

Shanghai Jiao Tong University

As part of the Master of Business Administration offered by the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) I was privileged to design, develop and deliver INF702 Electronic Commerce to students in Australia, China, Malaysia, Singapore and Fiji. I visited these countries at different times when the course was offered to meet the students and discuss issues related to the course content, lecture materials, assessment items and the textbook.

This webpage details the times I visited Shanghai as part of the course delivery over a three year period starting in 2001 and ending in 2003.

Day 1: Thursday 28 June 2001

This is my first visit to China and the visa stuck in my passport looks very impressive. On the way to the airport to catch the 3pm flight on Singapore Airlines I called into the university to pick up the DVDs and video tapes to test out in the lecture rooms at Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU). The flight to Shanghai requires a one night stopover in Singapore as there is no direct flight from Australia to China. On this flight I am with another USC lecturer Jeanette Van Akkeren who has been to China once before so I will rely on her knowledge.

The Boeing 777-200 aircraft is very new and even in economy class with sufficient leg room, your own screen in the back of the seat in front and a remote control unit that allows you to select from 22 channels of movies, documentaries, flight log, audio channels, shopping and video games, this should fill in some time and personal choice is great instead of putting up with the drop down screens showing a specific movie. The unit also has a telephone but the \$5.90 (USD) per 6 minute blocks is a little too expensive for my liking.

The journey over the top of Australia is smooth and the view magnificent, especially the Gulf country with all the winding rivers and open land. Our flight takes us over Darwin, the Timor Sea and lots of islands and one has thick clouds of smoke coming out the top of the volcano, wow my first volcano. It could have been the one they were showing on the television news for the past couple of days, but from the air you can see so many dormant volcano craters dotting many of the islands.

Singapore Changi Airport connects you to over 200 destinations worldwide, with aircraft taking off and landing continually and because it is at the crossroads it is huge with duty free shops all along the way as we head out to immigration and customs. Here there are no big customs halls as there are so many officials to make sure everyone passes through as quickly as possible.

Outside we caught a taxi that drove us through the tree lined streets and on either side of the road there are these high rise apartment buildings to house their 5 million population on such a small island. After the 20 minute taxi ride that cost \$14 Singapore we arrived at the Carlton Hotel right in the centre of the shopping area. The view from my room on level 10 looks over the city, the park and lots of high rise buildings and many style and colours.

After checking in I went for a walk along Victoria Street and through the markets that sell anything and everything imaginable but by far the biggest and most populated area is the food court that reminds me of China Town in San Francisco but I was not tempted as I didn't want to take the risk of getting sick.

You really know you are in the tropics as the temperature and humidity and as the shops were starting to close at 10pm it was time to retreat to the air-conditioning in the hotel and get some sleep for the continuation of the flight to China.

Day 2: Friday 29 June 2001

First thing I noticed when I woke up was how dark it is even at 7am. Breakfast finished it was time to check out and head back to the airport. Once again the process of checking in, customs and security went smoothly and this time there was a long, long, long walk to Gate E12 passing the many duty free shops along the way.

As we left Singapore it was pouring rain and heavy clouds restricting visibility. All I could see from my window as we passed Vietnam was clouds and when there was a gap, the South China Sea with the occasional ship. Our flight toward mainland China was over Macau and the aircraft seemed to change course at regular intervals but the countryside intrigued me as I have never seen a landscape like this before and you could pick out hills where all the trees and vegetation had been removed and the rivers and streams were brown from what I can only guess is the dirt washing into the water.

There are many farms, small villages, river systems with boats, wide river deltas, roads and railway lines, everything looks so well designed and laid out. As the plane banked to land at Shanghai International Airport the city came into view and I have never seen so many high rise housing complexes in my life and the smog gets thicker and thicker as we approach the runway.

First impression of the airport is how old and unkept it is with uncut grass between runways and taxi ways and the buildings requiring maintenance and a good paint job. Once inside the building guards and officials point out where to go as we made our way toward customs in the 38 degree Celsius temperature with no air conditioning in the building.

Everyone lined up behind the big brass strip that ran across the terminal and waited until an official called you forward. There are soldiers with machine guns watching every movement you make and it feels a little intimidating but I guess that's life in China so I had better get use to it.

Once we passed through customs we were met by Shirley from the [Shanghai Jiao Tong University](#) who held up a board with our names on it so at least we didn't have to find our own way into the city and hotel. Driving along the motorway in the taxi with all the traffic is overwhelming as cars, trucks and busses cut in and out from lane to lane (6 lanes in either direction) beeping their horns letting other drivers know what their driving intentions are and surprisingly it works as I didn't see one accident.

