

# GE1125: ARCHITECTURE AND SPACE IN CHINESE CULTURE

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Architecture and Space in Chinese Culture

### Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

### Course Number

1125

### 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

### GE Area (Primary)

Area 1 - Arts and Humanities

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

'Architecture and Space in Chinese Culture' is an interdisciplinary course that introduces students to discover different forms, functions and expressions of buildings and spaces in Chinese culture and society from various perspectives of academic fields, including architecture, archaeology, literature and fine art. Encompassing examples from China and other countries of the world, the course will examine different types of buildings from pre-historic age to modern time, with a thematic focus on how architecture relates to society and culture. Students will read literal and philosophical texts, view architectural drawings and images, observe antique objects and artifacts, and look at visual art in order to analyze buildings and spaces historically, philosophically and aesthetically. Through field study, group project and critical writings, students will interact with the actual built environment, to reflect on specific architectural space with reference to political, economic, religious and spiritual concepts.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Develop an attitude to perceive architecture and space as aesthetical, philosophical, historical, political, religious and spiritual concepts.		x		
2	Identify the variety of characteristics and meanings in different buildings and urban spaces by using analytical methods.			x	
3	Demonstrate abilities to appreciate the visual, functional and physical transformations that are expressed in our built environment.			x	
4	Employ skills for inter-disciplinary study and field study that are also applicable to other subjects and enquiries.			x	
5	Reflect and re-examine on spatial tradition and culture of China and Hong Kong.			x	
6	Apply acquired knowledge to a more complex and challenged built-society of the contemporary world.			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	To introduce concepts, theories and examples with thematic topics, and to demonstrate methods of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary studies. Students will be assigned to read reference articles before the lecture. Each lecture includes a 10-minute short written question on the lecture topic for students to complete in class.	1, 2, 3
2	Tutorials	To instruct, discuss and review assignments and projects of the course. Students are encouraged to ask questions actively. Students are required to make an oral presentation of their case studies in the final session. *By completing all assignments and projects under the instruction of teachers, students will learn interdisciplinary approaches to the subject matters, such as 'Architecture in Archaeology', 'Architecture in Literature' and 'Architecture in Fine Art'. This experience will help students applying same skills and methods in studying other subjects, for example, students studying Chinese History, Chinese Literature and Chinese Art will be obviously beneficial by referring to Chinese Architecture.	2, 3, 4, 5

3	Field Study	Students will team up to visit a built site in Hong Kong or mainland under the supervision of the course instructor, in order to learn outside of the classroom. It will help students to develop curiosities about architecture and space in reality. *Students shall investigate what cultural connotations the site contains in particular and how it relates to the modern surroundings socially, by using interdisciplinary point of views. Data research is an option to field study if the field-trip cannot be organized.	4, 5	
4	Group Project	Students will team up to do a field-study, a case study and an oral presentation, for learning skills of collaboration and learn from each other.	2, 6	
5	Course Concluding Forum	To summarize and conclude the course with interdisciplinary perspectives. Students are required to conduct a short oral presentation about their case studies, and express their opinions and reflections on recent issues of our society related to course topics.	5, 6	
6	Immersive Learning Activity	An online Virtual Reality Tour of the Wooden Pagoda in Yingxian is join-developed by Talent and Education Development Office and this course. Students will be able to visit the exterior and the interior the pagoda virtually for investigating its structure and construction methods	1, 2, 4	

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	<p>Immersive Learning Exercise: Students are required to take the</p> <p>online Virtual Reality Tour of the Wooden Pagoda in Yingxian, and to explore the architecture of the pagoda, then to complete an open-book online exercise consists of designated questions to reflect students' abilities of investigation and understanding of wooden construction technology through self-conducted investigation.</p>	1, 2, 4	20	-	No

