

CAH2536: INTANGIBLE HERITAGES AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Intangible Heritages and Indigenous Cultures

Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

Course Number

2536

Academic Unit

Chinese and History (CAH)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to critically examine the theories and methods used in defining, interpreting, and protecting intangible heritages and indigenous cultures. It will engage in current debates about the ownership and authenticity of heritage, by taking into account the approaches and interests of different stakeholders and the negotiations of cultural memories, religious identities, economic resources, and political struggles at the local, national, and global level. Through exploring historical and ethnographic materials, reading documents on international organizations, public policy, and legal frameworks, the course will address heritage both as a professional field for transmitting shared system of rituals, practices, values and experiences, and as a lens onto broader processes of social, cultural and political change. Students shall learn to explore the multiple meanings and constructed nature of cultural heritage and to work towards developing a comparative understanding of indigenous cultures not only in China but also around the world.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explain the concept of intangible heritage and how it works in the world today.	20	x		
2	Identify how heritage preservation projects impact and are impacted by modern society, historical contingency, and our role in shaping the future.	20	x	x	
3	Raise questions and challenge assumptions about ownership, authenticity, and identity in relation to indigenous cultural traditions.	20	x	x	
4	Discuss how the past is remembered and constructed by analysing and reflecting on archaeological, historical, and ethnographic materials.	20	x	x	x
5	Relate community concerns to real-world challenges to indigenous cultures through heritage work.	20		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	Lectures (Including Film Screenings)	Students will engage in lectures to gain knowledge about fundamental frameworks on the conception of indigenous culture and heritage, while discussing case studies from specific geographical regions of the world. Students will learn to explore both textual and visual materials.	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Tutorials and Group Discussions	Students will work in small groups to discuss class materials in tutorials. Students will also engage in tutorial exercises in and after the class meeting.	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	Fieldtrip	Students will join local fieldtrip(s) organized by the instructor to visit museums, temples, festive events, and historical heritages, etc.	1, 2, 3, 5	
4	Presentation	Students will participate in groups to present on a short piece on studying indigenous culture and intangible heritage.	2, 3, 4, 5	
5	Final Paper	Students will write a research paper or research proposal at the end of the semester, drawing on research materials related to a particular heritage site, historical artefact, or traditional knowledge and skill. Students will apply key concepts and debates learned in the course.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation and performance	1, 2, 3	20	-	Yes

2	Presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	40	-	Yes
3	Final Paper	2, 3, 4, 5	40	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class participation and performance

Criterion

Performance in class discussion tasks and in-class activities

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Active pre-class preparation and in-class participation, positive and interactive learning
- Adequate ability to engage in group tutorials, express ideas, and elaborate on comments based on familiarity with class materials

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

- Active pre-class preparation and in-class participation, positive and interactive learning
- Ability to engage in group tutorials, express ideas, and elaborate on comments based on familiarity with class materials

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of:

- Active pre-class preparation and in-class participation, positive and interactive learning
- Ability to engage in group tutorials, express ideas, and elaborate on comments based on familiarity with class materials

Marginal (D)

Marginally satisfies the basic requirements of participation in classes and tutorials

Failure (F)

Fails to meet minimum requirements of participation

Assessment Task

Presentation

Criterion

Subject Knowledge
 Applied Knowledge
 Research content
 Evidence of critical thinking

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Ability to show a firm grasp of concepts discussed
- Ability to accurately and concisely summarize materials
- Critical and insightful analysis, ability to express personal ideas, good sense of context
- Good grammar and spelling

- Cite readings and other sources appropriately

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

- Ability to show a firm grasp of concepts discussed
- Ability to accurately and concisely summarize materials
- Critical and insightful analysis, ability to express personal ideas, good sense of context
- Good grammar and spelling
- Cite readings and other sources appropriately

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of:

- Ability to show a firm grasp of concepts discussed
- Ability to accurately and concisely summarize materials
- Critical and insightful analysis, ability to express personal ideas, good sense of context
- Good grammar and spelling
- Cite readings and other sources appropriately

Marginal (D)

- Shows a general grasp of concepts discussed but with minor errors or misinterpretations
- Ability to address selected text(s) and other materials
- No clear contextualization or personal comments
- Few grammar or spelling mistakes
- Cites readings and other sources acceptably

Failure (F)

- Misunderstands concepts from lectures and selected texts
- Limited familiarity with the facts of the materials
- Unsystematic ideas and weak ability to express the subject matter or relevant themes
- Poor grammar and spelling
- Cites readings and other sources inappropriately

