

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

UG Course Syllabus

Chinese Oil Painting

HUMA 2661

3 Credits

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Office Hours: Mondays 4:30-5:30 PM, Room 3025 (lift #2)

Course Description

The course gives students knowledge of the development of oil painting in China from its beginning to the present. Focusing on the history of China in the 20th and 21st century, the course explores the social, cultural and political circumstances that favoured, oppressed and directed the path of the development of Chinese oil painting in different periods of time.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- ILO1. Examine the social and political circumstances for the rapid growth of oil painting from late Qing Dynasty to the founding of the PRC in 1949.
- ILO2. Analyse the relationship between the stylistic characteristics of Chinese oil painting and Communist ideologies between 1949 and 1979.
- ILO3. Describe and discuss how Chinese avant-garde was born in the 1980s and the various art theories of the time.
- ILO4. Evaluate the changes in the art circle after 1989 and the impact of globalization on contemporary Chinese oil painting.

Medium of Instruction

The course is taught in English completely. No Chinese materials will be used as reference. All quiz and exam questions must be answered in English.

Museum Visit

One or more museum visits will be arranged. Participation is highly recommended and voluntary.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics for each assignment are provided below, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

Assessments:

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Short Quiz 1	25%	Week 5*
Short Quiz 2	25%	Week 9*
Final Examination	40%	In Exam Period
Attendance	10%	not applicable

* Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks:

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Quizzes	ILO1, ILO2	This task assesses students' ability to understand and use their knowledge of the development of oil painting in China from the beginning to the end of the Cultural Revolution and critically analyze the relationship between social and political circumstances and artistic development (ILO1, ILO2).
Final Examination	ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	This task assesses students' ability to understand and use their knowledge of the development of oil painting in China from the end of the Cultural Revolution to the present day and identify the major art movements in this period (ILO2, ILO3, ILO4).
Attendance	ILO1, ILO2, ILO3, ILO4	Attendance is checked to ensure students' active participation in class for efficient learning.

Grading Rubrics

Descriptors of Range of Scores for Quizzes:

Scores	Short Description	Elaboration on the description
23-25	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the development of Chinese oil painting.
19-22	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge of the development of Chinese oil painting.
15-18	Satisfactory Performance	Demonstrates sufficient work and fair performance.
9-14	Poor Performance	Insufficient work and more effort is expected.
0-8	Extremely Poor Performance	Extremely poor work, needs much more effort to achieve a satisfactory result.

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the development of oil painting in China. Exhibits a high capacity for critical thinking and scholarship, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals.
B	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge and understanding of the development of oil painting in China. Demonstrates good critical thinking and displays high motivation to learn.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of Chinese oil painting. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has basic knowledge of Chinese oil painting. Shows limited effectiveness in learning.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of Chinese oil painting. Exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for further development in the discipline.

Required Texts and Materials

Li, Xianting. "Major Trends in the Development of Contemporary Chinese Art". ***China's New Art, Post-1989***, edited by Valerie C. Doran. Hong Kong: Hanart TZ Gallery, 1993.

Li, Xianting. "Some More Thoughts on the Raison d'Etre of Gaudy Art". Li, Xianting and Liao, Wen. ***Ouh La La Kitsch***. China, Changsha: Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, 1999.

Pi, Li, editor. ***Chinese Art Since 1970: The M+ Sigg Collection***. Thames & Hudson, M+, 2022.

Smith, Karen, editor. ***History of Chinese Oil Painting: From Realism to Post-Modernism***. Hong Kong: Schoeni Art Gallery, 1995.

Smith, Karen. ***Nine Lives: The Birth of Avant-garde Art in New China***. Zurich: Scalo, 2006.

Sullivan, Michael. ***Art and Artists of 20th Century China***. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1996.

Zhou, Yan. ***A History of Contemporary Chinese Art: 1949 to Present***. Springer Nature Singapore, 2020. (comprehensive, written by an insider) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1141-7>

Online Resources

M+ Sigg Collection, <https://www.mplus.org.hk/en/about-the-collection/m-sigg-collection/>

Hong Kong Museum of Art, <https://hk.art.museum/en/web/ma/collections/china-trade-art.html>

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Students who have questions about the marks should go to the paper-checking session to be held within five working days after the release of the marks.

Make-up Policy

Make-up quiz/exam will only be offered to those who cannot attend owing to unpredictable reasons and with mark reduction depending on the situation.

Course AI Policy

The use of AI tools in assessment tasks is prohibited since all of them are in closed-book format.

Academic Integrity

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. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Edited 2026-01-14