

EAST 211

Introduction to Chinese Culture 中國文化

McGill University
Winter 2021
Mon, Wed 11:35-12:55

Instructor: Prof. Rongdao Lai
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Teaching Assistants:
TBA

Course Description

This course introduces students to the fundamental aspects of Chinese culture and society from the antiquity to modern times. Rather than a comprehensive historical overview, we will focus on the predominant features of the social, political, economic, and religious life that have continued to shape the Chinese cultural sphere up to the present day.

Course Objectives

- To introduce students to the predominant concepts, themes, and issues in Chinese culture and societies.
- To familiarize students with critical aspects of Chinese cultural production across different time periods.
- To foster a sensitivity to and appreciation of the various expressions of Chinese culture in a global era.

Required Texts

1. All readings are posted on myCourses

Course Format

Under the extraordinary circumstances during the global COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery of this course will be done through a combination of recorded lectures and Zoom conference sessions.

1. Lecture recordings will be posted on myCourses the day before each class.
2. Conference Sessions on Zoom
Each student will sign up for **ONE** conference group on myCourses. There will be a total of 10 conference sessions, beginning Jan 25.
There will be six conference groups: 4 during scheduled class time on Monday and Wednesday, between 11:35-12:25, and 2 on Tuesday (time TBA). Once you have signed up for a conference group, please **DO NOT** switch groups without written permission from Prof. Lai.

To allow for open and free discussion, and to respect students' privacy, Zoom conference sessions will **NOT** be recorded. If your current situation prevents you from attending, please email Prof. Lai to discuss alternatives.

Assessment

Participation 20%

You are expected to come to the conference sessions prepared, having read course materials and listened to the lectures, and actively participate in discussion.

Quizzes 20%

(Jan 27, Feb 17, Mar 17, Apr. 7)

Quizzes will be based on the readings and lectures. On myCourses, you will have a 24-hour window to start a quiz. Once started, you need to complete it within 45 minutes.

Written Assignments (4x15%) 60%

There will be **FOUR** written assignments over the course of the semester (and no final exam!). Each written assignment should be between 500-600 words. Detailed instructions will be posted on myCourses two weeks before the due date.

Course Policies

1. As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and/or the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.
2. No extension for submitting written assignments will be allowed without documented evidence of a medical or family emergency. Late submissions will be subject to a 5% penalty per day, including weekends.
3. All emails should include the course number in the subject field. Please save lengthy questions about course material for office hours and allow at least 2 days for email responses.

Course Schedule

This course is divided into 6 modules:

- I) Language, Geography, and Time
- II) Philosophy
- III) Kinship and Family
- IV) Religion
- V) Material Culture
- VI) Reform and Revolution