

**HMMA 5001 – Fundamentals of Chinese Culture
Fall 2018**

Instructors: CHAN, Charles Wing-hoi (hmwhchan@ust.hk; room 3357)
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Class Time: Fridays 10:30AM-13:20PM

Classroom: Room 4504 (Lifts 25-26)

I. Course Description

This is an integrated multidisciplinary course on Chinese culture. It aims at providing students with a broad understanding of the perspectives and methodologies of humanistic studies on Chinese culture across various disciplines, including anthropology, history, linguistics, literature, philosophy, and religion.

In each offering of the course, 4 out of 6 humanities disciplines will be offered, with an emphasis placed on the introduction of fundamental concepts and general methodological/theoretical underpinnings of the studies of Chinese culture in humanities. This is a mandatory foundation course for all students in the MA program in Chinese Culture.

II. Course Objectives

Upon the completion of the course, students may be expected to attain the following attributes:

- 1) A broad understanding of the nature, scope and value of the studies of Chinese culture in humanities perspectives;
- 2) Better appreciation of the basic concepts, theories and methods in different humanities disciplines essential to the building of a holistic, dynamic and integrated understanding of Chinese culture;
- 3) Ability to respond critically to Chinese cultural texts and issues of various nature;
- 4) Strengthened skills in humanistic inquiry pertaining to Chinese culture, such as questioning, analyzing, interpreting, making connections and constructing arguments.

III. Course Assessment

- Attendance & in-class participation 20%
 - 4 short module papers (1,500-2,000 words each) 80% (20% per module)
- **Attendance & in-class participation** – Students are expected to complete the reading assignment PRIOR to coming to class and be ready to discuss and engage in class. All assigned reading materials are posted on Canvas, with the full-length books or additional reference materials placed on reserve in the library under this course code.
- **Module papers** – each module paper should be around 1,500-2,000 words long and is due around 2-3 weeks after the completion of respective module. The topic of each module paper varies, depending on the content of individual module and instructor’s requirement.

IV. Class Schedule

Module	Dates	Instructor
History	Sept 7, 14, 21	ZHANG, Lawrence
Anthropology	Sept 28, Oct 5, 12	LIU, Huwy-min Lucia
Philosophy	Oct 19, 26, Nov 2	CHAN, Charles
Literature	Nov 9, 16, 23	SHAW, May-yi
Closing Session	Nov 30	SHAW, May-yi

V. Module Description

1. History Module – The Meaning of History

History is the study of the past, but the questions we ask and the conclusions we draw are inevitably influenced by the present. Using three important debates as examples, this module is designed to familiarize students with the basic methods of academic inquiry within the discipline of history. Each of the debates discussed in this module touch on a significant question in China's recent history, with strong implications on China's society today.

Sept 7 – New Qing History

Required:

- Ho Ping-ti, "The Significance of the Ch'ing-Period," JAS 26:2 (Feb 1967), 189-95.
- Evelyn Rawski, "Reenvisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History", JAS 55:4 (Nov 1996), 829-50.

Suggested:

- Ho Ping-ti, "In Defense of Sinicization: A Rebuttal of Evelyn Rawski's 'Reenvisioning the Qing'," JAS 57:1 (Feb 1998), 123-55.
- Mark C. Elliott, "Introduction", *The Manchu Way*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Li Zhiting, "A Righteous View of History"
 - <http://cmp.hku.hk/2015/04/22/a-righteous-view-of-history/>
 - http://www.cssn.cn/zx/201504/t20150420_1592588.shtml

Sept 14 – Social Mobility

Required:

- Ho Ping-ti, *Ladder of Success in Imperial China*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, selections.
- Robert Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elites of Fu-chou*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, selections.
- Elman, "Political, Social, and Cultural Reproduction via Civil Service Examinations in Late Imperial China" JAS 50:1 (Feb 1991), 7-28.

