CLAS 1110: Classical Cultures (China)
The City University of New York--Brooklyn College
Study Abroad in China Program

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Required Text

Course package: Core 1110 Classical Culture of China. (To be purchased at the Far Better Printing Center, by the east side gate of Brooklyn College)

Course Description
The objective of this course is to familiarize students with the formation of China’s worldview of the secular and cosmic, moral and aesthetic, religious orientation, philosophical ideas and literary genres. It introduces classical Chinese thought (e.g., Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism), their historical background and relevance to globalizing 21st century. We will read and analyze selected texts from antiquity to the 17th Century that represent the essence of these traditions chronologically. The readings will include a substantial selection of philosophical and poetic texts ranging across Book of Changes, Book of Documents, Book of History, Book of Songs, Analects, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Han Rhapsody, the wilderness poetry of the Six Dynasties, the poetry of the Tang and Song dynasties, and prose of the Ming and Qing dynasties, etc. This course will focus on close reading of the original (via translation) texts of classics to enrich students’ knowledge of the cultural and literary traditions of China and develop students’ abilities of critical thinking.

Course Goals

1. to read closely and critically literary texts from ancient cultures in English translation;
2. to understand these texts in their social, historical, material, and performance contexts;
3. to relate the cultures which produced these texts to our contemporary culture in its diversity;
4. to speak and write clearly and coherently about the issues that emerge from critical reading and comparison of cultures.

Course Outcomes

1. Students develop skills of conceptual analysis and critical thinking skills of examining, comparing, and assessing cultures.
2. Students will be able to develop a foundation for analyzing philosophical and literary texts of Chinese culture and their relationship to the shaping of the modern China.
3. Students will achieve an understanding of the fundamental ethical issues of human life in a cross-cultural, comparative way.
4. Students can analyze different viewpoints of important theories in Chinese culture with each other and with Western thoughts.
5. Students describe and analyze structural, thematic and other characteristic elements of the various literary texts read in the class, demonstrating an awareness of the possibilities of ambiguity of multiple perspectives.
Course Approach & Schedule

This will be taught as a hybrid course, with Internet/WeChat APP-based activities mixed with some class discussions and many field trips to relevant sites in the Chinese cities. Students will be placed into small groups to facilitate discussions in class and online.

The course will be conducted in two parts. The first part will combine readings with online assignments based on the readings. This portion of the course can be regarded as a structured learning experience that can (and should) be completed, as much as possible, before departure for China. The second portion of the course will combine close observations of relevant sites in China, with some lectures and classroom discussions.

It is in the nature of the study abroad program that it will be a little hard to anticipate the schedule of the class meetings in Nanjing. The specific schedule of visits and discussions probably won’t be known until we arrive in Nanjing and may be subject to change, sometimes at short notice. Class sessions will probably vary in both day and time. The class may meet on weekend and evenings if necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make necessary adjustments in the class schedule and evaluation in response to the changing circumstances during the course of the program in China.

Methods of Assessment

1. Class discussion: Students are required to read the assigned texts before the class in which we discuss them. Students are strongly expected to make contributions to class discussion.
2. Examination: final exam. Students are asked to identify and describe basic concepts and to compare and contrast two or more texts belonging to different literary traditions or to different historical periods.
3. Essays: two 1,000 word essays constructing arguments about texts which are based on specific textual details
4. Assignments: 4 written reports on visits to historical sites and museums (no less than 300 words each)
5. Informal writing: Students are advised to write down questions and comments on text for preparation of each class session.
6. Students are required to keep daily journals to document observations of phenomena related to the course topics.

Grading

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written reports</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Essays</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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As this course is part of the study abroad program, students are strongly advised that their behavior, attitude and journal submissions via email during the trip will affect their final grade for the course.

Side Trip to Yangzhou

Students should prepare some additional fund for the side trip to Yangzhou; check the page of Side Trips for the trip. In addition to Beijing, Xi’an and Nanjing, Yangzhou is also an important site, especially for its museums and gardens (with a variety of artifacts connected to classical Chinese thought, art, poetry and calligraphy). We strongly recommend that students in this class attend the trip to Yangzhou.
Course Activities

