

CAH3832: THE STUDY OF DUNHUANG

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

The Study of Dunhuang

Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

Course Number

3832

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

Chinese

Medium of Assessment

Chinese

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Dunhuang is an oasis lying at the crossroads where the northern and southern branches of the Silk Road meet. The discovery and excavation of a huge number of Buddhist art objects in the Mogao caves and the ancient Chinese manuscripts

in the Library Cave indicate that Dunhuang is one of the major gateways to ancient Chinese civilisation. The study of Dunhuang is indispensable in the research of Chinese History. This course aims to (1) Provide students with historical knowledge of Dunhuang in the aspects of literature, art and religion; (2) Enhance students' abilities in interpreting ancient Chinese documents; (3) Strengthen the training in appreciating sculpture, mural paintings and frescoes in different caves for students; and (4) Deepen students' knowledge and skills to collect, integrate, analyse, apply and utilise different resources for the study of Dunhuang. The course contents encompass four major aspects, including (i) The History of Dunhuang, (ii) The Art of the Mogao Grottoes, (iii) The Chinese Manuscripts found in the Library Cave and (iv) The Present and Future of Dunhuang.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Demonstrate knowledge of Dunhuang history through the study of primary historical materials of the antiquities and the ancient Chinese manuscripts in Dunhuang	20		x	
2	Identify the features of Dunhuang relics and appreciate the aesthetic significance of Dunhuang grottoes	20	x	x	
3	Apply the capacity for self-directed learning to interpret the literatures of Dunhuang	20	x	x	
4	Compare and contrast the links and characteristics between different cultures through a literary study of Dunhuang	20		x	
5	Analyse and evaluate the appropriateness of policies and actions related to cultural objects and preservation of traditions in historical aspects, and provide solution plans for the identified problems	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 learn the background and basic knowledge of Dunhuang, by focusing on the history of Dunhuang, the art of the Mogao Grottoes, the Chinese manuscripts found in the Library Cave, and the Present and Future of Dunhuang. The involved core paradigms include history, art, literature and religious influence. Local site visits may be carried out during lectures.	1, 2, 4, 5	1.5 hours / week
2	In-class Learning Activities	To promote active learning and discovery learning. Students will be engaged in all the activities in every lecture, in-class discussion, in-class exercise, short quiz, real-time polling, students presentation, peer review will be carried out during the second session of the lecture. Students can further deepen their knowledge and reflection on what they have learnt in lectures.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1.5 hours / week
3	Reading Report	Students will give their analysis, comments and critics in their reading report. The readings are selected from book chapters, articles or academic journals.	3, 4	1-2 report(s) / semester

4	Written Essay	Students will select a topic and write an essay. They will combine what they have learnt and write clear essays which are well-structured, well-organised and creative. In the essay, they can conduct a literature review and summarisation, compiling quantitative or qualitative statistics. Students will also be encouraged to reflect on the issues they have studied.	3, 4, 5	1 essay / semester
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation and Class Exercises	1, 2, 3, 4	20	Students are required to actively participate in lectures. Activities during the lectures are informative and problem-solving based, it aims to test the students' knowledge outcome. The class exercises may include case study, analysed sharing, role plays, interactive games, quizzes, debates, and literature interpretation. Student are required to participate actively.	No
2	Presentation	3, 4, 5	25	Depending on the study progress in each semester, students will be required to present their analysis on selected topics in a group or individually.	Yes

3	A reading report (around 1500 words)	1, 3	15	The readings are selected from book chapters, articles or academic journals.	No
4	Final Written Essay (around 4000 words)	2, 4, 5	40	Students are required to use the approach of Historical-based or Case-based learning to set their reflective topic or proposition. The essay must be well-structured, well-organised and fluently written .	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class Participation and Class Exercises (20%)

Criterion

Students are required to participate actively in all of the class activities. Students must complete the class exercises/5-minute summary within the designated time and hand in during class. The result will be processed in the ‘Summative Assessment’ . Performance in learning activities will be graded. Students are encouraged to share, compare and exchange ideas in class.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of

1. engaged participation as demonstrated by active listening, initiation of questions or comments, and cooperative teamwork.
2. active reflection on the lecture, clear description of key points, clear indication of incomprehensible issues

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of

1. engaged participation as demonstrated by active listening, initiation of questions or comments, and cooperative teamwork.
2. active reflection on the lecture, clear description of key points, clear indication of incomprehensible issues

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of

1. engaged participation as demonstrated by active listening, initiation of questions or comments, and cooperative teamwork.
2. active reflection on the lecture, clear description of key points, clear indication of incomprehensible issues

Marginal (D)

Marginally satisfies the basic requirements of the participation and the class exercises.

