EAST 211 Introduction to East Asian Culture: China

(Tues, Thurs, 10:05 am-11:25 am ENGMC 304)

Instructor: GVILI, Gal
Email: gal.gvili@mcgill.ca
Office hours: Wednesday 2:30-3:30, Thursday 11:40-12:40 688 Sherbrooke, Room 268 or on zoom.

Teaching Assistants:
Edna WAN (edna.wan@mail.mcgill.ca) Office Hour and Location: TBA
Lingheng HE  (lingheng.he@mail.mcgill.ca) Office Hour TBA and Location: TBA

**In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change**

Course Description: This is an introductory course to Chinese culture. In this course, we will focus on different critical aspects of China’s cultural history via particular objects or frames of thought in literature, cinema, craft, religion, philosophy, and medicine. This is not a comprehensive historical survey of China—those are offered in the history department. Nor is this a survey course covering all aspects of Chinese culture. In the short span of one semester, we cannot possibly cover the entire cultural history of China, which extends beyond 4500 years. What we can do and what we will aim to do is to examine expressions of historical moments in different time periods of Chinese history through culture. By the end of the semester, students will have read some key texts, discussed major issues, and hopefully, emerge with hunger for more knowledge that could be pursued in other courses offered in East Asian Studies.

Objectives: 1. Students who complete this course will become familiar with critical aspects of Chinese culture across different time periods, so that they will be able to participate with ease in China related upper-level courses at McGill. 2. Students who complete this course will become better critical readers and will develop preliminary skills of discussing primary texts within a historical context.

Requirements:

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>ID Quiz in Class</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Take Home</td>
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Film Review Assignment

Select one of the six films we will be watching in class, between November 4 and December 2, and write a two-page (double space) review of the film. Your review should NOT summarize the plot of the film. Instead, raise two or three main points that the film makes—for example the representation of the Communist party in *Yellow Earth*, or the parents-children relationship in *Petition*—and discuss these issues in relation to what we learned in class. The goal of this task is to allow you to pick freely what YOU see as important in the filmographic text and present it in clear writing. You may consult the Yale Film Analysis to learn how to do basic film analysis. We will also introduce and discuss this resource in class. Please submit your film reviews to one of the teaching assistants via email and wait to receive a confirmation email from them notifying you that they have received your work. You will receive your grade via email as well. **You may submit at any time during the semester, even before we discuss it in class, but no later than December 2 at 11 pm. Please email your submission to both Tas—Edna and Lingheng (email above).**

**Late assignment policy:** No extensions will be given for assignments. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 3% per day, including weekends. No assignments are accepted after one week past the due date. Exceptions are only made in extraordinary circumstances (illness, family emergency), if arrangements are made in advance of the due date, and appropriate documentation (e.g., a medical note or a funeral notice) is provided to the instructor.

**Appeals:** Appeals or requests for a re-read of a test must be made within one week after the return of the assignment. Students must make their request first to the person who graded their assignments, teaching assistant or professor. There is a formal departmental procedure to follow in the case of final exams. Please see here.

**Attendance:** Attendance in this class is mandatory. We will take attendance eight times during the semester. Students are allowed to be absent once during those eight times. Absence of more than once during the dates checked, that is not backed up by medical documentation, will result in 1% grade reduction of total grade for every missed session. **If you are absent when taking attendance for reasons related to COVID 19, please see below.**

**French Language**

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.
Plagiarism

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Disability Accommodation:
Students who require disability accommodations should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at McGill. The OSD provides a broad range of support and services to assist students with disabilities: http://www.mcgill.ca/osd/. The OSD will then contact Professor Gvili, to discuss disability accommodations.

Sexual Assault Survivor Support and Allyship: Should you or someone you know need support as a survivor of sexual assault, harassment and/or discrimination on campus, please contact McGill's Sexual Violence Response Advisor, Émilie Marcotte, at 514-398-4486 or by email at: osvrse@mcgill.ca, situated in the new Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education (located at 550 Sherbrooke, suite 585) for assistance. They also offer drop-in hours during the school year (the schedule is online). For more information on their office, sexual violence support and reporting options visit: www.mcgill.ca/saap. The Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student’s Society (SACOMSS) offers peer counseling and support to students who have experienced sexual violence and their allies, as well as outreach and education. You can find out more about them at http://www.sacomss.org/wp/. Their hotline number is: (514) 398-8500 and they offer drop-in hours as well (the schedule for which is online).