Suggested:

- Zhang Weiwei, "Meritocracy Versus Democracy", NYT, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/10/opinion/meritocracy-versus-democracy.html>
- Mark Elliott, "The Real China Model", NYT, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/14/opinion/the-real-china-model.html>

Sept 21 – Seeds of Capitalism

Required:

- Mark Elvin, “The High-Level Equilibrium Trap: The Causes of the Decline of Invention in the Traditional Chinese Textile Industries,” Willmott, ed. *Economic Organization in Chinese Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 137-182.
- Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, selections.

Suggested:

- Arif Dirlik, “Chinese Historians and the Marxist Concept of Capitalism: A Critical Examination”, *Modern China* 8:1 (1982), 105-132.

2. Anthropology Module – Ethnography and Participant Observation

One of the key tools for understanding culture and humanity in anthropology is ethnography – a “thick description” of a group of people. Through the method of participant observation, anthropologists establish first-hand, layer upon layer (“thick”) of knowledge about specific groups of people and locales in their ethnography. Such a “bottom up” view for analyzing cultures emphasizes practice (that is, real everyday life) and interconnections within social life. Based on such holistic descriptions, anthropologists then make theoretical arguments about how human cultures work, why they are the way they are, and how we might compare them. In this section, students will read extracts of three different ethnographies of contemporary China that are each associated with three different anthropological topics: religion, civil society, and migration.

Sept 28 – Religion and Memory

- Jun, Jing. 1996. *The Temple of Memories: History, Power, and Morality in a Chinese Village*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Oct 5 – Civil Society and Democracy

- Weller, Robert. 1999. *Alternate Civilities: Democracy and Culture in China And Taiwan*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Oct 12 – Migration and Space

- Li, Zhang. 2001. *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks within China's Floating Population*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

3. Philosophy Module – Interpreting Chinese Philosophy

The three lectures on Chinese philosophy will be devoted to Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, the so-called “Three Teachings”, respectively. Notwithstanding the frequent and intricate interactions among them in the long history of China, they represent three distinctively different approaches to human predicament and human destiny. Each of these lectures will, therefore, first survey how they, one after the other, emerged as one of the most influential spiritual traditions in China through tracing their genesis and the major stages of their historical evolution, and then examine the profound insights offered by each of the three approaches through investigating one by one into their metaphysics, philosophical anthropology, spiritual discipline and ethical theory. Toward the end of the lectures, there will be a comparison between their perspectives on the very nature of the ultimate reality, the complicate relationships existed between that reality and humanity, the uplifting program through which a union, or reunion, of them can eventually be achieved and how individuals should relate themselves to their fellow human beings, showing the differences and similarities between them as possible and appropriate ways to a fulfilling and noble life. It is

on the basis of this comparison that the lectures will finally evaluate the legacies the Three Teachings have, or might have, left to posterity.

Oct 19 – The Confucian Approach

- A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy. Tran & comp. Wing-tsit Chan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 14-135, 588-691.

Oct 26 – The Taoist Approach

- A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy. Tran & comp. Wing-tsit Chan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 136-210, 314-335.

Nov 2 – The Buddhist Approach

- A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy. Tran & comp. Wing-tsit Chan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, pp. 343-369, 396-449.

4. Literature Module – A Multidisciplinary Approach to Literary Studies

Is literary study a stand-alone discipline with a clear or unique methodological approach, or does it require a well-versed understanding of different disciplinary traditions within the field of humanities as a whole? This module will take this question to the heart of its discussion and give special attention to reflecting how modern Chinese literature is approached, understood and articulated in both Chinese and Western academia.

Nov 9 – Literary History in Different Looks

- Denton, Kirk A., *Modern Chinese Literary Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945*. Standard: Standard Univ. Press, 1996.
- Hsia, C.T., *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1999.

Nov 16 – The Writing of History, Memory, and the Unspeakable

- Duara, Prasenjit, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Wang, David Der-wei, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in 20th-Century China*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2004.

Nov 23 – Articulation and Representation of Diversity

- Lee, Leo Ou-fan, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999.
- Shih, Shumei, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations Across the Pacific*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2007.