



School of Modern Languages

Newcastle University

Chinese @ NEWCASTLE



EDITED BY Linda Cheng & Linlin Fang

2024 Edition

Studying Chinese as part of your degree at Newcastle University

In the School of Modern Languages, we operate a dual entry system. You can start your East Asian language studies with us from scratch, or with a GCSE/A Level qualification.

We offer a range of undergraduate degree programmes that allow you to study East Asian languages and culture. You can study our specialised degree for Chinese or Japanese Studies, or include East Asian languages alongside other subjects on our other programmes.

Our classes are small to ensure that you are supported by our dedicated teaching team.

There is so much more to studying languages at university than just learning to speak a language. We offer a range of East Asian culture modules covering history, politics, business, film, literature and popular culture.

See below the degree programmes offered in the School of Modern Languages, where you can study Chinese as part of your degree. UCAS codes for each programme is also included in the brackets.

- BA (Hons) Chinese Studies or Japanese Studies (TT12)
- BA (Hons) Modern Languages, Translation & Interpreting (R9Q9)
- BA (Hons) Modern Languages (T901)
- BA (Hons) Modern Languages and Business Studies (TN92)
- BA (Hons) Modern Languages and Linguistics (QT19)

Chinese and Japanese*
at Newcastle University

Ranked 3rd in The Complete
University Guide 2024

*Asian Studies' category in The Complete University Guide 2024

Year Abroad: One of the attractions of studying Chinese at university is the opportunity to spend a year abroad. Immerse yourself in East Asian culture, while developing your language fluency. We are especially proud of the flexibility and variety we offer during the year abroad in East Asia. We offer 5 destinations in China, ranging from cosmopolitan cities to exciting rural destinations.

Teaching quality: We are a great place to study East Asian studies. Our position in global rankings demonstrates our commitment to academic excellence, teaching quality and student experience.

According to the 2024 Complete University Guide, we ranked 3rd in the UK for Asian studies with a high student satisfaction rating (78%). This means we are one of the best universities for East Asian studies in the UK. Please visit [our website](#) for more details of each degree programme offered in the School of Modern Languages, Newcastle University. If you have queries about studying Chinese with us, you can get in touch with our Chinese Language Co-ordinator, Ms Linlin Fang: linlin.fang@newcastle.ac.uk.



The Chinese Independent Film Archive (CIFA) at Newcastle University

Students studying Chinese at Newcastle University will now also benefit from our unique resources — The Chinese Independent Film Archive — if they would like to learn about the culture, society, history, and people's lives in modern China.

The Chinese Independent Film Archive (CIFA) is the home to nearly 800 independent films, over 150 oral history interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, and other related material culture. The project explores how the relationship to the state and the market has shaped Chinese independent cinema in terms of its production, circulation, and reception.

It is the only archive of its kind in the world, established with the help of a research grant from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. CIFA aims not only to safeguard a significant but marginalised film culture for future generations, but also to act as an alternative record of social changes, historical traumas, and the lives of ordinary people in modern and contemporary China.

CIFA works closely with a large number of Chinese independent filmmakers and curators, as well as a range of industry partners and cultural institutions to raise the visibility of Chinese independent cinema and enhance the world's understanding of China's film industry and film culture in China.

CIFA also works with scholars and universities around the world to advance the study of Chinese independent cinema and encourage the use of the collections at CIFA for research on, and the teaching of, modern and contemporary China.



Graduate Jack Deverson awarded an MBE



Jack Deverson, one of our previous graduates who studied Modern Languages (Chinese and German) and graduated in 2015, was awarded an MBE for services to education in recognition of the work of his Sunderland-based organisation, Evidence Based Education. Jack started learning Chinese from scratch at Level A (beginner's level), made outstanding progress during his Year Abroad in China, and was permitted to skip Level C. He successfully completed Level D Chinese (further advanced level) study with a 1st class mark.

Founded in 2015, Evidence Based Education (EBE) is a teacher development, school improvement and research organisation, and the home of the Great Teaching Toolkit, a personalised professional development platform. The organisation currently has 17 employees and more than 14,000 teachers accessing its services. In December 2023, EBE was awarded a contract to deliver training to 23,000 teachers in the UAE over the next two years. The contract will see the organisation translate courses from its popular Great Teaching Toolkit into Arabic.

Contact us

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Visit our website at www.ncl.ac.uk/sml/



Chinese cultural workshop in local schools

On 9 February 2024, just one day before the Chinese New Year, one of our Chinese lecturers, Ms Linlin Fang, visited a primary school to deliver a 50-minute workshop on Chinese culture to Year 4 pupils. During the session, Ms Fang introduced the significance of the Spring Festival to Chinese people, explained the customs observed during the New Year period, and shared the traditional Chinese New Year story featuring a monster named 'Nian'. The pupils showed keen interest in the tale and also learned the meaning of 'Guo Nian' in Chinese.

