

CAH2854: URBAN HISTORY OF CHINA

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Urban History of China

Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

Course Number

2854

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

Other Languages

Other Languages for Medium of Instruction

English supplemented by Chinese

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to explore the development of Chinese cities from the ancient period to modern times. Through studying a collection of primary sources, it examines the dynamic roles of cities in shaping Chinese history and analyses how the structures and designs of cities have influenced historical events and vice versa. Apart from reviewing various approaches to urban history, it also explores the recent interdisciplinary perspectives and research on the cultural, social, economic, political and religious development of cities and urban life as well as their significance in Chinese history.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Examine critically the development of Chinese cities from the ancient period to the modern era.	20	x		
2	Analyse the features of Chinese cities and their roles in shaping Chinese history	20	x		
3	Identify the various representations of Chinese cities from the perspectives of culture, economics, politics and religion.	20	x		
4	Evaluate the images and concepts of the city in Chinese historical texts from multiple points of view.	20		x	
5	Interpret primary sources from the ancient world to the present as well as the latest research through historical methods.	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	Students will engaged with key concepts and theories of the topics in each lecture and related in-class group activities (e.g. group discussions, simple quizzes and debates).	1, 2, 3	

2	Reading	Students will develop in-depth understanding of the concepts and topics discussed through scholarly books and articles.	2, 3, 4	
3	Presentation & Discussion	Students are required to study the assigned readings in advance, and all of them will take turns to be the presenter and lead the discussion throughout the course. Teacher will assess students' analytical skills and their understandings of assigned readings and related academic issues. Students are required to submit in written form a revised presentation after receiving comments from their teachers and classmates. Both the oral and written presentations will be assessed. Students assigned as discussants are required to actively take part in discussions right after the presentation. They are also required to submit their comments and discovery in written form.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Group Presentation: Students are required to show the depth of knowledge and the discovery of new issues. Students are required to contribute to all in-class discussions by raising thoughtful questions, analyzing relevant issues and materials, and synthesizing across the required readings. Emphasis is based on the depth of knowledge and the discovery of new issues.	2, 4, 5	20	-	Yes
2	Final Paper (2500-3000 words): Students are required to submit a final paper in academic form. Important concepts should be defined or explained. Every point should be substantiated with strong evidences.	2, 3, 4, 5	40	-	No
3	Book review: Students are required to write one book review (around 1000-1500 words) in terms of its framework, content, organization, arguments, use of primary and secondary sources etc.	2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No

4	Active discussion in class: This is to motivate students to learn and discover new perspectives on the subjects discussed. Students are expected to contribute to ongoing discussion and respond to teachers' questions and other students' comments in class. They need to be ready to report to the whole class on a small-group discussion. They need to make a list of bulleted key points of the learning from the lesson.	1, 2, 3	10	-	Yes
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Group Presentation

Criterion

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation as well as the organisation 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;
- Critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited 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.

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

Final Paper and book review

Criterion

This assessment will grade 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.

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 utilized in accordance with the topic.
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various research methods and writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some 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 utilized in accordance with the topic.
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited 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 utilized in accordance with the topic.
- Exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, able to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

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

Active discussion in class

Criterion

Students actively participate in discussions, debates and other class activities 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, listening comprehension, able to participate in 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

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

City, Beijing, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Chinese history, urban, Buddhism, Daoism, social network, Luoyang, Kaifang, Xian.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Chung, Anita, Drawing boundaries: architectural images in Qing China (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).
2	Elvin, Mark and William Skinner (eds.), The Chinese City Between Two Worlds (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974).
3	Esherick, Joseph W. (ed.), Remaking the Chinese city: modernity and national identity, 1900-1950 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).
4	Heng, Chye Kiang, Cities of aristocrats and bureaucrats: the development of medieval Chinese cityscapes (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).
5	Liang, Samuel Y., Mapping modernity in Shanghai: space, gender, and visual culture in the Sojourners' city, 1853-98 (London: Routledge, 2010).
6	Marcuse, Peter and Ronald van Kempen (eds.), Globalizing cities: a new spatial order? (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
7	Naquin, Susan, Peking: temples and city life, 1400-1900 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
8	Rowe, William T., Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796-1895 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).
9	Skinner, G. William (ed.), The City in Late Imperial China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
10	Xiong, Victor Cunrui, Sui Tang Chang'an (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 2000).

Additional Readings

Title	
1	楊素德，《中國近代城市與建築》，北京：中國建築工業出版社，1993。
2	李孝悌，《中國的城市生活》，台北：聯經，2005。
3	李孝悌，《昨日到城市》，台北：聯經，2008。
4	樊樹志，《明清江南市鎮探微》，上海：復旦大學出版社，1990。
5	許嵩，《建康實錄》，北京：中華書局，1986。
6	楊銓之，《洛陽伽藍記》，山東：山東友誼出版社，2001。
7	楊寬，《中國古代都城制度史研究》，上海：上海古籍出版社，1993。
8	何一民主編，《近代中國城市發展與社會變遷》，北京：科學出版社，2004。
9	王瑞成，《中國城市史論稿》，成都：四川大學出版社，2000。
10	賀業鉅，《中國古代城市規劃史論叢》，北京：中國建築工業出版社，1986。