

USC Sol Price School of Public Policy
**“Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Sustainability: The case
of Danzhai”**

USC Price China Lab PPD 613a and 613b
Spring and Summer 2019

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USC Price International Labs

The Price School International Labs integrate scholarly knowledge with professional practice by providing consulting services in a setting outside the United States. Lab participants work collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams to address a particular project identified by the client in the host country. With active guidance from their professor, students analyze information pertinent to the project and its context, and then produce a set of policy recommendations for the client. These recommendations are supported by classroom knowledge, academic research, analytical tools, databases, case studies, together with various maps and graphics.

As participants transition from the classroom to a real-world international setting, they gain direct experience with translating professional practice in a cross-cultural context. While some background research and preparation are necessary prior to leaving the U.S., the bulk of the assignment is undertaken on an intensive basis in the field. The on-site work culminates in a presentation to the client. The International Labs are designed as integrative professional experiences for graduate students from across the Price School. Graduate students from other USC programs may also join on a case-by-case basis (with permission from the instructor). The labs provide students with an opportunity to build their credentials and experience while extending their network of professional contacts.

The International Lab comprises two components. PPD 613a is a 1-unit course in the spring semester that precedes and is the prerequisite for a companion two-week, 3-unit intensive field course offered early in the summer term. Although the two are closely coupled, they are technically two distinct courses.

USC Price China Laboratory 2019

The first component of the China Lab, PPD 613a, will comprise four sessions held at USC during the Spring 2019 semester. Classes will be held in RGL 215 from 6PM – 9:20PM on the following dates: January 7; February 11; March 18; and, April 15. The second component, PPD 613b, will be conducted on an intensive basis in Beijing and Danzhai, China from Monday, May 20 through Friday, May 31. A detailed daily schedule for this intensive component will be announced prior to arrival in Beijing.

Beijing, previously known as Peking, is the capital city of the People's Republic of China. Chinahighlights.com refers to 10 interesting facts you know about Beijing, as you plan your Journey to this Lab. See: <https://www.chinahighlights.com/beijing/beijing-facts.htm>.

In the lab, we will explore the role of public-private partnerships and corporate social responsibility as a strategy for poverty alleviation and increased sustainability. Our focus will be on Danzhai village. Danzhai is a county in the southeast of Guizhou province, China. With a population of approximately 172,000, it is under the administration of the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture. The region is renowned for its unique geographic, cultural and ethnic diversity, including the distinctive rice terraces, and Miao ethnic crafts and traditions.

Wanda group will be our primary client. In 2014 the Wanda Group, designated it as the site for its 'Enterprise Sponsored County-wide Comprehensive Poverty Alleviation' program. Wanda Group has committed to invest RMB300 million to a Danzhai vocational school, RMB500 million for a Danzhai poverty alleviation fund, and RMB700 million for a Danzhai Wanda Village, which includes a culturally sensitive hotel and town district built in the distinctive Miao architectural tradition. Wanda Group's total investments total 1.5 billion RMB and the tourism village is expected to provide up to an additional 3,000 jobs.

This year's China Lab will focus on innovative strategies to address the challenges of reducing poverty and protecting cultural traditions and the environment through social corporate responsibility, and public-private partnerships. During our time in Beijing and Danzhai, we will have a series of meetings with key stakeholders, which together with related projects and initiatives tested throughout the world will help us develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for a private corporation like the Wanda Group and the local government to tackle this issue.

During the 1-unit preparatory course in the spring semester, students will conduct background research, form thematic teams, identify relevant case studies, and develop a proposed work plan that will guide the fieldwork in the summer. During the 3-unit intensive summer course, PPD 613b, students will spend two weeks in Beijing. During this time we will have meeting with experts and practitioners, conducting site visits and working collaboratively on the project. This work culminates in the submission of a final written report and a single, integrated presentation of that report to the client on the final day of the Lab.

Course Objectives

As with all USC Price International Labs, the learning objective is to learn how to translate "classroom knowledge" into professional practice, and to do so in a setting outside the United States. The pedagogical model draws on a professional consulting paradigm, with a clearly identified client and terms of reference for the students' work.

Specifically, the learning objectives for the two-part lab include the following:

- Integration and application of classroom knowledge to a specified problem context. Students will have the opportunity to develop their skills associated with synthesizing existing research, finding and gathering data relevant to the project, and using the data to diagnose problems, design and assess various options, and develop recommendations that take into account the constraints facing the client.

- Management of an international consulting project, paying particular attention to formulating and adhering to a manageable work plan. Students will gain valuable practice in presenting analyses of issues and recommendations in a concise, clear and interesting manner from the perspective of their client. Participation in the Lab also entails an affirmation of professional norms of conduct. Students are expected to adhere to professional norms of punctuality, thoroughness, reliability, communication skills, professional appearance, integrity and ability to work well in multi-cultural teams.
- Personal growth in terms of teamwork, by developing a better understanding of how to function as part of a team with international members. Participation in the Lab provides students with useful insights into their individual strengths and what they can contribute to a team effort, as well as how to resolve interpersonal and organizational issues within the team. The course also intends to attract students with diverse backgrounds and interests, so that individual team members are able to contribute the specialized knowledge related to their field of study.
- Translation of professional practice in a cross-cultural setting. Professional practice as developed in the United States and elsewhere is embedded in a particular social, economic and cultural context. A key objective of the course is for students to gain a better awareness of how to adapt their professional practice to suit contexts that are often quite different from those in the US and elsewhere.
- Enhanced knowledge of social corporate responsibility as an effective tool to alleviate poverty and protect the environment. Students are challenged to understand the theoretical underpinnings of emergency management administration and training. Additionally, they should develop lessons learned from a wide range of case studies and assess the applicability of those lessons for the Italian context.

