

Department: MCL

Course No: CHIN 121

Title: Traditional Chinese Culture

Credits: 3

Contact: Roger Travis, Norma Bouchard

Content Area: CA1 and CA4 International

Catalog Copy: Either semester. Three credits. Three class periods. An introduction to traditional Chinese culture prior to the 20th century. Survey of institutions, philosophy, art, literature, and social customs seen through a variety of media.

Course Information:

a. course goals and objectives. This course introduces students to important elements of traditional Chinese culture and complements Chinese Language instruction that is offered by the department of Modern and Classical Languages. Through a variety of media, it surveys traditional Chinese culture from the the Zhou to the Qing Dynasties. Students are introduced to the history, art, literature, philosophy, religion, and social customs of pre-modern China as well as to the cultures that developed under the Zhou, Qin , Han, Tang, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties and gain an appreciation of traditional Chinese culture heritage, values, symbols, and myths. Since the approach is both interdisciplinary and comparative, this course encourages students to think critically about another culture and making sense of an unfamiliar world by moving past Western conceptual categories.

b. Course requirements: Quizzes, 4 short papers, mid term and final exams. The exams are in the form of short essay questions, definitions and identifications. Exams also include background, factual information, and interpretative material presented during the lectures and class-discussions. Students are also asked to write 4 short essays on the main topics around which this course is structured.

c. List the major themes, issues, topics, etc., to be covered.

- 1) Geography of China, the People and Languages of China, Chinese Ethnic minorities and linguistic groups, the City-States
- 2) The Warring States, The Shia , the Shang , and consolidation of the Zhou Dynasty.
- 3) the Age of Philosophy under the Zhou Dynasty: the rise of Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism , and Legalism
- 4) The First Empires (221 B.C- A.D. 220): the Qin dynasty, the “First Emperor,” the Legalist Foundation and the common system of Writing
- 5) The First Empires—continued, The Han Dynasties and prosperity, the spread of Confucianism/conservatism, and the first encounters with China and Central Asia, or the “Silk

Road”

- 6) China in the Age of Buddhism, Disunity, the 16 Kingdoms, and the Cultural Mix (A.D. 220-581), the Reunification of the Sui
- 7) Art in the Buddhist Age, the Tang rule: 618-907, Western merchant-settlers in China
- 8) China under the Mongols and the Yuan Dynasty: 1264-1368
- 9) The end of Mongolian rule and the rise of the Ming Dynasty—1368-1644, the rise of neo-Confucianism, Chinese travelers in India and East Africa, the building of the “Forbidden City”.
- 10) Restoration under the Ming Dynasty and autocratic rule
- 11) The Manchu Rule (Qing)--1644-1911—and its cultural transformations: Manchu clothing, style, and the rise of literary inquisition.
- 12) The Manchu Rule (Qing), the “Eight Banners,” the Opium Wars and the Western encroachment
- 13) The fall of the Qing Dynasty: the Republic of China (1911)

How Meets Goals of Gen Ed.: This course is based upon a selection of a rich body of works, including poetry, calligraphy, drama, prose, historical accounts, and opera, that exemplify the richness of traditional Chinese culture dating from the Classics of Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770-256 BC), presumably compiled by Confucius, to the four centuries of Manchu Rule (Qing)--1644-1911, when, despite the Manchus' attempts at maintaining their own cultural heritage, fundamental cultural changes took place as a result of 5 centuries of contacts with Chinese society and the increasing encroachment of the West, from the Western merchant-settlers in China under the Tang rule to the 19th century "Opium Wars." Hence, students will not only acquire intellectual breadth and versatility by gaining an understanding of how major political and social developments shaped traditional Chinese culture (i.e., the rise of Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism under the Zhou Dynasty, the common system of Writing introduced by the Qin dynasty, the Tang's rule and Buddhism, the rise of the opera under the Yuan and the Mongols dynasties, the cultural reaction of the Manchu rule, etc.) but will become sensitive to the variety of human responses encountered in their weekly readings and screening. These range from the early (and often enduring beliefs) in cyclical times, ancestor worships, to the "Hundred Schools of Thoughts," which include Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, Legalism, and Buddhism, the latter introduced in modern times but mediated by the similarities that it shared with Daoism. Moreover, by way of lectures, class-discussions, readings, and writing assignments, students will become more articulate while also developing the skills that are necessary for any critical, responsible, and serious assessment of the way culture responds to and participates in different visions of world in which we live.

CA1 Criteria: This course brings together historical, critical and aesthetic modes of inquiry. All readings/screening selected survey the social and political developments that gave rise to the main schools of thought of traditional Chinese culture. Hence, students are introduced to teachings of Confucianism, the dialectical vision of Taoism, the spiritual cultivation of Buddhism, the universality of Mohism, and so on, through poetry, calligraphy, drama, prose, historical accounts, operatic texts, religious and moral reflections. Because of this wide selection, students become aware of the intricate relations between specific rhetorical and visual genres and fundamental historical, social, and cultural developments. The variety of texts that are included in this course also provide students with a deeper comprehension of the modes of Chinese verbal

(i.e , Analepts , Rhapsody (fu) and Music Bureau ballads) and visual arts (i.e., calligraphy, Beijing and Kunqu opera).