Failure (F)

Fail to meet minimum requirements of participation and the class exercises.

Assessment Task

Presentation (25%)

Criterion

Students must upload the required materials on the Canvas by the designated date. The presentation must be drafted according to the principles of Problem-based and Case-based learning. Students will deliver a presentation based on the topic which they have thoroughly studied and researched. They must work out 2 to 4 open-ended questions for class discussion.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of

1. accurate and comprehensive description of material, rich contents, thorough understanding, well-organized and detailed. Arguments are convincing, new ideas are pursued.
2. Correct and clear pronunciation, voice and body language are in tune with the contents of topic, has natural posture, very good time management.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of

1. accurate and comprehensive description of material, rich contents, good understanding, well-structured, good arguments, well-reasoned.
2. Clear pronunciation, voice and body language are well-balanced. Natural posture, good time management.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of

1. accurate and comprehensive description of material, elementary understanding. Well-structured, clear contents, well-reasoned.
2. Correct pronunciation, occasional mistake, voice and body language not in balance. Posture basically natural, overruns (approximately 3-6 minutes)

Marginal (D)

Marginally satisfies the requirements, contents are broad, details missing or incorrect, loose structure, reasoning needs to be improved. Indistinct speech, voice and body language remain unchanged, overruns (by approx. 6-10 minutes)

Failure (F)

Does not meet the minimum requirements, has a very general idea of the facts, contents is fragmentary, no structure, arguments not convincing. Indistinct speech, voice and body language are rigid, unable to express clearly, seriously overruns (by more than 10 minutes)

Assessment Task

Reading Report (15%)

Criterion

Student will submit a reading report by the deadline. The reading materials are mainly drawn from book chapters or academic articles, which are closely related to the ancient Chinese manuscripts found in Dunhuang. Students are required to demonstrate their abilities in the following aspects: (1) Reading and comprehension skills (2) Observation and discovery intention (3) Analysis and integration ability (4) Innovative suggestions (5) Ways of written presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of

1. accurate and comprehensive description of the reading materials, clearly present their views in critically and constructively way.
2. conclude and present their point of view accurately, present accurate and specific ideas, make reasonably criticism, appreciation and suggestion in a discovery way.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of

1. accurate and comprehensive description of the reading materials, clearly present their views in critically and constructively way.
2. conclude and present their point of view accurately, present accurate and specific ideas, make reasonably criticism, appreciation and suggestion in a discovery way.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of

1. accurate and comprehensive description of the reading materials, clearly present their views in critically and constructively way.
2. conclude and present their point of view accurately, present accurate and specific ideas, make reasonably criticism, appreciation and suggestion in a discovery way.

Marginal (D)

Marginally satisfies the requirements, late submission of the reading report, demonstrate the limited ability to read and interpret the materials, intentionally copy the ideas from the material without any elaborations, unclearly conclude and present their point of view, poor analysis and integration skill, holding extreme views without any supports from academic literatures.

Failure (F)

Fail to submit a reading report, fail to demonstrate the ability to read and interpret the materials, simply copy the ideas from the material without any elaborations, not being able to conclude and present their point of view, poor analysis and integration skill, holding extreme views without any supports from academic literatures.

Assessment Task

Final Written Essay (40%)

Criterion

Students must combine what they have learnt and write clear essays which are well-structured, well-organised and creative. They must:1. Apply what they have learnt;2. Conduct literature review;3. Describe and analyse their arguments;4. Combine the materials from lectures, library, presentations as well as class exercises, explain the issues and write a conclusion.4. Reflect on the course materials and formulate constructive plans.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of original thinking; good organisation, capacity to analyse and synthesise; superior grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base, creative and pursuing new ideas.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of grasp of subject, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of issues; evidence of familiarity with literature.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Student who is profiting from the university experience; understanding of the subject; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.