Additionally, Ms Fang conducted a Chinese paper cutting activity, teaching the pupils to craft intricate patterns using the Chinese character 春 (which symbolises Spring). By the end of the workshop, all the pupils had grasped how to wish someone 'Happy New Year' in Chinese and were each presented with a red envelope containing sweets. Their excitement and engagement throughout the session impressed Ms Fang, as they actively participated by asking and answering questions.

The school had organised a Chinese Day the day before Ms Fang's visit, where the pupils were treated to a delicious Chinese lunch. Their favourite among the Chinese dishes served was chicken noodles!



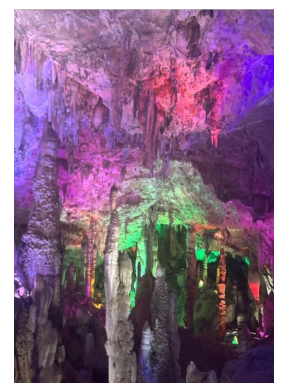
Our student Zoe is sharing her Year Abroad China experience below. Zoe is currently studying in Sichuan University, China.

The last six months in China during my year abroad have honestly been some of the best moments of my life. As I've been fortunate enough to be able to travel not only around the beautiful province of Sichuan but also around the whole country, I can fully immerse myself into the culture to get the most out of my experience here, as well as improving my language abilities. Last month, for example, I travelled around the province of Yunnan (the province just below Sichuan), as the high-speed railways (*gāotiě*) are not only fast and convenient, but cheap too. Hopping from place to place, I was able to see natural marvels such as the Jade Dragon Snow Mountain at sunrise, or the amazing rock formations at the Leaping Tiger Gorge.

As we recently celebrated Chinese New Year, I revelled in the opportunity to throw myself into yet another cultural experience and further understand the people I'm living amongst. New Year's Eve saw 15,000 people flocking to the outskirts of Chengdu to witness perhaps the best display of drones I've ever seen. The sky lit up to reveal an array of colourful dragons, flowers, and other elements representing Chengdu. I was also lucky enough to have the pleasure of being



invited to the village of a Chinese friend in the countryside to celebrate the New Year. Being the first foreigners to ever step foot in this village, my friends and I were bombarded by curious people eager to get to know us. It was certainly a challenge to try to understand their local dialect, but we succeeded in the end. We were made to feel very welcome and spent numerous hours playing mah-jong and ate lots of delicious food. The night ended with an extravagant firework display and copious firecrackers. It was certainly interesting to see the contrast between the city and the countryside, and how their New Year celebrations differ. I'm really excited for the next semester in China, and for the adventures I'm yet to have.





From Lara, another student who is now on her Year Abroad in Xiamen, China:

Learning in China has been different from any studying I have done before. Of course, university here is not the same – the hours are longer, the expectations higher, and the work culture intense. The corridors in my college are open and run along the outside of the building, exposed to Xiamen’s baking sun and the occasional relieving gust of wind. My morning commute consists of a long trek across wide paved streets and arched stone bridges, hugging the shade of the palm trees as I go. It is very different from my old walk through Jesmond’s damp avenues.



Besides the obvious changes – the climate, the culture, and the course – studying in China has also changed how I view the act of learning a language. As a student, I am always studying, actively learning, dragging myself to classes and persevering through long library sessions. However, here, wrapped in a foreign language and culture, I am learning every day without even trying. I am learning when I get lost in Beijing and have to ask for directions. I am revising vocabulary when I want to order a new kind of milk tea. I am adjusting to culture when I respond to a compliment too swiftly and am reminded I ought to be humbler. I’ve learnt to converse with the lady who serves the canteen noodles, with curious taxi drivers, and with the no-longer-intimidating groups of well-dressed young people in the Shanghai nightclub queues.

Throughout first and second year, I was learning Chinese on screen and on paper, the language not filtering any further into my life past when I closed my laptop. Now I know that there is more to learning a language than flashcards and Duolingo! Studying Chinese has opened up this new world encased within China to me – this vastly different way of life. I will come home from this year abroad with a fresh perspective on how it feels to be ‘foreign’, and how distinct some parts of the world are from what we know in the UK. In addition (fingers crossed) with a much-improved level of Chinese.

Jacob Bowers 江博文, Level C Chinese, Stage 4 student

Studying Chinese at Newcastle has been a thoroughly enriching and rewarding experience. Not only is the standard of teaching from the Chinese department exceptional, but every teacher also goes above and beyond to support us in our learning. This was demonstrated when, despite having to switch to online learning a few years ago, the Chinese department adapted really well and made sure lessons were just as interesting, and that we could still get the most out of the classes, despite not being there in person. At first, the idea of learning a language which is so different to English felt like a daunting task, but the teachers made lessons fun and engaging, which, in turn, made the task less daunting over time. Thanks to my experience at Newcastle, I have been able to learn so much more about Chinese culture than I thought I could, and learning what is known to be a difficult language for English speakers has turned out to be a really enjoyable experience.