CA4 Criteria: By introducing students to a variety of texts, including poetry, calligraphy, drama, prose, historical accounts, and opera, it introduces students to a variety of modes of human thought, values and creativity. However, the most significant aspect of this course is the introduction of conceptual categories that developed in traditional Chinese culture in the schools of thought of Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, Buddhism, and Mohism . These categories offer perspectives that are often quite distinct from Western ones. Whereas the Western philosophical tradition places a great deal of value on individualism, rationality, liberty, and so on, Chinese philosophical thought champions harmony, a sense of community and tradition, and so on. By being confronted with categories that are not part of their epistemologies, students become aware that interpretive systems (and the social structures that often derive from them), are cultural creations and therefore subject to a process of redefinition. At the same time, this course stresses the importance of inter-cultural dialogue and seeks to establish similarities across diverse cultures by making students aware that Chinese and Western philosophies also share similar concerns (i.e., “philosophy” as a search for truth, the meaning of being human, “philosophy” as ethics, etc.).

Role of Grad Students: None.

Supplementary Information: syllabus

Course Description: This course surveys traditional Chinese culture from the Zhou, Qin , Han, Tang, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Through a variety of texts, including poetry, opera, prose, religious, philosophical, and historical documents, students are introduced to culture of pre-modern China and gain an appreciation of the values, symbols, and myths of the Chinese cultural heritage. The course also encourages students to think critically about another culture and making sense of an unfamiliar world by moving past Western conceptual categories. The approach is both interdisciplinary and comparative.

Course Requirements:

Participation: 10%

Quizzes: 10%

4 short papers: 40%

Mid term Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Textbooks:

Schirokauer , Conrad. A Brief History of Chinese Civilization. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991

Course Packet with excerpt form:

Ropp , Saul (ed.) Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization. U of

California Press, 1990.

Smith, Richard. China 's Cultural Heritage (1994 ed .)

Ebrey , Patricia, Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook (1993)

Owen Stephen, An Anthology of Chinese Literature, (1996)

Week 1

Introduction to the course:

Topics: Geography of China, the People and Languages of China, Chinese Ethnic minorities and linguistic groups

Readings : Schirokauer , chap. 1, Keightley , chap 2

Week 2

Topics: The Warring States , The Shia , the Shang , and consolidation of the Zhou Dynasty.

Readings : Excerpts from Sima Qian , The Historical Record : “The Yellow Emperor”

Week 3:

Topics: the Age of Philosophy under the Zhou Dynasty: the rise of Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism , and Legalism

Readings: Schirokauer , chap 2; excerpts from Analepts of Confucius, the Shih Ching (“Classic of Poetry”), Lao- tzu's Tao- te Ching (“Classic of the Way of Power”), selections from Mo Tzu, Hsun Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu

Week 4:

Topics: The First Empires (221 B.C- A.D. 220): the Qin dynasty, the “First Emperor,” the Legalist Foundation and the common system of Writing

Readings: Schirokauer , chap. 2, 3, selection from ancient Fu genre poetry by in Norton Anthology

Week 5:

Topics: The First Empires—continued, The Han Dynasties and prosperity, the spread of Confucianism/ conservatism, and the first encounters with China and Central Asia, or the “Silk Road”

Readings: Smith, 41-86; Ebrey 297-300, Han Poetry: Rhapsody (fu) and Music Bureau ballads (yuefu), selection from Sima Xiangru , Yang Xiong , Huan Ta, Li Bai , and female historian Ban Zhao's Lessons for Women

Week 6:

Topics: China in the Age of Buddhism, Disunity, the 16 Kingdoms, and the Cultural Mix (A.D. 220-581), the Reunification of the Sui

Readings: Schirokauer , chap. 4 selection from the Hou Hanshu enquiry, and excerpts from the account by Yang Xuanzhi , calligraphy: Wang Xizhi's Lanting Xu , Wei Shuo's The Inscription of Wei -shi He'nan

Week 7:

Topics: Art in the Buddhist Age, the Tang rule: 618-907, Western merchant-settlers in China

Readings : excerpts from marvel tales, poetry under the Tang rule; readings from Liu Zongyuan , Ouyang Xiu , and Su Xun .

Week 8:

Topics: Late Imperial China , the Song Dynasty: 960-1279,

Readings : Wang Anshi , Zeng Gong, and Su Zhe , from Norton Anthology

Week 9

Topics: China under the Mongols and the Yuan Dynasty: 1264-1368

Readings : Excerpts form Yuan Drama The Purple Hairpin and Rejuvenation of the Red Plum Flower, developments in Beijing opera and Kunqu opera.

Video-clip: Beijing opera

Week 10:

Topics: Late Imperial China, the end of Mongolian rule and the rise of the Ming Dynasty—1368-1644, the rise of neo-Confucianism, Chinese travelers in India and East Africa, the building of the “Forbidden City”.

Readings : Ming Poetry: Gao Qi , Ming prose: Zhang Dai, Wen Zhenheng's “Zhang Wu Zhi ” (On Superfluous Things).

Video-clip: the “Forbidden City”

Week 11:

Topics: Restoration under the Ming Dynasty and autocratic rule

Readings : Song Lian (1310-1381), Liu Ji (1311-1375), Yuan Hongdao (1568 -1610), Xu Xiake (1586-1641)

Week 12:

Topics: The Manchu Rule (Qing)--1644-1911—and its cultural transformations: Manchu clothing, style, and the rise of literary inquisition.

Readings : sel . from The Dream of the Red Chamber (1791), Fang Pao 1668-1749), Liu Daqui (1698-1779), Yiao Nai (1731-1815) Wei Yuan (1794-1857)

Week 13:

Topics: The Manchu Rule (Qing), the “Eight Banners,” the Opium Wars and the Western encroachment

Readings: Yuan Mei's Suiyuan shihua , Cao Xueqin's Dream of the Red Chamber, Pu Songling's “Tea house” tales.

Video-clip: The Chinese Ghost Story by Tsui Hark.

Week 14:

Topics: The fall of the Qing Dynasty: the Republic of China (1911)