

CAH5745: ARCHAEOLOGY AND CIVILIZATION OF EARLY CHINA

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Archaeology and Civilization of Early China

Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

Course Number

5745

Academic Unit

Chinese and History (CAH)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

Chinese

Medium of Assessment

Chinese

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course addresses the contributions of archaeology to, and its interactions with, the study of civilization in early China. Probed is a corpus of knowledge on key Chinese archaeological discoveries and developments in institutions, methods, theories and the ethos involved, and how these aspects relate to its intimate interplay with the history and culture of early China. These contents are spelled out in representative regions and exemplified in specific archaeological or (pre)historical subjects. The course exposes students to this specialized field of study on past material culture and offers them a unique set of knowledge, perspectives, as well as analytical and epistemological know-how, so that they can learn to be more prepared and intellectually robust to think and judge on the intricate world of civilizations and cultures like those of early China.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 app.)		DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify major archaeological contributions to the study of Chinese civilization.	20	x		
2	Describe the features, subjects and contributions of archaeology for the study of early China.	20	x		
3	Differentiate key importance and characteristics of study on material culture and that on text-based sources.	20	x		
4	Apply the understanding of academic connection between archaeology and other related disciplines to general intellectual inquiries.	20		x	
5	Analyse in depth the types of interactive nexus between archaeology and civilization in various facets over time so as to build up a sound and critical awareness of the development of civilization in early China.	20			x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lecture and In-class Discussion	Students will engage with key concepts, facts, theories, themes, and research findings in Chinese archaeology, and inquire knowledge of relevant Chinese archaeological findings and examine the research outputs and archaeological reports.	1, 2, 3	
2	Reading	Students will critically engage with book chapters and articles related to important topics.	2, 3, 4	
3	Tutorial, Presentation & Discussion	Students will participate in group discussions and presentations to hone their analytical skills and consolidate their understanding of assigned readings. By working in small groups on specific topics, they will enhance their ability to communicate ideas and collaborate effectively.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Participation in Class Students should proactively participate in and contribute to discussion activities conducted in lectures and tutorials, and any other related classroom activities (including those carried out via on-line platforms).	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No

2	Presentation Students need to develop their own points and ideas that meet scholarly standards while collaborating within a teamwork framework, fostering both individual thought and collective engagement.	2, 4	20	-	No
3	Proposal Writing Students need to write a formal, well-edited proposal around the middle of the semester to introduce and discuss the topic chosen as their final paper project.	1, 2, 3, 4	15	An appropriate amount of use is ok, esp. in discussing ideas with Gen AI. That said, GenAI often provides false or fabricated information regarding archaeological facts, and students should not copy and paste verbatim the texts generated by AI in their submitted assignments.	Yes
4	Final Paper Students are required to write a final paper on a selected topic in academic form. They are required to generate original arguments, use academic sources properly and apply methods skillfully. Evidence and materials should be arranged logically to support the argument.	3, 5	35	An appropriate amount of use is ok, esp. in discussing ideas with Gen AI. That said, GenAI often provides false or fabricated information regarding archaeological facts, and students should not copy and paste verbatim the texts generated by AI in their submitted assignments.	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Participation in Class (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students actively participate in discussions, debates and other class activities (including those carried out via on-line platforms) in tutorials and lectures. They should demonstrate an ability to interpret and criticize both insightfully and innovatively.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, able to simulate class discussion and comment on other points;
- Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, able to initiate class discussion and comment on other points;
- Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of:

- Active in-class participation, positive listening, able to initiate class discussion and comment on other points;
- Sufficient pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials.

Marginal

(D)

- Marginally satisfies the basic requirements of the participation.

Failure

(F)

- Fail to meet minimum requirements of participation

Assessment Task

Presentation (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will be graded on content and fluency of presentation as well as the organization and coherence of the assignment. The group delivering the presentation must have thoroughly studied and researched their topic and worked as a team on the collection, reading, selection, integration, analysis of the resources. They should lead classmates into the discussion, to explain with rich content and excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter. They should demonstrate rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition and an ability to criticize and analyse with cogent arguments and creative comments.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- Critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
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Marginal

(D)

- Loose organization, but acceptable identified content.
- Adequate understanding of the reading and indication of grasp of the general ideas, limited or irrelevant use of reading materials;
- Simple and unilateral comments, without clear explanation;
- Acceptable pronunciation and expression; few of mistakes in diction, but no influence to general delivery.

Failure

(F)

- Limited familiarity with the facts of the reading and its surface relations, unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes;
- Loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary structure;
- Devoid of personal comment and/or unreasonable opinion;
- Overly soft voice, indistinct pronunciation and improper diction, seriously over time.

Assessment Task

Proposal Writing (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will be graded on content, organization, and the academic feasibility of the chosen topic. Students should demonstrate the ability to select promising topics, ask quality academic questions, utilize primary and secondary sources properly, deliver argument and analyse critically, apply research methods skilfully, as well as conclude (even though at this stage the conclusion may be preliminary) in a convincing and creative manner.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;
- Creative, and insightful ideas;
- Able to interpret the opinions originally;
- Sufficient and organized references which can be later utilized in accordance with the topic;
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various research methods and writing skills to communicate the feasibility of the chosen topic with proper diction.

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Marginal

(D)

- Adequate content, ability to integrate resources generally based on demand, limited or irrelevant use of resources;
- Loose organization;
- Able to express relevant points to the subject matter;
- References are insufficient, ability to provide some reasonable personal comments, but no clear demonstration;
- Sentence fluency and diction is acceptable.

Failure

(F)

- Vague and devoid of content, weak ability to integrate limited resources;
- Loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary levels;
- Unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes;
- Summary of references, no personal idea and/or unreasonable comment;
- Seriously insufficient/no reference;
- Although expression is not clear, part of the idea can be identified; over- use of existing quotations and relevant research.

Assessment Task

Final Paper (for students admitted in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

This assessment will be graded on content, organization and fluency. Students should demonstrate the ability to utilize primary and secondary sources properly, deliver argument and analyse critically, apply research methods skilfully, as well as conclude in a convincing and creative manner.

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Additional Information for AR

Not applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Chinese Archaeology, Chinese History, Archaeological Discoveries, Historical Texts, Material Culture Study, Adaptive Systems, Meanings of Material Culture, Artifact, Archaeological Site/Feature/Context, Archaeological/Historical Approaches, Prehistory, Chinese Dynasties, Interdisciplinary Dialogue and Exchange.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Anne Underhill (ed), A Companion to Chinese Archaeology, New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.
2	Li Liu and Xingcan Chen, The Archaeology of China: From the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
3	Feng Li, Early China: A Social and Cultural History, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
4	Chang Kwang-chih, The Archaeology of Ancient China (4 edition), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
5	張光直著，《古代中國考古學》，北京：生活·讀書·新知三聯書店，2013。
6	楊楠編，《考古學讀本》，北京：北京大學出版社，2006。
7	陳星燦著，《20世紀中國考古學史研究論叢》，北京:文物出版社，2009。

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Falkenhausen, Lothar von. Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC): The Archaeological Evidence. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2006.
2	Gideon Shelach-Lavi, The Archaeology of Early China: From Prehistory to the Han Dynasty, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
3	中國社會科學院考古研究所編著，《華南及東南亞地區史前考古》，北京：文物出版社，2006。
4	張光直著，《美術·神話與祭祀》，瀋陽：遼寧教育出版社，2002。