2	<p>Case Study Report: Students are required to submit a 5000-word written case-study-report on a traditional building of wooden construction. The chosen building could be based on a field trip or on data research. It is a group project. The report shall analyse a specific case from interdisciplinary perspectives and applying theories from different academic fields such as architecture, culture, social or technology. It shall identify the relationship between the physical site and its social and cultural context. It shall reflect how the case contributes conceptual or practical understandings to recent architectural issues. Proposals or solutions to improve such issues are most encouraged.</p>	2, 4, 5, 6	40	-	No
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3	Oral Presentation: Students are required to make an oral presentation of their field-study in class. This is a group project. *Students will get feedback right after their presentations, in the form of verbal comments.	2, 6	10	Allow use of AI for image search	Yes
4	Quizzes: There are 2 quizzes to test students' understanding of all lecture topics taught in classes. Each quiz weights 15%, and is conducted online via Canvas/Quizzes.	1, 2, 3	30	-	No

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Immersive Learning Exercise

**Criterion**

Students are required to go through the designated Virtual Realty Tour of the Wooden Pagoda in Yingxian for self-conducting an online investigation according to guided questions on architecture of the pagoda.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of

- understanding of special methods of wooden construction technology; ability to locate, identify and name building parts, ornaments and decorations correctly.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of

- understanding of special methods of wooden construction technology; ability to locate, identify and name building parts, ornaments and decorations correctly.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of

- understanding of special methods of wooden construction technology; ability to locate, identify and name building parts, ornaments and decorations correctly.

**Marginal (D)**

Marginally satisfies the basic requirements.

**Failure (F)**

Fail to meet minimum requirements.

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**Assessment Task**

Case Study Report

**Criterion**

A group project will be developed through the semester on a selected case or a site of Chinese architecture. Teachers will assess students' ability of research and analytical skills by using primary and secondary materials.

**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;
- clear and integrated ideas which can keep to the point, clear-cut subject, distinct themes, ability to interpret the opinions effectively;
- sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.
- teamwork and collaboration.

**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;
- clear and integrated ideas which can keep to the point, clear-cut subject, distinct themes, ability to interpret the opinions effectively;
- sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.
- teamwork and collaboration.

**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;
- clear and integrated ideas which can keep to the point, clear-cut subject, distinct themes, ability to interpret the opinions effectively;
- sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.
- teamwork and collaboration.

**Marginal (D)**

- adequate content, ability to integrate resources generally based on demand, limited or irrelevant use of resources;
- loose organization;
- ability 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**

### Oral Presentation

#### **Criterion**

- Information and discovery derived from the field-study;
- Skill of oral communication;
- Teamwork spirit.

#### **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.
- teamwork and collaboration.

#### **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.
- teamwork and collaboration.

#### **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.
- teamwork and collaboration.

#### **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;
  - softly voice, indistinct pronunciation and improper diction, seriously over time.
-

## Assessment Task

### Quizzes

#### Criterion

1. Understanding of the subject matter.
2. Ability in explaining relevant concepts.
3. To construct critical thinking.

#### Excellent (A+, A, A-)

1. Excellent command of knowledge of Chinese architecture and gardens;
2. Excellent critical thinking ability in reviewing research reports/research articles related to Chinese architecture and gardens;
3. Excellent application of theories in studying architecture and gardens;
4. Excellent ability in knowledge application.

#### Good (B+, B, B-)

1. Good command of knowledge of Chinese architecture and gardens;
2. Good critical thinking ability in reviewing research reports/research articles related to Chinese architecture and gardens;
3. Good application of theories in studying architecture and gardens;
4. Good ability in knowledge application.

#### Fair (C+, C, C-)

1. Fair command of knowledge of Chinese architecture and gardens;
2. Fair critical thinking ability in reviewing research reports/research articles related to Chinese architecture and gardens;
3. Fair application of theories in studying architecture and gardens;
4. Fair ability in knowledge application.

#### Marginal (D)

1. Marginal command of knowledge of Chinese architecture and gardens;
2. Marginal critical thinking ability in reviewing research reports/research articles related to Chinese architecture and gardens;
3. Marginal application of theories in studying architecture and gardens;
4. Marginal ability in knowledge application.