Assignments and Determination of Grades

Spring semester (1-unit course)

Final grades for the 1-unit course PPD 613a are based on the following items:

- **Assignment 1: Self-introductions.** Each student will introduce him/herself during the first class session and then will prepare a one-two paragraph introduction that will be posted to Blackboard for future reference for all team members. The self-introduction should briefly explain your background training, knowledge and interests, your past involvement in environmental policy, NGOs, social corporate responsibility, and the specific areas in which you are interested. Please also indicate whether you speak Chinese (10%)
- **Assignment 2: Academic review.** Each student will identify, read and report on a scholarly articles pertaining to key aspects of social corporate responsibility and public-private partnerships with the goal of alleviating poverty and protecting the environment. The 2-3 page report should summarize the literature in question while explaining its potential relevance for practitioners. (30%)

- **Assignment 3: Case study.** Working in teams, students will research case studies relating to strategies for poverty alleviation and protection of the environment through social corporate responsibility. Each team will present its findings in class with an emphasis on the lessons learned from that case study. **(20%)**
- **Assignment 4: “Translation”.** Each student will write a 2-3 page essay assessing how readily the prior case studies and academic reviews apply (or not) to the China context. What are some of the unique policy, cultural or economic conditions in China that may need to be considered? **(30%)**
- **Class participation.** The relevant metric here is how each student’s participation enriched the experience of others in the class. **(10%)**

Summer semester (3-unit course)

While *individual* effort and initiative is essential, ultimately it is the quality of the *group* product that matters to the client. Accordingly, final grades for the 3-unit course (PPD 613b) are based on both group and individual components. Although each student will be contributing in her own way to the outcome, the written report will be evaluated as a single, integrated document. All students succeed or fail in equal measure, based on the quality of the group work. Similarly, the final presentation made to the client will be evaluated as a single, coherent effort. Accordingly, half of each student’s grade for this 3-unit course will be calculated as follows:

- **Final group written report.** This report will be addressed to the client, but should also be of interest to a wider audience. It should be a summative effort that states its purpose clearly while also explaining its findings and recommendations in a thorough, professional and persuasive manner. Arguments should be supported – as needed – with an appropriate range of data, graphs, illustrations, analytical work, appendixes and bibliographic references. The emphasis should be on clarity of thought, with a crisp writing style. Its length should be kept to a minimum, subject to fully accomplishing what it has set out to do. **(15%)**
- **Final group presentation to client.** The presentation made to the client should generally follow a parallel structure to the written report, but with appropriate adjustments to reflect the different medium of communication. Although each student should contribute to its content in some meaningful way, the presentation itself should not be cluttered with multiple voices. The emphasis should be on a single, integrated, coherent presentation on behalf of the entire group. **(10%)**
- **Interim group written report.** A full draft of the written report should be submitted to the instructor three days prior to the final. Because there is so little time for review, feedback and revision, this interim effort is of equal weight to the final. **(15%)**
- **Interim group presentation.** A practice run of the final presentation will be given two days prior to the final. **(10%)** The remaining half of each student’s grade will be based more directly on individual effort, as indicated here:
- **Class participation.** This includes punctuality, professionalism, and regular participation

in all aspects of the Lab. Ultimately, however, the value of each student's contribution is based on how others in the class benefit from his/her involvement. **(15%)**

- **Professional journal.** This is intended to be the centerpiece of your individual effort, and it is weighted accordingly. At one level, it is a daily record of your activities in the Lab. More than that, it is a venue for you to reflect on the Lab experience as you are experiencing it. You should aim to produce a thoughtful set of daily observations and reflections of enduring value. **(25%)**
- **Photo contest.** Each student will submit three photos, one in each of the following categories: a) Photo pertaining to the overall theme of this Lab; b) Photo revealing what it is like to participate in this Lab; c) Photo that shines with creativity and artistry. Although the instructor will assign grades based on his own judgment, the three contest winners – one in each category – will be chosen by their peers through a ballot. **(10%)**

Course schedule – Spring semester (PPD 613a)

Although the spring semester comprises only one unit of academic credit, it is of crucial importance to ensuring the group arrives in China well prepared for the intensive portion of the course. Once one has arrived on site, it will be too late to prepare. Accordingly, the spring semester has four successive sessions, culminating in a full state of readiness.

Session 1 (Jan): Session content includes client background & introduction; terms of reference; course overview; review of on-line platform; travel logistics; and scholarly context of policy issue. Introduction assignment is due February 15.

Session 2 (Feb): Assignment 2 (academic reviews) is due March 1.

Session 3 (Mar): Team presentation of case studies, prepared in advance using the online platform. Class discussion of lessons learned. Due March 18.

Session 4 (Apr): Assignment 4 (“translation”) is due April 15. In class, the instructor will lead a discussion and assessment of how lessons learned from the case studies and the scholarly articles may or may not apply to the Italian context.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to the TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work

as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code. See Section 11.00 (under University Governance) for a description of violations of university standards and Appendix A for the recommended sanctions: <http://web-app.usc.edu/scampus/university-student-conduct-code/>

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>