1. The class will make many site visits, with some lectures and class discussions, plus online work
2. Site visits to historical cultural sites on four afternoons while in Nanjing
   a. Confucius Temple and Ancient Civil Examination Hall
   b. Xuanwu Lake Historical Site of the Cultural Center of the Six Dynasties
   c. Nanjing Museum
   d. Jiming Temple: Famous Buddhist site
3. Site visits in other famous cities:
   a. Beijing: Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City & Temple of Heaven
   b. Xian: Terra Cotta Army Museum, Shaangxi Province History Museum, Wild Goose Pagoda &
      Xuanzang Buddhist Stature, & Museum of the Ancient Silk Road
   c. Yangzhou: Yangzhou Museums and Slender West Lake Park, both with rich information about
      classical Chinese thoughts, poetry, art and calligraphy

Course Schedule

Day 1: Introduction - defining classic cultures

Topics: ancient civilizations of great river valleys; geographic features of China and their influences; formative
period of the Chinese civilization; origin of the Chinese language

Look for information online (I-Ching/Yi Jing/Zhou Yi) and write down questions as evidence of research.

I Ching (Yi Jing, Book of Changes), pp. 1 – 9, Chapter 1 Chien (Heaven); Look for information I-Ching/Yi Jing/Zhou
Yi online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Day 2: From gods to Tian (Heavens) – Chinese cosmic view taking shape

Topics: divination with oracle bones; an atheist perspective and a holistic philosophy of nature; the humanitarian
turn from the Shang to Zhou

Chapter 2 Kun (Earth); pp. 10-14; Look for information online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Day 3: Early tradition of poetry (1) – Shi Jing (the northern tradition)

Topics: earliest Chinese poems: tradition of official collection of folk songs; techniques of poetry writing: Fu
(description), Bi (simile and metaphor) and Xing (atmosphere and emotional association)

Shi Jing (Book of Odes), pp. 16 – 32.

Day 4: Early tradition of poetry (2) – Shi Jing and Chu Ci (the southern tradition)

Topics: factors of regional differences between the north and the south: geography, religion, history and economy;
romantic literary tradition of the south; stylistic features

pp. 33-46; Look for information of Chu Ci online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Heavenly Questions (The Songs of Chu); pp.73-78.

Day 5: Philosophy of communal survival – Confucian humanism
Topics: political disintegration of Zhou dynasty; Confucius’ solution – a harmonious society by Ren (human heartedness), Li (decorum and etiquette) and Yue (music and songs); a hierarchical social order on reciprocity relationship.

Confucian Analects, Book 2, pp.47 – 54, Look for information online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Day 6: Individual existence and freedom - Daoist tradition: Laozi

Topics: survival in a time of chaos; fundamental concepts of Dao (the Way): yin and yang, non-action/renunciation of social reality

Tao Te Ching, pp.55-60; Look for information online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Day 7: Individual existence and freedom - Daoist tradition: Zhuangzi

Topics: simple life, personal freedom from social bondage, relativist view of the universe

Chuang Tzu, pp. 65-72; Look for information online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Day 8: Mencius: great successor of Confucius

Topics: Mencius, the most influential disciple of Confucius; development of Confucianism in the Han period.

“The Stupid Old Man Who Moved a Mountain”, “Bull Mountain” and “Fish and Bear’s Paws” pp.60-64; Look for information online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Field trip 1: Confucius Temple (Afternoon: 3 hours)

(First essay due)

Day 9: Literary achievements of the Han dynasty

Topics: Yue Fu (folk songs) and historiography.

Folk Songs and ballads, pp. 79– 90.

Day 10: Literary consciousness in time of disunity and Buddhism in China

Topics: disintegration of political order; intellectuals seeking protection from Daoism; metaphysical discourse; Buddhism entering Chinese life; growing consciousness with genre of literature and division of philosophy, history and literature

pp. 94-96. Look for information (Wei-Jin period/Northern and Southern Dynasties) online and write down questions as evidence of research.

Field trip 2: Xuanwu Lake: Historical site of the cultural center of the Six Dynasties (Afternoon: 3 hours)

Day 11: Emergence of “ the fields-and-gardens” and “rivers-and-mountains” poetic tradition
Topics: Tao Ch’ien’s fields-and-gardens poetry; wilderness in Xie Ling-yün’s “rivers-and-mountains” poetry; Buddhist/landscape poets; imagism; poetic mood of quietude.

