

CAH2545: EXPLORING CHINA: WORDS, IMAGES, AND OBJECTS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Exploring China: Words, Images, and Objects

Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

Course Number

2545

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

CTL2545 Texts in Chinese Art and Culture

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to enhance students' understanding of Chinese art and culture through extensive reading on selective texts from both Chinese and non-Chinese sources either in original or in translation. It will introduce the students to a substantial amount of representative cultural texts—literary, philosophical, art, aesthetic or in popular/folklore forms—that have influenced the development of art and culture as well as shaped our understanding of culture and heritage. It will give the students an overview of the central theories that have been developed by artists, historians and philosophers from ancient time to the present. Students will read art and cultural texts from more popular and easy-to-read style to more theoretical style, and are encouraged to read and discuss critically about the selective texts, so that can be able to develop their own analytical views on art and culture.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 app.)		DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Acquire broad cultural knowledge through reading and discuss representative cultural objects with related texts		x		
2	Demonstrate analytical skills in art and culture through hands-on experience/museum visits			x	
3	Present cultural topics with context and various perspectives in both oral and written English				
4	Contrast cultural objects with written sources, and develop appropriate arguments based on readings and hands-on experience.				

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	Students will prepare the assigned reading weekly before coming to class and engage actively in discussions		1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Students will attend hands-on sessions or visits to museums or collections, and discuss the objects and texts under the course instructor's guidance.		1, 2, 3, 4	

3	Students will deliver oral presentations discussing cultural objects with the help of primary sources.		1, 2, 3, 4	
4	Students will develop and present arguments for selected objects in a written assignment/final paper.		1, 2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?	
1	Class Participation and Canvas Discussion: Students will join actively the in-class and Canvas discussions.	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	Yes
2	Oral Presentation: Students will deliver a 15-minute oral presentation delineating their findings.	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	Yes
3	Book Review: Students will write a mid-term book review discussing the major arguments of the book author.	1, 2, 4	20	-	Yes
4	Final Paper: Students will write a final paper and develop appropriate arguments based on selected objects and texts.	1, 2, 4	40	-	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Grading is based on overall performance scored in various tasks. No need for further subdivisions here.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Superior command of English-language ability in comprehending, conversing and discoursing on art and cultural texts. Demonstrated familiarity with representative cultural texts and topics, and demonstrated confidence and fluency in expressing them in near-native level English.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good command of English-language ability in comprehending, conversing and discoursing on art and cultural texts. Demonstrated familiarity with representative cultural texts and topics, and demonstrated confidence and fluency in expressing them in good English.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Satisfactory command of English-language ability in comprehending, conversing and discoursing on art and cultural texts. Adequate familiarity with representative cultural texts and topics, and fair confidence and fluency in expressing them in comprehensible English.

Marginal (D)

Sufficient command of English-language ability in comprehending, conversing and discoursing on art and cultural texts so as to allow students to progress without repeating the course.

Failure (F)

Little command of English-language ability in comprehending, conversing and discoursing on art and cultural texts. Little familiarity with representative cultural texts and topics, and little confidence and fluency in expressing them in acceptable English.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Art, Culture, Aesthetic, Art Theory, Cultural theory, Literary theory

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Andrews, Julia F., Shen, Kuiyi. A Century in Crisis: Modernity and Tradition in the Art of Twentieth-century China. New York: Guggenheim Museum: Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1998.
2	Barnhart, Richard M. Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting. New Haven: Beijing: Yale University Press; Foreign Languages Press, 1997.
3	Bartholomew, Terese Tse. Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 2006.
4	Brownell, Susan., and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom. Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities: A Reader. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
5	Gao, Jianping. Aesthetics and Art: Traditional and Contemporary China in a Comparative Perspective. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg: Imprint: Springer, 2018.
6	Hsiu-Chuang Deppman, Adapted for the screen: the cultural politics of modern Chinese fiction & film. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010.
7	Judith T. Zeitlin, Historian of the strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese classical tale. Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 1993.
8	Shiamin Kwa and Wilt L. Idema, ed. & trans. Mulan: five versions of a classic Chinese legend with related texts. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2010.
9	俞劍華. 中國古代畫論類編. 北京:人民美術出版社, 2000.

10	萬青力. 並非衰落的百年: 十九世紀中國繪畫史. 台北市: 雄獅圖書股份有限公司, 2005.
11	錢穆. 中國文化史導論. 臺北市: 臺灣商務印書館股份有限公司, 1993.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Barthes, Roland. Mythologies (http://seacoast.sunderland.ac.uk/~os0tmc/myth.htm)
2	Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of criticism: four essays. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
3	Fu Poshek ed. China Forever: The Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008
4	Hall, Stuart & Evans, Jessica eds. Visual Culture: The Reader. London: Sage, 1999.
5	Hassler-Forest, Dan, Nicklas, Pascal, eds. The politics of adaptation: media convergence and ideology. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
6	Kohn, Livia. Early Chinese Mysticism: Philosophy and Soteriology in the Taoist Tradition. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.
7	Li, Siu Leung. Cross-Dressing in Chinese Opera. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003.
8	Rainey, Lee Dian. Confucius & Confucianism: The Essentials. Oxford; Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
9	Zeitlin, Judith T. The phantom heroine: ghosts and gender in seventeenth-century Chinese literature. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007.
10	余英時. 士與中國文化. 上海: 上海人民出版社, 2003.
11	彭麗君. 複製的藝術: 文革期間的文化生產及實踐. 香港: 中文大學出版社, 2017.
12	林啟彥, 黃媽梨. 中國文化導論. 香港: 香港教育圖書公司, 1998.