We are staying at the [Hangshen Hotel](#) (built in 1934) on Hangshen Road adjacent to the Xujiahui green belt and the Hengshan Park within walking distance to Xu Jia Hui commercial centre, the university and the shopping and business areas on Huai Hai and Nanjing Road. Our hotel has a separate section for western guests and is quite modern with large open rooms with 2 beds, fridge, television and bathroom and from my room on the eighth floor I look toward the city and over the park and on the right there is a large multi-story Chinese Military Barracks with satellite communication dishes on the roof.

Between 5pm and 7:30pm we met with our co-teachers to discuss the program for Saturday and Sunday to make sure they and the students will be able understand our lecture slides and materials and make arrangement to be picked-up at 8:30am for the short ride to the university.

Before doing anything we exchanged some Australian traveller's cheques for Renminbi or yuán as we needed cash for dinner at Kevin's Café across the road. Jeanette assured me the food is the best and she didn't disappoint as the prawns I had were magnificent. Back in my room I found some information on how to dial out so I thought I would ring Robyn at home but nothing I did would result in even getting a line out, only to hotel reception.

Didn't matter what channel I flicked to on the television they were showing the same event, some statesperson (I guess as it looked official) was speaking but as it was in Chinese I didn't understand a word but was fascinated and continued to watch. Finally it ended with everyone singing their national song and plenty of flag waving.

Day 3: Saturday 30 June 2001

Woke up this morning around 6am with the sun streaming in through the window and I could hear music coming from the park and when I looked out of the window the park was full of people exercising or dancing in organised groups or on their own some on footpaths, others in grassy areas and still others under the shade of a tree. I could see an old man with a sword going through martial arts type movements, very inspiring.

Once again I tried to ring home but kept getting a message saying I was dialling too many numbers, maybe I am not meant to ring out of China but would love to let Robyn know that I am here safe and sound. Off to breakfast but not that impressed with the state of the dining room and could only imagine the kitchen that was behind a large wall that housed a big fish tank full of fish which I think you can pick the one you want to have cooked for your meal. In the room there are military officers all chatting away while eating their breakfast. For me I stuck with toast and eggs, can't go wrong with anything in a shell you had to peel.

The short drive to the university down the tree lined streets filled with people going about their own business got us there in plenty of time to spare. Dr Wong my co-teacher was introducing the course to the students as I walked into the lecture theatre which erupted with loud clapping of hands as the students rose to their feet, what an entry, nothing like walking into a lecture theatre at an Australian university. Before long we were into the lecture with the students becoming very interactive asking lots of questions and educating me about doing business in China and how they are progressing with eCommerce and eBusiness. Their levels of English are outstanding however just like the Australian students back home they have not pre-read any of the textbook or study materials, guess students are the same worldwide.

Lunch was something else and not what I expected with a fully prepared smorgasbord of food laid out in the staff dining hall but just like breakfast back in the hotel the look and smell of the food was not very appetising and I had to do I could not to show I nearly choked several times. The meal here is certainly like the Chinese meals we get back home but we were polite and picked at our food looking for things we thought were safe to eat; I did enjoy the bread rolls and coffee. I was glad when it was time to head back into the lecture theatre for the afternoon session.

After the Saturday session I went to the library to buy a Chinese to English translation dictionary to try to come to terms with some of the words and phrases. We decided to walk back to the hotel instead of catching a taxi and it was very pleasant walking through the tree lined streets past the shops and houses, people on bikes or walking with many stopping and staring at us as we walked past.

Since I can't ring Robyn from my room I thought I would go down the business centre and found out the only way to communicate with someone outside China from the hotel is via fax. Having written a simple message letting Robyn all is going okay I handed it to the person behind the desk who read it, put a stamp on the paper and passed it to a second person. That person read the fax and put another stamp on the paper then went over to a teletype machine and typed the fax. I received the official copy and told me it had been sent; guess I will find out when I get home.

After a quick change we headed to the major shopping area very similar to the Myers Complex but what we saw was similar to back home and after the conversion around the same price. I guess there are cheaper prices if you look around however the heat is oppressive and so we decided to head back to the hotel and the air conditioning.

When I turned on the television set there was a rugby game Lions versus Australia from the Gabba and at half time the Lions are in front, at least I can understand the commentary and hear Australian voices. Anyway, Jeanette and I head over to Kevin's Café for dinner as we are both famished not having much at lunch and this time we didn't care about the smells and what was other people plates we tucked and the hamburger and chips with salad was fantastic.

