

Hong Kong University of Science & Technology
MA Course syllabus

MILE 5012 Chinese Culture in Classics

Time & venue: Spring, 2026. Thus 18:00-20:50; Room 1409

Instructor: Li Dechao 李德超

E-mail: hmdcli@ust.hk

Office Hours: Thus 10:30-12:00,

Course materials such as syllabus, lecture notes and reading materials are arranged and placed on Canvas.

Course Description: This course introduces Chinese culture through reading and interpreting ancient Chinese classics from cultural and linguistic perspective. It examines the works of ancient Chinese scholars such as *Confucius*, *Guan Zi*, *Zuoqiu Ming*, *Zengzi* and *Laozi*, etc. to explore the cultural roots of various social phenomena in modern Chinese society. This course aims to guide students in grasping the essence of Chinese culture through reading classical Chinese texts. Understanding culture begins with understanding the language that carries it. Language is not merely a medium of communication or a vehicle for culture; language itself is a fundamental component of culture.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- 1). Understand and appreciate better the works of classical Chinese, especially in terms of their literature innovation, philosophical value and cultural significance.
- 2). Have basic knowledge and understanding of the function words and syntax of Classical Chinese.
- 3). Understand the fundamental differences in structural device and lexical/morphological mechanisms between ancient and modern Chinese language.
- 4). Apply the basic principles of Classical Chinese in translating Classical Chinese texts into modern Chinese.
- 5). Improve their reading and writing ability and oral communication skill in modern Chinese

Assessment:

- (1) Two group projects (40%)
- (2) Mid-term test (20%)
- (3) Final exam (40%)

Teaching schedule:

| Week | Topics |
|------|--------|
|------|--------|

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | A. Introduction: B. Texts selected from <i>Zuozhuan</i> (<i>Zuo's Commentaries</i> 左傳) |
| 2 | Texts selected from <i>Zuozhuan</i> |
| 3 | A. Diachronic similarities and differences of word meaning; B. Texts selected from <i>Daxue</i> (<i>The Great Learning</i> 大學) |
| 4 | Texts selected from <i>Daxue</i> (<i>The Great Learning</i> 大學) |
| 5 | A. Word order; B. Texts selected from <i>Lunyu</i> (<i>The Analects</i> 論語) |
| 6 | Texts selected from <i>Lunyu</i> (<i>The Analects</i> 論語) |
| 7 | A. Mid-term test; B. Pronoun; |
| 8 | “ <i>Letter replying to Ren An</i> ” (by Sima Qian 司馬遷) |
| 9 | Texts selected from <i>Mengzi</i> (Mencius 孟子) |
| 10 | Texts selected from The <i>Tao Te Ching</i> (Writings by Laozi 老子) |
| 11 | Texts selected from The <i>Tao Te Ching</i> (Writing by Laozi 老子) |
| 12 | A. Adverb and Conjunction; B. Texts selected from <i>Liji</i> (<i>The Book of Rites</i> 禮記) |
| 13 | A. Final particles; B. Texts selected from <i>Shijing</i> (<i>The Book of Songs</i> 詩經) |
| 14 | A. Review; B. Selected Tang poems and Song Ci. |

Recommended Readings:

Confucius. *The Analects*.

Confucius (ed). *The Book of Songs*.

Confucius (ed). *The Book of Change*.

Guan Zhong, *The Guanzi*.

Lao Zi. *Tao Te Ching*.

Mencius. *Mengzi*.

Qiu Xigui 裴錫圭 1988, 2013. 《文字學概要》北京: 商務印書館.

Zhu Xi. *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*.

Zuoqiu Ming. *The Zuo Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*.

郭錫良、唐作藩、何九盈、蔣紹愚編著 《古代漢語》，上、下冊，北京：商務印書館，1999。

AI Policy:

The use of Generative AI in project is permitted with proper acknowledgement.

Academic Integrity:

The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.