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Review

Werbel's new book . . . captures Chinese students in their own words as they grapple with America's . . . past and, in doing so, inevitably reflect upon their own country's past, present, and future. . . Upon completing Lessons from China, the reader is left with an appreciation for the value of international exchange programs like Fulbright. . . both she and her students gained a bit more mutual empathy and exercised their abilities to see the world as others see it.- See more at: tealeafnation.com/2013/07/americanhistory-through-chinese-eyes/#sthash.NKatYhwO.dpuf

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About the Author

Amy Werbel currently serves as an Associate Professor of the History of Art at the State University of New York - Fashion Institute of Technology. From 1994 to 2013, she was Professor of Art History and American Studies at Saint Michael's College. Professor Werbel is the the author of numerous works on the subject of American visual culture, sexuality, and censorship including: Thomas Eakins: Art, Medicine, and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia (Yale University Press, 2007). Professor Werbel is a graduate of Harvard and Radcliffe Colleges (A.B. '86) and Yale University (PhD '96), and the recipient of fellowships and grants from numerous institutions, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, and Metropolitan Museum of Art. She served as a Fulbright Scholar for 2011-2012 at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in Guangzhou, China. She is the mother of two sons, ages 19 and 15, and lives in Brooklyn with her husband and fellow writer, Frederick Lane.

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In Lessons from China, Fulbright Scholar and American Studies Professor Amy Werbel paints a vivid portrait of China's rising generation of university students. Seeing Frederick Douglass, Andrew Carnegie, the Vietnam War, Malcolm X, Timothy Leary, and Betty Friedan through their eyes reveals as much about China's present realities as it does about America's past. Perhaps most importantly, Chinese students' responses to questions about censorship, revolution, war, and feminism are good indicators that this generation is unlike any that has come before. Educated, eyes opened, and facing their future with optimism and great expectations, China's post-Cultural Revolution youth promise to change their country forever. Lessons from China is a provocative look at how that is happening today.

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Captures the hearts & minds of today's Chinese students

By William P. Lee

As a teacher in Chinese Universities since 2008, I found Ms. Werbel's observations equally grounded in her student's own words and her own incisive observations. This book is a part of an emerging China literature that is a bit more mature than the initial exotic, instant and superficial experts of earlier years. She dives into her students' thoughtful essays - many in a kind of Chinglish - and yet more than understandable and selects thoughtful morsels for her readers to taste, digest, and savor. In this way, I consider her a bridge builder - one who will help two of the world's civilization understand each other better.

Ms. Werbel's passion for teaching is stunning and her love of seeing her students's eyes light up is palpable in her writing. If you ever thought of a year in China teaching in a University, "Lessons from China" is your primer on how to do it!

She is an adventurer & her detailed descriptions of several side trips and local immersion are delightful. Buy this book - recommend it to others!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Thinking across borders

By Vt reader

"Lessons from China" is an engaging, thoughtful, and stimulating account of Amy Werbel's year as a Fulbright Scholar teaching at the Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, in Guangzou China. In 2011-2012 the author taught courses on "Culture in the United States from the Civil War to World War I" and "America in the 1960s" to graduate students at GDUFS; traveled throughout China as a guest lecturer; mentored and befriended several graduate students; learned the ins and outs of negotiating ethnic and linguistic divisions and barriers within China; and absorbed much else about contemporary China's cultural, intellectual, and political environment that she reports in her book.

American readers will find much here to engage their minds, both in Werbel's account of her teaching and in her accounts--supported with long unedited quotations from student homework and examination papers--of Chinese students' reception and perception of American history and culture. Werbel and her students discussed topics such as race relations, the counterculture of the 1960s, censorship, the dynamics of reform, and the Vietnam War. She introduced them to the practice and skills of dialogue, critical thinking, and the use of primary sources, which in turn raises important questions about the nature and future of higher education in both China and America.

Reading this account of a year of teaching and learning leaves an American reader with a lot to ponder: our understanding and assessment of our own history and institutions, how others perceive them, and the role of the liberal arts and critical thinking in our own system of higher education.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The Real China Lessons

By Masao Miwa

Excellent read and insight into today's China. Having lived half my time in Shenzhen, China (City next to Guangzhou) over the last 12 years, I could relate and found her book thoroughly enjoyable. I truely appreciated Amy Werbel's warmth, compassion, and humorous portraits of her experiences teaching in China. Her insight into the goals, ambitions, and fears of her students are real. The pressure on the students from peers, schools, and parents to succeed are fact. Her personal trials and tribulations adapting to Chinese culture are similar to others connecting with the 'China experience'. This is a 'must read' for those interested in China and the Chinese.

Amazing how fast China is growing. For example, in the few years gone by since she taught in Guangzhou, the 'one child' policy is giving way to 'two children' with Xi Jiping's government policies. The generation that

Professor Werbel taught will soon become the new China. I like what I read. I like what Professor Werbel added to the lives of her students. I have hope for China's future. You, your children, your parents, and your husband have given wonderful insight to Chinese students into the real America and Americans---who could ask for more to communicate the human experiences between people of different cultures. Yeah Amy!

See all 9 customer reviews...

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