After dinner we went for a walk along Hangshan Road looking at all the restaurants, shops and hairdressing salons and in one shop I stopped to look at some pottery and statues in the window and had my first taste of bartering. Got them down from 538 to 80Yuan for a tea set but I felt guilty when I said no as 80Yuan is about \$12AUD, what a steal but wasn't sure how I would get it home without breaking it as it was delicate.

Further down the road in the open air courtyard there appeared to be a concert so we stopped to listen to this young girl playing a string instrument and while we were standing there some officials came over and invited us to come and sit with them. We were ushered to the second row and two people gave up their seats and boy did we receive the royal or should I say the Communist Party treatment with bottles of water. The concert was great and the 100 or so people watched singers, fan dancers, a flute rendition and other items and speeches and then we found out that this weekend is the 80th year of the formation of the Communist Party in China. At the end of the concert the organisers and officials came up and thanked us for attending and being part of their celebrations and after much bowing we left and walked back to the hotel. This will always stick in my mind as this was a locally organised concert for the people and they didn't have to treat us with such politeness, fantastic.

Day 4: Sunday 1 July 2001

After breakfast (toast and boiled eggs with cordial) we headed back to SJTU for lectures and today there was more interactivity in the classroom and couldn't get through all the material but the dialogue as excellent, I think I learned just as much from them as they learned from me. That's what you call a successful learning and teaching experience. In the end I had to stop as we were already

20 minutes into the lunch hour and our hosts were keen to take us to another staff dining room reserved for the higher up level of educators. What a difference in food and how it was presented and this time I enjoyed the meal from the tea through to the main dishes which just kept on coming and placed on the lazy susan.

After the classes had ended and a presentation on behalf of the university, photos were taken, goodbyes said followed by many handshakes one of the lecturers (Jeanette's co-teacher) from SJTU took us to the Yuyuan Garden a famous classical garden located in Anren Jie, Shanghai. It was finished in 1577 by a government officer of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) named Pan Yunduan. Yu in Chinese means pleasing and satisfying, and this garden was specially built for Pan's parents as a place for them to enjoy a tranquil and happy time in their old age.

She told us that she would leave us alone so we could barter on our otherwise the shop owners might think we are rich westerners with a Chinese guide and not willing to lower their prices. I must confess that this is the only type of shopping I like, especially the bartering and using a calculator to enter your price followed by their price etc. and before long you have halved the advertised price. Should be more of it back home and I might go shopping.

After dinner at tonight (Kevin's Café) we went for a walk around the block and had a hair shampoo and massage of the head, neck, back, arms, hands and fingers that took about 1 hour 30 minutes all for \$6AUD or 28 Yuan. You actually lie down on a table with your head and hair over a wash basin for the shampoo and then you roll over on to your stomach as the young Chinese girls work magic with their little fingers and they couldn't get over how hairy my arms were as Chinese men do not have so much hair. Once it was completed you sort of floated out of the salon, boy it felt good. Why doesn't my hairdresser back home include this service in the price?

Day 5: Monday 2 July 2001

My first free day and so much to see, never mind take things one step at a time and what I don't see this time I will see in future trips. Before leaving the hotel I caught up with Jeanette who was flying back straight away but she looked awful as she had been sick most of the night.

I started out catching a taxi to the Bund also called Zhongshan Dong Yi Lu (means an embankment or an embanked quay), is a famous waterfront and regarded as the symbol of Shanghai for hundreds of years. It is on the west bank of Huangpu River from the Waibaidu Bridge to Nanpu Bridge and winds 1500 meters (0.93 mile) in length. The most famous and attractive sight which is at the west side of the Bund are the 26 various buildings of different architectural styles including Gothic, Baroque, Romanesque, Classicism and the Renaissance. The 1,700-meters (1,859 yards) long flood-control wall, known as 'the lovers' wall', located on the side of Huangpu River from Huangpu Park to Xinkai River and once was the most romantic corner in Shanghai in the last century.

The number of ships and barges plying up and down this stretch of the river is unbelievable and even with all that traffic there are no incidents. Barges loaded with cardboard, coal, timber, boxes of goods etc. right down to the gunnels so that water is nearly lapping over and going into the barge. You can see that those who work the barges live on the as well and at the back people are washing or cooking, what a way of life. I am not sure if there is a speed limit on this river as boats are travelling at all different speeds.

At one end there is the 'Monument to the People's Heroes' a 24 metre structure built to commemorate revolutionary martyrs as well as those who have lost their lives fighting natural disasters by the Shanghai municipal government in the 1990s. The main feature is the stylised shape of three rifles standing against each other. The only problem is I can't read Chinese as it would be fascinating to read the history behind the struggle following each section along the wall.