This course includes in-person teaching, and learning activities have been planned in accordance with public health directives and McGill’s protocols. It is important, however, to ensure you have read and abide by the following:

- Please review and follow the Health Guidelines for Students, and it is imperative that you understand when to stay home if, for example, you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- If you develop COVID-19 symptoms while on campus, please follow the required guidelines, which include ensuring you have a mask on, isolate in a closed, private room, immediately call 1-877-644-4545 (Info-Santé) for instructions, and notify the University by calling 514-398-3000.
• **Masks are required in classroom settings,** at all times, and masks will be available for you on campus. Masks are also to be worn when entering and circulating in buildings and classrooms.

• If you are in a situation that might require you to miss some lectures or assignments because of short-term absences due to COVID-19, you are to request an academic accommodation using the online form found under the “Personal” menu in Minerva; the form is called “**COVID-19 Academic Accommodations Request Form**”. You are asked to use this form instead of requesting accommodations directly from your instructor.

• Finally, the context of attending University during a pandemic will bring on additional stress and may impact your wellbeing. Please do not hesitate to reach out for support if necessary, and access the many resources available, including, for example, **Student Services**, the **Office of the Dean of Students**, and your Faculty’s Student Affairs Office.

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**A note on Chinese names**

Chinese names are preceded by the last name to be followed by a first name. As is customary in China, people are usually referred to by their full name especially in writing. Please make a note of this and avoid confusing first and last names. For example, the famous Tang poet Du Fu’s last name is Du and first name is Fu. You should refer to him in your writing as Du Fu and not as “Du” or “Fu.” The film director Chen Kaige’s last name is Chen and first name is Kaige, but you should refer to him in writing as Chen Kaige.

**Readings:** All Available on mycourses or as E-books in the library.

**Schedule:**

** Please read the items in the order in which they appear each week (beginning with number 1, then moving to number 2, etc.). Readings MUST be done prior to each session. **

**Unit I: Introduction**

**September 2:** Introduction: Course requirements, schedule, requirements. The Sinosphere: geographic features, climate, environmental challenges, languages.

**September 7:** Peking Man

**Read:**
Unit II: From Ancient Civilization to the First Dynasty

September 9: Was there a Xia Dynasty? Between Myth and History

Read:

1. John E. Wills, Jr., Ch. 1 “Yu.” from Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History. 3-10.

September 14: Oracle Bones: The Beginning of Documentation

Read:

https://www-cambridge-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/core/books/cambridge-history-of-chinese-literature/76F4628F8A769EEF2DF952B530ED0CEE

Recommended


September 16: Class Canceled for the Jewish Holiday of Yom Kippur

21+23: In Search of Unification: Major Schools of Thought in the Warring States Period

Read:

Theodore De Bary and Irene Bloom, Sources of Chinese Tradition, Vol 1:
1. Confucianism: pp. 41-47; 114-119
2. Daoism: 77-81; 95-103
3. Legalism: 190-192; 199-208

September 28: The Great Wall and the Great Historian

Read:


Unit III: Humans and the Cosmos

September 30: Literature and the World

Read:


Unit IV: Encounters and Connections

October 5: Buddhism and China

Read:

October 7: Porcelain and Translation

Read:


October 15: Six Records of a Floating Life: the High Qing Literati Culture

Read:


October 19: Opium Wars

Read:


http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1750_opium.htm

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October 21: Review for ID Quiz

October 26: ID Quiz

Unit V: Revolution and Reform

October 28: Footbinding Is History

Read:


**November 2: The Birth of Chinese Feminism**

**Read:**


**November 4: Literature to the Rescue**

**Read:**


**November 9: The Golden Age of Shanghai Cinema**

**Watch:**

Sun Yu, *Tianming* (Daybreak, 1933)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vizLWoitikw
Translation of Intertitles to be found on mycourses.

**Read:**

November 11: Enter the Party

Read:


November 16: Art Work in the Cultural Revolution

Watch:

*White Haired Girl*

https://www.bilibili.com/video/av19047554/

The following Wikipedia entry has the libretto under "plot". I recommend you read that before watching the ballet.


Read:


Unit VI: Then and Now

November 18: 1980’s: Chinese Cinema Going Global

Watch:


Read:

November 23: New Chinese Documentary Movement

**Watch:**

Zhao Liang, *Petition* (2012)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhK3y9Afm60

**November 25: The Hong Kong Situation**

**Read:**


**Watch:**


**FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM DISTRIBUTED**

**November 30: The Postcapitalist Condition**

**Read:**


Han Dang. *A Brand New World*.

**December 2: Conclusion**

**Watch:** Jia Zhangke, *A Touch of Sin* (2013) (Copy at McGill Library)

**Final Exam Due Date: December 7**