

Fall 2026

**HUMA2400 Approaches to Humanities in China Studies:
Research Methodologies for Humanities**

Monday 13:30-16:20

1409

I. Instructors and TA

Instructors

Discipline	Professor	Email	Phone	Room	Office Hrs
Literature	MA Xiaolu 馬筱璐	hmxlma@ust.hk	23588921	3377	Tue 13:00-14:45
History & Digital Humanities	CHUNG Yan Hon Michael 鍾恩瀚	hmichung@ust.hk	23587765	3357	Mon 15:00-16:15
Anthropology	Giulio Ongaro	giulio.ongaro@ust.hk	23585871	2354	Tue 13:00-15:00

II. Course Description

This course is designed to train students with the **skills of academic research** in the field of humanities in general, but with special reference to anthropology, arts, history, linguistics, literature, and philosophy of China, in particular. The course will pay attention to the following few key questions:

- 1) What constitute data and source materials?
- 2) How and where to collect them?
- 3) How data and source materials are processed and analysed?
- 4) What research questions are asked?
- 5) What conceptual and theoretical approaches are applied?

By focusing on the common human experiences and how they are studied in each discipline, students will be guided to compare the distinctive approaches to humanities in China Studies.

Three modules, History and Digital Humanities, Anthropology, and Literature, will be covered in this course this semester.

III. Intended Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students should be able to

- Comprehend the basic research methods of particular disciplines in Humanities;
- Understand human endeavours and appreciate their creative expressions through the different approaches to Humanities in China studies;
- Develop cultural sensitivity toward human experiences and conditions;
- Write a research proposal with a basic framework related to research methods

IV. Course Assessment & Requirements

•	Module assessments (30 marks x 3)	90 marks
•	Attendance	10 marks
•	Total:	100 marks

(Each module includes multiple assignments, such as discussions, presentations, reports, and summaries. Specific details for each assignment will be provided within the respective module.)

Attendance policy

You should regularly attend class and actively participate in class discussions.

- (a) 0.5 mark will be **deducted** for one absence starting from the third absence after the add/drop period. Noted that being late or leaving early (e.g., longer than 15 mins) without permission will also result in a mark deduction.
- (b) If you cannot attend class for valid reasons, you need to get **advance** permission (that is, before class) from instructors to waive absences. Explanation and **proof** documents (e.g., medical certificates, interview notification letters, etc.) are required for permission.
- (c) According to the university policy, RVC recordings will be released only to students in need. Students should not expect to get “attendance” credit by viewing recordings.
- (d) During the class, the use of electronics (e.g., laptop) is allowed **exclusively** for notetaking. Food is not recommended in class.

Assignment policy

As a general rule, **NO** late submission will be accepted for credits unless:

- (a) You got **advance** permission (before the due) from instructors.
- (b) You could not submit the assignment on the day the assignment is due because of a serious illness or emergency. You need to contact instructors

with a written explanation of the situation and provide **proof** (e.g., medical certificates).

- (c) We go with “Restrict ways of using generative AI tools for assessment”. For instance, you can use generative AI tools (e.g., chatGPT) for assisting your understanding of materials. However, you are **prohibited** from using the GenAI tools to produce any content related to essay assessments (e.g., article summary).

V. Class Schedule, Topics and Readings

Module	Dates
Literature (4 sessions)	Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28
History & Digital Humanities (4 sessions)	Oct 5, 12, 26, Nov. 2
Anthropology (4 sessions)	Nov. 9, 16, 28, 30

1) Module of Literature

Sept 7

Topic: How to write a research proposal? I

Watch at home:

Green Snake (1993)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBjycaw5ulk>

Sept 14

Topic: Literature and cinema

Read:

Liang Luo, *The Global White Snake* (Selected)

Sept 21

Topic: Literature and cinema

Watch at home:

White snake I (2019)

https://www.bilibili.tv/en/video/4799472990165504?bstar_from=bstar-web.homepage.recommend.all

Sept 28

Topic: How to write a research proposal? II

(first round of research proposal submission due on Sept 27)

Second round of research proposal Due – 12 pm noon, Oct 11 (Sunday)

2) Module of History and Digital Humanities

Laptop Requirement: *Students are required to bring a laptop computer to every class. Tablets, including iPads, are not considered substitutes for a laptop.*

Oct 5

- **Topic 1: Historical Sources and Citation**

- **Required Readings :**

Schrag, Z. (2021). *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 103-120.

The Chicago Manual of Style Online. Notes and Bibliography: Sample Citations.
https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html

- **Optional Readings :**

Ssû-nien, F. 傅斯年. (1928). “The Guiding Principles of the Institute of History and Philology” (〈歷史語言研究所工作之旨趣〉). *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica* 1, no. 8 (1928): 3–10.

Tutorial 1: Bibliography of primary sources

- **Assignments :**

Tutorial Exercise 1 (@7.5; Due date: **Oct 12**)

Oct 12

- **Topic 2: Source Criticism**

- **Required Readings :**

Schrag, Z. (2021). *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 208-226.

Tutorial 2: Source criticism of selected sources

- **Assignments :**

Tutorial Exercise 2 (@7.5; Due date: **Oct 26**)

Oct 26

- **Topic 3: Historiography and Book Reviews**

- **Required Readings :**

Schrag, Z. (2021). *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*. Princeton University Press. Pp. 90-97.

Bu, L. (2015). Review of *Chinese and Americans: A shared history*, by Xu. Guoqi. *The American Historical Review*, 120(5), 1863–1864.

Tutorial 3: From source to data: Text processing with large language models

- **Assignments :**

Tutorial Exercise 3 (@7.5; Due date: **Nov 2**)

Nov. 2

- **Topic 4: Digital History**

- **Required Readings :**

Vierthaler, Paul. 2020. “Digital Humanities and East Asian Studies in 2020.” *History Compass* 18 (11).

Tutorial 4: Fine-tuning AI models for humanities research

- **Assignments :**

Tutorial Exercise 4 (@7.5; Due date: **Nov 2**)

3) Module of Anthropology

Nov 9

- **Topic 1: What is Anthropology?**

- **Required Readings :**

Geertz, C. (1973) 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 3–30.

Fei, X. (1992) 'Differential Mode of Association', in *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*. Translated by G.G. Hamilton and Z. Wang. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 60–70.

In-class Group Discussion 1

Nov 16

- **Topic 2: What is Ethnography? Preparing for Fieldwork**
- **Readings:**

Mathews, G., (2007). Chungking Mansions: A center of low-end globalization. *Ethnology*, 46(2), pp.169–182.

In-class Group Discussion 2

Nov 28 (Saturday)

- **Fieldwork trip to Sham Shui Po (details forthcoming)**

Nov 30

- **Topic 3: Reflections on Ethnographic Fieldwork**
- **Required Readings:**

Narayan, K. (1993) 'How "Native" Is a "Native" Anthropologist?', *American Anthropologist*, 95(3), pp. 671–686.

In-class Group Discussion 3

Assignment: fieldwork report due on Dec 13