*pp.97-107. Look for information online (Tao Yuanming(TaoChien)/ Xie Ling-yun) and write down questions as evidence of research.*

**Field trip 3:** Nanjing Museum  (Afternoon: 3 hours)

**Day 12: Golden Age of Chinese poetry - great poets of the Tang dynasty**

Topic: Li Po’s Daoist romanticism; Du Fu’s Confucian humanism and social realism; Po Chu-i’s egoless ego and other poets

*pp.108 – 135; Look for information online(Tang poems) and write down questions as evidence of research.*

**Field trip 4:** Jiming Temple : Famous Buddhist site (Afternoon: 3 hours)

**Day 13: Further growth - poetic innovations of the Song dynasty**

Topic: de-sublimated wilderness; mundane aspect of life; fusion of empirical world and “inner pattern” of nature.

*pp. 136 – 152; Look for information online (Song Ci) and write down questions as evidence of research.*

**Day 14: Going back to the roots – the revitalizing of classic prose**

Topics: Han Fu became extravagant in style and empty in content; surge of criticism and appeal for conciseness and directness of pre-Chin prose style.

*Look for information online and write down questions as evidence of research. “A Record of the Pavilion of an Intoxicated Old Man”*

**(Final exam and second essay due)**

**University’s policy on Academic Integrity:**

"The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: [http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies). If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member MUST report the violation."

**Bibliography:**

Assignment of Keeping Journals

An important goal of the program is to enable each student to explore and experience China in his or her own individual ways, such that you can obtain maximum academic benefits from this China trip. Keeping a journal during the trip will help serve that purpose well.

You will be keeping a journal during the trip and submit the journal entries as part of the trip and course participation to their course instructor (with a copy to Prof. Lu, the program director); see the instructors’ email addresses below. Here are some guidelines:

How to Write a Journal Entry

1. Describe a specific, very meaningful, phenomenon or incident that you observe or experience during the 2-3 days in a city, something that caught your attention and has an impact on you personally, culturally or intellectually, or something that has touched you deeply. Do not just list what you have done during the days (which will give you no credit). Tell us the story, with descriptive details, of a meaningful intercultural encounter/instance. This should be the 1st paragraph.

2. Then, in the 2nd paragraph, analyze or reflect upon that. Write down your reflections and thoughts on that experience or observation from a cross-cultural or intercultural perspective. If you are in one of those non-language classes, try to tie that to what you have read in the textbook(s) or what we are discussing in class.

3. In the 3rd paragraph, summarize or conclude this journal entry by making connections to a larger picture of what you have read, heard and studied previously in other classes, or even what you have experienced back in America and/or other contexts.

4. Each entry should be about 3 paragraphs in length. However, you are free to organize your ideas in what you believe to be creative ways; it is not a good idea to write one journal entry in only one paragraph.

How and When to Submit

1. Write an entry about every 3 days; a total of 5 (FIVE) journals are expected of you during the trip:
   a. ONE entry for visit to Beijing
      -- To be submitted on the day when you arrive in 2nd city of Xi’an

   b. ONE for visit to Xi’an
      -- To be submitted on the day when you arrive in Nanjing

   c. TWO entries during stay in Nanjing (including side trips if any)
      -- To be submitted every 6 days

   d. ONE final entry for visit to Suzhou and Shanghai
      -- To be submitted no later than 10 pm on the eve of departure from Shanghai

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This final journal entry should be a bit longer than the previous ones. You need have 2 additional paragraphs in which to reflect on the overall trip experience: your gains from the trip, the impact of the trip on you, your recommendations for the trip, etc.

2. Submit your journals via email to the instructor via email:
   a. Email each entry to the instructor, also with a copy send to: ChinaJournals@yahoo.com
   b. And, if you are taking a class with another professor, also copy that professor.

3. At the beginning of each journal, please clearly indicate:
   a. the course #(#s),
   b. course title(s), &
   c. the professor(s) of the course(s), if you are taking more than one course

4. Name each journal entry clearly, by making the subject of the message as Journal #1 (#2, #3, #4, etc.) from XXXX (your full name).
5. In one email message, only send one journal entry by way of copy & paste (Do not send it as attachment, please). Send each journal entry separately; Do NOT attempt to include more than one journal entry in one message.

**Grade and Reward**

1. The professor will read your journals and respond if needed. If your journals are well written, professors may use them to replace some assignment(s) of the course, at the professors' discretion.
2. If you are taking more than one course, you still only write a total of FIVE journal entries; be sure you email each entry to both instructors if you are taking two courses from two professors.
3. The journals are part of the trip and course participation grade.
4. If you have been doing an exceptionally good job with the journals, the professors will give you extra credit (as much as 10% of the grade) for the course(s), at the professors' discretion.