As I was walking along the path several people came up saying 'hello' and touching my arm and then saying "xie xie" (thank you) before they quickly disappeared into the crowd. Although the heat is oppressive, the view of the modern buildings on the Pudong side of the river are impressive and look like anything you would see in any major western capital city.

The 'Oriental Pearl TV Tower' is 468 meters (1,536 feet) high and is the world's third tallest TV and radio tower surpassed in height only by towers in Toronto, Canada and Moscow, Russia. Construction began in 1990 and the tower was completed in 1994.

Next massive structure is the 'Grand Hyatt Hotel' in the Jin Mao Tower has 555 rooms on the top 36 floors of the 88 floor building. It is also famous for having the world's longest laundry chute running down the full length of the tower to the basement, and incorporates buffers to slow down the laundry during its descent.

At the far end of the Bund there are a number of ferry and cruise terminals and although I asked for a ticket to take me to the other side of the river to the Pearl Tower so I could go up to the observation deck I ended up on a river cruise instead. Have to learn Chinese or at least have it written on a card to present to the ticket office next visit. The cruise up the river up to the very modern Nanpu Bridge was interesting as we passed the Pudong District, ship building yards, a naval base, shipping terminals and wharfs before returning to the ferry terminal. In addition the air conditioned boat was a welcome relief from the heat but as I watch the workers on the ships and industry any Australian worker would have gone out on strike for better working conditions and Workplace Health and Safety rules and regulation doesn't seem to exist. I bet their pay isn't the same either and on most sites you can see the shanty living conditions where workers swap beds as the work goes on 24/7.

Back at the terminal I headed back to Nanjing Road also called walking street, a wide mall stretching from the Bund all the way up to the Shanghai Exhibition Centre. I only went as far as 'People's Square' and visited the art gallery, what a phenomenal 4 story building and the range of paintings, drawings, statues and other items depicts history from the earliest times to the present. I am no art lover and don't spend much time in art galleries, however I could spend days just in the building alone, all that history from a nation going back 1700–1046 BC and making the history of Australia rather insignificant and I don't mean that in a negative way, just the age of history and the struggles of the Chinese people. Next to the gallery is Renmin Park and as I walked around the ponds and little streams there under the trees men are playing cards and different sorts of board games just like you see in the photos. On the other side of the park is the Grand Theatre and when they say grand it understates the size and shape of the building. Workmen are still putting finishing touches to the outside of the building and there is no sign to say when it will open.

Along both sides of the 4 km mall are shopping complexes and would be a shopping haven for everyone as they cater for every taste, style and product. A shopaholic could book into one of the hotels on the mall and spend a week or so just going from one shop to another. Many of the shops

advertise that they ship goods back to your home country so you could end up with a whole house of furniture and artefacts. First however you have to ignore the many girls trying to grab your arm or get your attention to come inside and buy something 'hello hello you buy very cheap'.

By now I have finished several bottles of water and had lunch at a KFC, how very Chinese is that, very brave in trying different Chinese food aren't I. I would have liked to go into the museum but at it was already 3:30pm and since it closes at 5:00pm I will come back tomorrow as I am sure it will take more than 1 ½ hours to see the exhibits.

By now I am surprised with myself how I am navigating the streets of Shanghai without a map but seem to have my bearings and walking through the back streets and laneways getting a feeling for the real China that tourists don't go into I see the living conditions of millions of people cramped into tiny dark rooms with communal toilets (a big hole in which they pour their toilet potties and jars), little or no electricity and plumbing, open holes where windows should be, tiny doorways and who knows how many people are living/existing in these tiny dwellings.

Eventually I end walking past the Yuyuan Garden Markets heading back to the hotel through the back streets and although there are just as many shops these are for the Chinese people as no tourists venture off the beaten track (except me) and there are no girls grabbing your arm 'you buy very cheap'. Along the way there is a major trading area selling all sorts of hardware supplies from tiles, taps, shower modules where two people could take a shower together and it even has a radio and answer the door chimes. They also have fire places, chain saws, tools, timber, sheeting, nut, bolts, screws, wire, rope and the list goes on. You name it they have it.

By now I have walked at least 10Km or so but am now exhausted due to the heat so I took a taxi the remaining distance through the peak hour(s) traffic (I don't think there is a defined peak hour) and once back in my room I flaked out in the cool air conditioning.

Once again back to Kevin's café for dinner the safest place to eat and then off for a walk in another direction exploring the neighbourhood and ended up in the oriental shopping area of Xujiahui with department stores and shopping centres on all corners of this major intersection. It is around 9:15pm and the stores are packed with shoppers but the section where most of the people are is the whitegoods supplies and it seems the most interest is in air conditioners and fans, don't blame them.