I was also lucky enough to have the opportunity to study in Taiwan for a semester during my year abroad to continue to improve my Chinese. This semester alone was one of the best experiences of my life and I was able to learn so much and make a lot of progress in a relatively short period of time. Being able to experience the culture, cuisine, and way of life first hand was such a vital experience which definitely broadened my cultural horizons. I was also lucky enough to meet so many people from all over the world, sharing experiences and learning from each other. Overall, studying Chinese at Newcastle and during my semester abroad in Taiwan has been an incredible experience that I would highly recommend to anyone.



Lauren Binns 白璐雯, Level C Chinese, Stage 4 student

Studying Chinese at Newcastle University has been a truly wonderful experience. I feel incredibly lucky to be living and studying in a city as diverse and culturally rich as Newcastle. With a large Chinese community and our very own Chinatown right on our doorstep, I have had many opportunities to immerse myself in the language and culture.

Throughout my degree, I have benefited from a range of Chinese cultural- and language-learning opportunities that the university and the city have to offer. Whether it's signing up for a calligraphy session with the university's Anglo-Chinese society, finding a language and cultural exchange partner through the Language Resource Centre's Online Tandem Board, or practising my speaking skills in Chinatown's restaurants and supermarkets, there have been endless opportunities to learn and grow.

In terms of my degree itself, the teaching quality is superb, and all our teachers are incredibly enthusiastic, friendly, and supportive, and are always helping us further develop our language skills and cultural awareness. What's more, is that because the Chinese language cohort at Newcastle is relatively small (less than 30), it feels like such a special tight-knit family. I love how close we are and that we can always work together and help each other out.

Reflecting on my Chinese language learning journey at Newcastle University that began all the way back in 2019, I am amazed at how much my Chinese language skills have flourished. From learning how to introduce myself in my first year to discussing the complex housing situation in China in my final year – the progress I've made has been incredible! I look forward to progressing even further and for the day when I can finally visit China and immerse myself fully in its fascinating language and culture.



Anonymous, Level B Chinese, Stage 2 student:

I chose Newcastle University because I was confident that the linguistics and Chinese course is well-rounded and I felt like the university cared about me as a student in the application process, in addition to the city being home to a large Anglo-Chinese community. I felt that Newcastle University treats its taught languages with equal respect, which was one of my struggles in finding a university. I often found that Chinese was not considered a modern language option in many courses in the first place, which I felt didn't suit my interests. I applied during the tail-end of the pandemic, so I was still not able to travel to scope out any UK universities and my choices were therefore all based on the information given by the universities and word-of-mouth—but I am happy with where I ended up because in comparison to stories from my friends in other places, I truly believe that the course that I have chosen has benefited my knowledge and facilitated my learning very effectively.

Student life in Newcastle was surprisingly comforting because it is such a student city. I felt safe being on my own because there are students everywhere I go, and people are always warm and welcoming in the shops I enter. I plan to go back to my home country and start working there and possibly pursue a Master's in Translation or Speech Pathology, which I feel my bachelor's degree from Newcastle University would have properly prepared me for. My goal is to be able to work with people, exchanging cultures and ideas and constantly learning and growing.



From Dr Fang Su, one of our Chinese language lecturers

Welcome to Newcastle University, where students from all across the UK choose to pursue their studies in Chinese language and culture! We are confident that regardless of the reasons for choosing our university, students will find satisfaction in our outstanding courses and services.

Our commitment to professional teaching means that we celebrate every small achievement our students make. Here, we've cultivated an environment akin to a family, forging strong emotional connections between students and teachers. Regular and warm communication ensures that our academic community is filled with a sense of belonging. As a result, our student satisfaction remains consistently high.

Our four-year Chinese language programme offers a comprehensive learning experience. In the first and second years, we focus on helping students establish a solid language foundation while introducing them to the vibrant and diverse culture of China. This prepares them seamlessly for their third-year study abroad experience in China.

Moving on to the final year, we've designed a specialised module, "Historical and Cultural Interpretations of China through classics and newspaper reading", to enable students to delve deeper into Chinese societal topics, gain a comprehensive understanding of the real China, analyse its current state and development, and interpret Chinese culture more profoundly.

This module places emphasis on three key aspects:

- Firstly, we explore various genres of classical Chinese literature, with a primary focus on Tang and Song poetry, guiding students to a deeper understanding of Chinese literary culture.
- Secondly, we delve into significant philosophical and religious doctrines from a historical perspective, facilitating a better comprehension of critical issues in China's development, such as cultural and political systems.
- Thirdly, we encourage students to critically evaluate policy discussions related to China's current situation and globalisation challenges.

With all-round learning, from language to culture, from the UK to China, from ancient times to the present, our students are becoming the emerging leaders and experts of a new generation. Picture yourself joining this exciting cohort, where possibilities are limitless, and life is nothing short of extraordinary! We can't wait to welcome you into our Newcastle family, where dreams take flight and possibilities are endless.

