

HMMA 5001 Fundamentals of Chinese Culture
Fall 2024

Instructors: NAM, Sai Lok (shlewis@ust.hk; room 2367)
CHEUNG, Siu-woo (hmcheung@ust.hk; room 3340)
MA, Xiaolu (hmxlma@ust.hk; room 3377)
CABOARA, Marco (hmcaboara@ust.hk; room 3341)

Class Time: Fridays, 15:00-17:50
Classroom: Room 1527

I. Course Description:

This is an integrated multidisciplinary course on Chinese culture, aiming to provide students with a broad understanding of the perspectives and methodologies of humanistic studies on Chinese culture across various disciplines, including history, anthropology, literature, linguistics, philosophy and religion. Emphasis will be put on the introduction of fundamental concepts and general methodological/theoretical underpinnings of the studies of Chinese culture in humanities perspective. This is a compulsory foundation course for all students in the MA program in Chinese Culture.

II. Course Objectives:

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define the nature, scope and values of the studies of Chinese culture in humanities perspectives.
2. Recognize the basic concepts, theories and methods in different humanities disciplines essential to the building of a holistic, dynamic and integrated understanding of Chinese culture.
3. Respond critically to Chinese cultural texts and issues of various nature.
4. Strengthen skills in humanistic inquiry pertaining to Chinese culture, such as questioning, analyzing, interpreting, making connections and constructing arguments.

III. Course Assessment:

- 1) Attendance & in-class participation: 20%

Students are expected to complete the reading assignment PRIOR to coming to class and be ready to discuss and engage in class.

All assigned reading materials are either in electronic form or posted on Canvas, with the full-length books or additional reference materials placed on reserve in the library under this course code.

2) 4 short module papers: 80% (20% per module)

Normally, students are required to write a short paper for each of the four modules. Each module paper should be 1,400-1,600 words long, neatly typed and double-spaced, and is due 3 weeks after the completion of the respective module.

Marks will be deducted from paper that are either shorter or longer than the required length, with 5% for every hundred words.

Late paper will also be penalized, with a daily deduction of 5%. Note that unless there are exceptional contingencies, requests for extension will not be entertained.

The topic of each module paper varies, depending on the content of the individual module and the instructor's requirements.

Note that students might be required to write a book review and/or a report, rather than a paper, subject to the specific requirements of individual modules.

IV. Class Schedule:

Date	Modules	Instructor
Sept 6, 13, 20	Introduction; Philosophy/ Religion	Sai Lok NAM
Sept 27, Oct 5, 18	Anthropology	Siu-woo CHEUNG
Oct 25, Nov 1, 8	Literature	Xiaolu MA
Nov 15, 22, 29	History	Marco CABOARA

V. Module Description:

1) Philosophy Module: Chinese Philosophical Perspectives on Human Effort and Fortune

In this module, students will explore the ancient Chinese philosophers' perspectives on the relationship between human effort and fortune. They will delve into key concepts such as *Tian* and *Ming* in Chinese philosophy, Xunzi's emphasis on human effort, Daoists' views on destiny, Mencius's beliefs about human

nature, and the connection between morality and human nature. Additionally, students will reflect on Zhuangzi's observations on life and reflect on the pursuit of happiness. By the end of the module, students will have gained a deeper understanding of these fundamental aspects of Chinese culture and philosophy.

Sept 6: The Conceptions of Tian, Ming, and Ren

- ♦ Mozi's Chapter 35 "Against Fate I"
- ♦ Xunzi's Chapter 17 "A Discussion of Heaven"
- ♦ Liezi's Chapter 6 "Endeavor and Destiny"

Sept 13: Mencius on Human Nature

- ♦ Selected passages in the *Mencius*

Sept 20: Zhuangzi on Humanities

- ♦ Zhuangzi's Chapter 1 "Free and Easy Wandering"
- ♦ Note that students are prohibited from using generative artificial intelligence (AI), including ChatGPT, to produce any materials or content related to the paper.

2) Anthropology Module: Field Research and Understanding Chinese Culture and Society

One of the key tools for studying human societies in anthropology is fieldwork. Anthropologists live in the community that they study and participate in people's daily life. Through the method of participant observation, they collect field data and experience the local ways of life. Adopting the holistic approach, a fieldworker tries to understand how local people make their living, organize their society, and interact with the supernatural world. This approach also requires putting the local community in the wider regional and global contexts, to make sense of the data that the fieldworker have collected. In this section, students will be introduced to this anthropological research method, guided to practise field observation and interview in two nearby Hakka and fishermen communities in Saikung, and through these Hong Kong cases are to engage with anthropological readings on the diversity and unity of Chinese culture and society in folk models, imperial culturalism, and modern nationalism.

Sept 27 : Anthropological concept of culture and fieldwork research

- ♦ Peoples, James and Garrick Bailey. 2012. *Humanity: An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* (9th

ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. (Chapter 2: Culture; Chapter 5: Methods of Investigation).

- ♦ Whyte, William Foote. 1994. "Learning to be a Participant Observer." In his *Participation Observer: An Autobiography*, pp. 67-84. Ithaca: ILR Press.

