, artifacts, recordings and text)            2.3 Create various forms of written work (e.g. journal, essay, blog, webpage, brochure) to demonstrate an understanding of history and social studies issues</p>	
<p><b>Understanding (s)/Goals:</b>            Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic opportunity may present hardships for families and traditional values.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Essential Question(s) Related to Theme(s):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why and where do people move?</li> <li>What is the impact of urbanization on China and its people?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Student Objectives (Outcomes):</b>            Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the ways that modern urbanization challenge Confucian traditions.</li> <li>Apply the themes from the film <i>Last Train Home</i> to a current event journal assignment.</li> </ul>	
<b>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</b>	
<p><b>Performance Task(s):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will engage in discussion of <i>Last Train Home</i> and complete comprehension questions.</li> <li>Students will complete separate independent journal assignment about urban life and economic activity and how it challenges tradition.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion performance</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3 – Learning Plan</b>	
<p><b>Learning Activities:</b></p> <p>1. Introduction to Confucianism</p> <p>a. Background notes about Confucius, his teachings and how his values shaped Chinese society (family relations, traditional gender roles, first sons as social security system, aversion to commerce).</p> <p>b. Primary Sources – “A Meeting between Gentlemen,” “On the Duties of an Official,” Excerpts</p>	

from Court Cases from Late Imperial China

(<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/exeas/resources/your-honor.html>)

Post lecture, reading questions:

- Who/what is a gentleman in our culture? Why?
- Think of an example from your own life where rules, propriety and role are important to maintaining harmony. What situations rely most on decorum and ritual? Why?
- To what extent do we value the concept of the collective group over the individual today? When is it appropriate to sacrifice for the group? Is it ever ok to be selfish?
- Confucianism stresses the ways of a glorious past. How could reverence for the past and tradition positively or negatively affect a nation?

## 2. Contrast between traditional China and Modern China

Background on China's opening, Special Economic Zones

NPR Planet Money, the Secret Document That Transformed China

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/money/2012/01/13/145184551/the-friday-podcast-the-secret-document-that-transformed-china>

## 3. Background on Migrant status and issues in China

- What is the Hukou System?
- Why did China create such a system?
- Is this system fair? Is it still necessary?
- What is the cost/benefit analysis of involved in migration?
- How could movement challenge Confucian traditions that we learned about earlier?

## 4. Viewing Guide and Statistics:

Example of Urban Growth, SEZ Shenzhen, China

<http://www.randomwire.com/shenzhen-before-and-after>

<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=371799>

Google Maps

<http://maryannodonnell.wordpress.com/2011/09/10/shenzhen-population-statistics-1979-2011/>

Thought questions:

- Why build a city in this location? What factors could lead to this decision?
- How could the emergence of new economic opportunity in Shenzhen affect the people already living in the area, as well as people outside of the area?
- As population grows rapidly, what issues could the city of Shenzhen or China have to consider?
- What s

## 5. Lixin Fan's Last Train Home (2009)

See handout – attached

## 6. Independent Study

See handout- Attached

***Resource List/Bibliography:***

Last Train Home: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1512201/>

***How Are You Going to Use This Unit?***

This lesson will be used as an introduction to China Today, our modern Chinese studies course. The students are 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders of all learning levels.

# Last Train Home Viewing Guide

*Last Train Home* chronicles the daily struggles of a migrant family in Guangzhou. Along with over a hundred million migrant workers, the Zhangs return home for the Chinese New Year holiday. Between traditional countryside and the big city, migrant workers are faced with difficult, often heart-rending choices. As you watch the film, keep the viewing questions in mind; comprehension will aid in discussion and provide a basis for your independent reading.

## **Comprehension Guide: think about these questions during the film.**

- Compare and contrast life in Guangzhou, one of China's largest cities, to life in the countryside. Where would you rather live? Why?
- How does the film portray the effects of migration on the city and on the countryside?
- Describe work and labor conditions in the city.
- What are the motivations of the family members? Are they happy? How can you tell?

## **Short Responses:**

1. You have often discussed the "American Dream" in previous classes. Using examples from *Last Train Home*, what is the Chinese Dream?

2. How would Confucius feel about urbanization and the lifestyle of migrant workers? What advice would he give?

# Confucian Tradition vs. Modernity Independent Assignment

Modern China is the world's largest country with a rapidly improving standard of living. But prosperity has raised great challenges to traditional teachings.

Choose one of the topics below.

- Research 2-3 current event articles on the subject. In a few sentences, summarize each article and describe how the issues presented are a challenge to tradition.
- Complete in your Journal: What Would Confucius Do? (WWCD!)  
How would Confucius feel about the changes occurring in China? Why?

## Topics:

- a. Population Growth and the One Child Policy
- b. Advanced Aging and Elderly Care
- c. Global Influences on Chinese Culture
- d. Education – Who is educated? What is taught? How?