Guess what's on television tonight? Robyn will get a laugh out of this, tennis as it is about the only show you can watch but all the commentary is in Chinese. All other television shows are about the 80th year celebrations of the Communist Party and the 4th year for Hong Kong being part of China again. Once again all the official party speeches, war movies, concerts and history lessons, compulsory viewing but I do not see any flags flying from buildings or outside homes.

Day 6: Tuesday 3 July 2001

A slow start this morning as my feet are a little sore and the legs are stiff from all the walking in the heat yesterday. After the normal breakfast of toast and boiled eggs with orange juice I sorted out my dirty clothes and placed it in the bag for the laundry service.

The taxi ride to the Shanghai Museum was again one that makes a Sydney taxi driver look like the lead car in a funeral procession if you get my drift as this taxi driver got me there in record time. Walking up the steps of the museum you walk past a number of statues and all of a sudden around

100 neatly dressed school children in their school uniforms with a red scarf and white cap pile out of a string of busses, line up in rows and march into the museum with their teachers. As I stood and watched many of the students tried out their English like Hello, how are you? Where do you come from? I had a good chat with them until the guides appeared, clapped their hands and the children stopped talking and ran into position in straight lines at each entrance terminal. I was with a number of the teachers and said Australian students don't do this they would keep talking and after a lot of yelling finally form some form of line.

The museum is spread out over 4 floors around a centre court yard with a glass dome ceiling, marble steps, black guard rails with gold trimmings, absolutely stunning. The various sections include an ancient Chinese bronze gallery, a sculpture gallery, ceramics, pottery with live demonstrations of a spinning wheel, paintings, calligraphy, seals used by people in power, art, jade, coins, furniture starting from the 20th century BC through to 2001. A special display for 2001 was from Tibet and the history behind their unique relationship and how Tibet is part of China.

It seemed that every time I met up with different groups of school children they would stop me and ask questions, very touching. I spent 5 hours in the museum and all that time moving from one display to the next reading the information boards or listen to the tape recording describing the special artefacts. If you do the full tour set aside 1 or 2 days and don't go walking the day before as there is so much to see and learn about the Chinese culture. Several times I sat down and also enjoyed the orange juice in the coffee shop.

Leaving the museum I walked back down to People Square and escaped the heat by going through as many air conditioned stores running the gauntlet of the sales women trying their hardest to get me to buy something. By 4pm I had enough and caught a taxi back to the hotel even though there is so much more I would like to see and do but my body was telling me to rest.

There is one store in the mall I would like to visit again, the china shop that has all types of items made out of china and would look great in the house and they provide a shipping service back home. When I walked back into my room in the hotel and turned on the television set the third 'State of Origin' game was about to start so as I write this entry 'Go Queenslander'. At least this is more exciting especially watching Queensland win 40 to 4, up the Blues. The magic of Alfie is something to watch and bad luck Fittler (Blues coach).

Just got a phone call from reception letting me know my laundry has arrived and will be brought up to my room. When it arrives everything is itemised, neatly pressed, folded and sorted into various plastic bags, excellent service.

This is my last night so why not go to Kevin's café for a meal and although my legs are still sore I went for a walk along Hengshan Road taking in the sights, sounds and smells of Shanghai. Back in the room I enjoyed a cup of coffee and watched Wimbledon and Capriati was playing Williams.

On the news they were talking about the development of the shopping malls from the early 1990's by watching a 15 minute video from Hong Kong. The chairman of the commercial committee in Shanghai was proud that there were now 150 mega stores (like a Meyer complex) along People's Walk Nanjing Road.

I wondered why the temperatures were dropping and the wind picking up and found out there is a typhoon heading toward Taiwan and should affect Shanghai within the next couple of days, hope I can get out of Shanghai tomorrow on the 4:25pm flight to Singapore.

Day 7: Wednesday 4 July 2001

With the temperature range expected to be between 24 to 35C I am heading home. At breakfast I sat with a mixed group, 2 French, 2 Chinese civilians and 3 Chinese Army Officers with 1, 2 or 3 stars on their collars, the same officers who have been her for the whole stay.

Note:

Unfortunately I didn't complete the journal entry for the return trip home but I must have made it. I do know that when I was in Singapore I bought two traditional Chinese garments, one for Robyn and one for me, the rest of the journey is unrecorded.

I went China to deliver lectures to SJTU on 4 occasions each with a different lecturer and now regret not keeping a journal for each trip as each one was slightly different. The second trip was with Sue Douglas (law); Bill Simmich (Finance) and a third part-time lecturer (Finance) who got dehydrated and got really sick and spent a couple of days lying in a bath of cold water.