Assessment Task

Final Paper

Criterion

This assessment will grade on students' ability of critical thinking through effective writing and oral communication. The final paper must be original, convincing, and well-presented in academic form. Students should demonstrate the ability to utilize and analyze materials critically, in order to raise insightful questions and build up arguments in an organized, structured manner.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Rich and informative content, ability to integrate various materials
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic composition
- Ability to interpret and analyze materials critically
- Ability to draw from sufficient and organized references to support the writing
- Precise and fluent expression, appropriate grammar, spelling and citation
- Creative and insightful ideas, ability to make a convincing argument, show an in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

- Rich and informative content, ability to integrate various materials

- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic composition
- Ability to interpret and analyze materials critically
- Ability to draw from sufficient and organized references to support the writing
- Precise and fluent expression, appropriate grammar, spelling and citation
- Creative and insightful ideas, ability to make a convincing argument, show an in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of:

- Rich and informative content, ability to integrate various materials
- Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic composition
- Ability to interpret and analyze materials critically
- Ability to draw from sufficient and organized references to support the writing
- Precise and fluent expression, appropriate grammar, spelling and citation
- Creative and insightful ideas, ability to make a convincing argument, show an in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter

Marginal (D)

- Adequate content, limited ability to integrate materials
- Loose organization and structure lacks coherence
- Ability to express relevant points to the subject matter, but not clear or in-depth enough
- Insufficient references
- Acceptable diction and sentence fluency

Failure (F)

- Vague and insufficient content, weak ability to integrate materials
- Unsystematic composition and incoherent structure
- Shows limited knowledge about the subject matter, and lack of ability to express clear ideas
- No critical comments other than simply summarizing the materials
- Seriously insufficient or no reference
- Misunderstood concepts, inaccurate diction, and inappropriate citations

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Intangible Cultural Heritage, Indigenous Peoples and Communities, Oral Traditions, Folklore, Performing Arts, Rituals, Festive Events, Social Practices, Memory, Historical Preservation, Indigenous Knowledge, Authenticity and Identity, Cultural Resources, Food and Cuisine, Craftsmanship, Digital Heritage, Public Policy, International Organizations, Nationalism, Globalization, Cultural Industries, Artefacts and Handicrafts, Antiquities, Museum, Intellectual Property, Modernity, Remembrance and Forgetting, Religion and Cosmology

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Smith, Laurajane. 2006. <i>Uses of Heritage</i> . London and New York: Routledge.
2	Zhu, Yujie and Christina Maags, 2020. <i>Heritage Politics in China: The Power of the Past</i> ' Routledge.
3	Blumenfield, Tami and Helaine Silverman, eds. 2013. <i>Cultural Heritage Politics in China</i> . New York: Springer.
4	Wang, Chu-Li, Michael Rowlands, and Yujie Zhu, eds., 2020. <i>Heritage and Religion in East Asia</i> . London: Routledge..
5	Madsen, Richard, 2014. From socialist ideology to cultural heritage: the changing basis of legitimacy in the People's Republic of China, <i>Anthropology & Medicine</i> , 21:1, 58-70.

6	Fisher, Gareth. 2011. In the Footsteps of the Tourists: Buddhist Revival at Museum/Temple Sites in Beijing. <i>Social Compass</i> , 58(4), 511–524.
7	Liu, Jifeng, 2017. Reconstructing Missionary History in China Today: Cultural Heritage, Local Politics and Christianity in Xiamen, <i>The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology</i> , 18:1, 54-72.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, eds. 1983. <i>The Invention of Tradition</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2	Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1998. <i>Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage</i> . Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
3	Foster, Michael Dylan and Lisa Gilman, eds. 2015. <i>UNESCO on the Ground: Local Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage</i> . Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
4	Brown, Michael. 2004. <i>Who Owns Native Culture?</i> Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
5	Handler, Richard and Eric Gable. 1997. <i>The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg</i> . Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
6	Cameron, Fiona and Sarah Kenderdine, eds. 2007. <i>Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse</i> . Cambridge and London: MIT Press.
7	Smith, Laurajane and Natsuko Akagawa, eds. 2009. <i>Intangible Heritage</i> . London and New York: Routledge.
8	Hevia, James Louis. 2001. "World Heritage, National Culture, and the Restoration of Chengde." <i>Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique</i> 9(1): 219-43.
9	Arizpe, Lourdes and Cristina Amescua, eds. 2013. <i>Anthropological Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage</i> . New York: Springer.
10	UNESCO / World Bank / World Intellectual Property Organization (websites and documents).