

**Figure 1. Some Important Differences Between the Academic Cultures of China and the United States**

	China	United States	Potential Impact on Academics/Campus Life
<b>Conception of Self</b>	Collectivist: higher value placed in own cultural group and individual modesty.	Individualist: self-reliance, self-promotion, value freedom from imposed constraints.	Limited class participation: not wanting to appear immodest; less willing to risk behavior displeasing to group; will not respond to posted activities or even individual invitations of group members do not plan to attend.
<b>Educational Framework</b>	The Confucian system focuses on extensive memorization w/o any requirement to challenge or theorize on what student has memorized.	The American system emphasizes creativity, exploring new ideas challenging existing concepts or theories.	Problems in responding to "why?" Unfamiliarity with group work; discomfort with self-expression. Skill in memorizing can collide with academic honesty policies.
<b>Social Relationships</b>	Formal and hierarchical. Most comfortable in context in which position and rules for behavior are known.	Informal, egalitarian. Social hierarchy is present but less visible and de-emphasized.	Confucian respect for professors can severely inhibit class participation.
<b>Harmony versus Confrontation</b>	In keeping with Confucian and Communist Party teachings, avoid open criticism, controversial topics, or confrontation. "Saving face" important.	Willing to discuss controversial topics, criticize, confront, advance personal view regardless of status of person being challenged.	Huge impact on class dynamics and interaction. Seldom willing to admit blame when confronted.
<b>Rule of Law</b>	Hold greater faith in personal relationships than in written policies or regulations.	Have great faith that laws, regulations, policies lead to fair outcomes and must thus be followed or changed through rule-governed processes.	Rules can be circumvented to achieve goals.
<b>Academic Honesty</b>	System rewards scores on standardized exams—how ever those scores are attained. Focus on product.	A belief in a meritocracy and a cherishing of original thought. Strict belief in citing sources. Focus on process.	Willing to risk violating policies on academic honesty
<b>Role of Silence</b>	<i>San si er xing</i> (think twice before you speak). Meditation is encouraged; prompt speech considered hasty. Student silence is sign of respect for teacher. More pronounced in situations where student's status appears ambiguous or if student feels unwelcome.	Silence in the presence of others is rare and uncomfortable. Focus on interactional competence in academic settings. Silence viewed as lack of preparation, competence or respect.	Seldom participate if not part of grade; seldom given time by teachers to give considered opinion (an absence of hang time or of an inclusive atmosphere to support students risking loss of face to participate.

**Figure Sources**

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