

LT5454: SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE IN CHINESE

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Syntax-Semantics Interface in Chinese

Subject Code

LT - Linguistics and Translation

Course Number

5454

Academic Unit

Linguistics and Translation (LT)

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

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English supplemented with Putonghua

Medium of Assessment

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Assessment

English supplemented with Chinese

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

CTL5404 Chinese Linguistics Structure / CAH5404 Chinese Linguistics Structure

Part II Course Details**Abstract**

This course aims to help students analyse words, phrases and sentences in Modern Standard Chinese in a logical and systematic way, and familiarize them with the morphological, syntactic and semantic properties of Modern Standard Chinese. Focus will also be on topics that are currently discussed in the literature and unique to Modern Standard Chinese. Upon completing this course, students should be able to apply the knowledge of Chinese grammar and the analytic skills they acquire in the course to conduct linguistic analyses on their own.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify the lexical and functional categories of Modern Standard Chinese structures;		x	x	
2	Describe the argument structure of Modern Standard Chinese and the linguistic differences between Chinese compounds and phrases;		x	x	x
3	Identify the verb phrases in Modern Standard Chinese, and the constituents involved in relevant constructions;		x	x	
4	Identify and explain linguistic properties and features that are unique to Modern Standard Chinese; and		x	x	
5	Identify special constructions in Modern Standard Chinese and perform relevant basic analyses.		x	x	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 Class Activities	Student will engage in lectures and class activities, and develop theoretical foundations and concepts related to the above learning outcomes.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3 hours

2	Independent learning	Student will read recommended research articles/papers, including journal papers and articles, on topics in Chinese linguistics, particularly on those related to special constructions in Modern Standard Chinese.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Assignments: Students are required to complete one assignment during the semester	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, solve problems, format references, and edit language. Students should give proper acknowledgment to all the content from GenAI tools that they incorporated into the assignment and keep a journal of their GenAI conversations. Students should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes
2	Quiz: A quiz will be given in the middle of the semester to evaluate students' understanding of the topics covered in the lectures	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20	-	No

3	Final paper: Students are required to submit a final paper (35%) and an abstract of it (15%) to demonstrate the analytical ability of the syntax of a Chinese language.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	50	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, solve problems, format references, and edit language. Students should give proper acknowledgment to all the content from GenAI tools that they incorporated into the assignment and keep a journal of their GenAI conversations. Students should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Assignments

Criterion

Understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to understand current literature of Chinese syntax

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to understand current literature of Chinese syntax

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to understand current literature of Chinese syntax

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to understand current literature of Chinese syntax

Marginal (D)

Poor understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to understand current literature of Chinese syntax

Failure (F)

Little to no understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to understand current literature of Chinese syntax

Assessment Task

Quiz

Criterion

Understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese relating to topics introduced in class

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese relating to topics introduced in class

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese relating to topics introduced in class

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese relating to topics introduced in class

Marginal (D)

Poor understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese relating to topics introduced in class

Failure (F)

Little to no understanding of the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese relating to topics introduced in class

Assessment Task

Final paper

Criterion

Understanding of current issues in the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and ability to propose a new syntactic analysis for a Chinese language

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent understanding of current issues in the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and excellent ability to propose a new syntactic analysis for a Chinese language

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good understanding of current issues in the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and good ability to propose a new syntactic analysis for a Chinese language

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair understanding of current issues in the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and fair ability to propose a new syntactic analysis for a Chinese language Chinese.

Marginal (D)

Poor understanding of current issues in the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and poor ability to propose a new syntactic analysis for a Chinese language

Failure (F)

Little to no understanding of current issues in the linguistic structures of Modern Standard Chinese and no ability to propose a new syntactic analysis for a Chinese language

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Chinese morphemes and words, words and phrases, lexical categories, verbs and nouns, adjectives and prepositions, functional categories, argument structures, Chinese resultative compounds, adjuncts, complements and verb phrases, double objects and the structure of verb phrase, aspectual phrases and modals, passives, the ba construction, topic constructions, questions, nominal expressions, anaphora.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Huang, C.-T. James, Y.-H. Audrey Li and Andrew Simpson, eds. (2014). Handbook of Chinese Linguistics. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
2	Huang, James C.-T., Audrey Y.-H. Li and Yafei Li. (2009) The Syntax of Chinese. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Zhu, Dexi. (1982). Yufa Jiangyi [Lecture Notes on Grammar]. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
2	Carnie, Andrew. (2007). Syntax: A generative introduction. 2nd edition. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
3	Li, Charles N. and Sandra A. Thompson. (1981). Mandarin Chinese: a functional reference grammar. Berkeley: University of California Press.
4	Chao, Yuen-Ren. (1968). A Grammar of Spoken Chinese. University of California Press, Berkeley.