#### Failure (F)

1. unsatisfactory command of knowledge of Chinese architecture and gardens;
2. unsatisfactory critical thinking ability in reviewing research reports/research articles related to Chinese architecture and gardens;
3. unsatisfactory application of theories in studying architecture and gardens;
4. unsatisfactory ability in knowledge application.

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## Part III Other Information

### Keyword Syllabus

Subjects: Chinese Architecture, Space, Culture, Society.

Topics: Myths & Symbols, Man & Nature, Public & Private, War & Peace, Religions & Beliefs, Spirits & Traditions, Death & Immortality, Home & Family, Landscape & Paradise, Urbanization & Globalization.

Examples: Settlement in Pre-historic China, Stonehenge, Pyramid, Acropolis, Agora, Forum, Basilica, Amphitheatre, Forbidden City, Champs-Elysees Avenue, Grand Mall, The Great Wall; Athens, Rome, Beijing, Chang' an, Suzhou, Paris, Washington D.C., Hong Kong; Buddhist Monastery, Christian Church, Islamic Mosque; Temple of Heaven, Ancestral Hall, Confucius Memorial, Mausoleum, Tomb; Courtyard House, Landscape Garden, Shopping Malls in Hong Kong.

Cultures: Pre-historic, Pre-modern, Modern, Post-modern; China, Egypt, Ancient Greek and Rome, Maya, Incas, Aztecs; Buddhism and Zen, Daoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islamic.

Concepts: Polis, City, Republic, Defence System, Borderland Development, Sanctity, Secularity, Heaven, Ancestor, Rite, Ritual, Clan, Kinship, Loyalty, Filial Piety, Fengshui, Burial Tradition, Residence, Marriage, Gender, Seniority, Ethic, Seclusion, Retreat, Industrialization, Capitalism, Consumerism.

Activities: Lecture, Tutorial, Field Study, Group Project, Forum.

Assignments: Reading, Lecture Topic Research Essay, Case Study Report, Oral Presentation.

## Reading List

### Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Liang Ssu-ch'eng, A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984)
2	David Baker (ed.), Jacques Gernet (fwd.), The Great Wall (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1982)
3	Ronald G. Knapp and Kai-Yi Lo (ed.), House, Home, Family (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005)
4	Alfreda Murck, Wen Fong, A Chinese Garden Court (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985)

### Additional Readings

Title	
1	Yu, Zhuoyun, Palaces of the Forbidden City (New York: Viking, 1984)
2	Wang Boyang, Imperial Mausoleums and Tombs (Wien/New York: Springer, 1998)
3	Sun Dazhang, Ritual and Ceremonious Buildings (Wien: Springer-Verlag, 2002)
4	Yuheng Bao, Buddhist Art and Architecture of China (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004)
5	Mimi Lobell, Spatial Archetypes ( "ReVision" , Sebastopol: ReVision Publishing, vol.6, No.2, Fall 1983)
6	Charlie Xue, Building a Revolution: Chinese architecture since 1980 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006)
7	樓慶西著《中國古建築二十講》（北京：生活·讀書·新知三聯書店，2001）
8	王其鈞著《中國民居三十講》（北京：中國建築工業出版社，2005）
9	薛求理《全球化衝擊：海外建築設計在中國》（上海：同濟大學出版社，2006）
10	鍾華楠《城市化危機》（香港：商務印書館有限公司，2008）

## Annex (for GE courses only)

**A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:**

Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)

**PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning**

1, 4

**PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology**

2, 4

**PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills**

2, 5, 6

**PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text**

1, 2, 3

**PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills**

5

**PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team**

4

**PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues**

5

**PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions**

6

**PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation**

1, 2, 5

**B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.**

**Selected Assessment Task**

Case Study Report: Students are required to submit a case-study-report on a traditional building by employing skills of interdisciplinary study.