Oct 5 (Saturday) : Whole-day Field study in Yimtintsai Hakka Village and Kausai Fishermen Village, Saikung

- ♦ Watson, James L. and Rubie S. Watson. 2004. "Fieldwork in Hong Kong New Territories (1969-1977)." In *Village Life in Hong Kong: Politics, Gender, and Ritual in the New Territories*, pp. 3-18. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- ♦ Barbara E. Ward. 1965. "Varieties of the Conscious Model: The Fishermen of South China." In Michael Banton, ed., *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, pp. 113-138. London: Tavistock Publications.

Oct 18: The Diversity and Unity of Chinese Cultural Identity

- ♦ James L. Watson. 1993. "Rites or Beliefs? The Construction of a Unified Culture in Late Imperial China." In Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, eds., *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press), pp.80-103.
- ♦ Myron L. Cohn. 1991. "Being Chinese: The Peripheralization of Traditional Identity." *Daedalus* 120 (2): 113-134.
- ♦ Cheung Siu-woo. 2012. "Appropriating Otherness and the Contention of Miao Ethnic identity in Southwest China." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 142-169.

3) Literature Module: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Literary Studies

Is literary study a stand-alone discipline with a clear or unique methodological approach, or does it require a well-versed understanding of different disciplinary traditions within the field of humanities as a whole? This module will take this question to the heart of its discussion and give special attention to reflecting how modern Chinese literature is approached, understood and articulated in both Chinese and Western academia.

Oct 25: Comparative literature and Chinese literature

Xiaolu Ma, *Transpatial Modernity: Chinese Cultural Encounters with Russia through the Prism of Japan (1880–1930)* (Selected)

Nov 1: A new paradigm of East Asian literature

Satoru Hashimoto, *Afterlives of Letters: The Transnational Origins of Modern Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Literatures* (Selected)

Note: Satoru will give an on-line lecture about his book. An announcement will be made close to the date of lecture.

Nov 8: Chinese cinema and revolution

Ying Qian, *Revolutionary Becomings: Documentary Media in Twentieth-Century China* (Selected)

4) History Module: The Historian, the Sources, and the Craft

History is the study of the past. A historian's task is to ask historical questions, locate, evaluate, and analyze sources, and develop arguments and narratives. Good history writing is a craft that requires exacting scholarship and effective storytelling. In this module, we will examine how historians use a wide variety of sources to build compelling narratives. Students will be required to (1) write a book review; (2) find an oral history interviewee, conduct a preliminary interview, create a chronology/timeline of the interviewee's life history, and prepare a draft questionnaire for follow-up interviews.

Nov 15: The Historian and the Sources

- ♦ E. H. Carr, "The Historian and His Facts," in *What is History?* (1961), pp. 3-35.
- ♦ Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (1979), Preface.
- ♦ 高華, "敘事視角的多樣性與當代史研究——以五十年代歷史研究為例,"《歷史筆記》(香港: 牛津大學出版社, 2014), pp. 315-332.

Nov 22: The Historian and the Craft

- ♦ Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (1979), Ch. 1 "The Observers" and "Epilogue: The Trial."
- ♦ Gao Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origins and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945*, translated by Stacy Mosher and Guo Jian (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2018), Ch. 11, "Forging the 'New Man': From Rectification to Cadre Examination" (pp. 419-470), and Postscript (pp. 707-718). Online access (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvtzpz48>)

Nov 29: The Use of Memoirs and Oral History

- ♦ Chi Pang-yuan, *The Great Flowing River: A Memoir of China, from Manchuria to Taiwan*, edited and

translated by John Balcom with an introduction by David Der-wei Wang (Columbia University Press, 2018), Introduction by David Wang (pp. XIII-XXVIII), and Ch.4 “At The Confluence Of Three Rivers: University Life” (pp. 129-177). Online access (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/chi-18840>)

- ♦ David Cheng Chang, *The Hijacked War: The Story of Chinese POWs in the Korean War* (Stanford University Press, 2019), Introduction, Ch. 2 “Fleeing or Embracing the Communists in the Chinese Civil War,” Ch. 3 “Desperados and Volunteers,” and Ch. 7 “The Fifth Offensive Debacle.”

VI. Communication and Feedback:

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission.

VII. Course AI Policy:

Generative AI may be used to find and evaluate sources of information, but must not be used to compose the essay or cited in the text or as an author of the text.

VIII. Academic Integrity:

The whole University is very serious about upholding academic integrity. Students are required to comply with the Academic Honor Code adopted by the Senate, which is as follows:

- 1) Honesty and integrity are central to the academic work of HKUST. Students of the University must observe and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty in all the work they do throughout their program of study.
- 2) As members of the University community, you have the responsibility to help maintain the academic reputation of HKUST in its academic endeavors.
- 3) Sanctions will be imposed on students, if they are found to have violated the regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.

For more information, please visit:

<https://registry.hkust.edu.hk/resource-library/regulations-student-conduct-and-academic-integrity>