Marginal (D)

Sufficient familiarity with the subject matter to enable the student to progress without repeating the course.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of familiarity with the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Dunhuang, Mogao Grottoes, Library Cave, Frescoes, Silk Road, Western Paradise, Chang Shuhong, Wang Yuanlu, Nestorian Christianity, Manichean.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	榮新江，《敦煌學十八講》。北京：北京大學出版社，2001。
2	柴劍虹，《敦煌學與敦煌文化》。上海：上海古籍出版社，2007。
3	陳祚龍，《敦煌學要籥》。臺北：新文豐出版公司，1982。
4	劉進寶，《敦煌學通論》。蘭州：甘肅教育出版社，2004。
5	伯希和著，耿昇，唐健賓譯，《伯希和敦煌石窟筆記》。蘭州：甘肅人民出版社，1993。
6	劉進寶，《敦煌學術史：事件、人物與著述》。北京：中華書局，2011。
7	季羨林主編，《敦煌歷史與莫高窟藝術研究》。蘭州：甘肅人民出版社，2002。
8	敦煌研究院編，《敦煌莫高窟》。酒泉：敦煌研究院，1992。
9	法律出版社法規出版中心編，《甘肅省敦煌莫高窟保護條例》。北京：法律出版社，2004。
10	Chung Tan: Dunhuang art: through the eyes of Duan Wenjie. New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts: Abhinav Publications, 1994.
11	Dunhuang Research Institute: Dunhuang: A Centennial Commemoration of the Discovery of the Cave Library. Beijing: Morning Glory Publishers; Chicago, Ill.: Art Media Resources, 2000.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	中國國家圖書館編，《國家圖書館藏敦煌遺書》。北京：北京圖書館出版社，2005-。
2	中國社會科學院歷史研究所，《英藏敦煌文獻》。15冊。成都：四川人民出版社，1990-。
3	《俄羅斯科學院東方研究所聖彼得堡分所藏敦煌文獻》。上海：上海古籍出版社、莫斯科：俄羅斯科學出版社東方文學部，1992-。
4	《俄羅斯國立艾爾米塔什博物館藏敦煌藝術品》。上海：上海古籍出版社，1997-。
5	《法國國家圖書館藏敦煌西夏文文獻》。上海：上海古籍出版社，2007。
6	中國科學院歷史研究所資料室編，《敦煌資料》。北京：中華書局，1961-。
7	榮新江，《辨偽與存真：敦煌學論集》。上海：上海古籍出版社，2009。
8	公維章，《涅槃，淨土的殿堂：敦煌莫高窟第 148 窟研究》。北京：民族出版社，2004。
9	項楚，《敦煌變文選注》。北京：中華書局，2006。
10	馬繼興等，《敦煌醫藥文獻輯校》。南京：江蘇古籍出版社，1998。
11	叢春雨，《敦煌中醫藥全書》。北京：中醫古籍出版社，1994。
12	關長龍，《敦煌本埠輿文書研究》。北京：中華書局，2013。
13	朱鳳玉，《百年來敦煌文學研究之考察》。北京：民族出版社，2012。

14	常書鴻，《常書鴻自傳：九十春秋-敦煌五十年》。北京：北京大學出版社，2011。
15	樊錦詩主編，《解讀敦煌：佛陀的本生因緣故事》。上海：華東師範大學出版社，2010。
16	梁曉鵬，《敦煌莫高窟千佛圖像研究》。北京：民族出版社，2006。
17	敦煌文物研究所，《敦煌莫高窟內容總錄》。北京：文物出版社，1982。
18	Dunhuang Institute for Cultural Relics: The Art treasures of Dunhuang. Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Company, 1981.
19	Whitfield Roderick, Cave temples of Mogao: art and history on the silk road. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Getty Museum, 2000.
20	Dunhuang Research Academy - http://en.dha.ac.cn/
21	敦煌研究院，《敦煌研究》。北京：中國學術期刊 (光盤版) 電子雜誌社，1994-