

CH 615

CHINA'S PERSPECTIVES ON CHINESE CIVILIZATION

Instructor: TBA
Credit: 5
Time: TBA
Room: TBA
Office Hour: TBA

Course Description

Conducted in Chinese and uses text materials produced in China for Chinese audiences, this course aims at providing training in the following three areas: 1) vocabulary and structures necessary for discussing topics in Chinese civilization; 2) mainstream Chinese perspectives on major issues in Chinese civilization; and 3) major ways of developing and presenting viewpoints and arguments in Chinese discourse of Chinese civilization. It is important to keep in mind that these three areas are intrinsic to one another and therefore should be treated as a whole instead of three separated or “add-on” sections. The goal of the course is to familiarize the learners with the discourse of Chinese civilization and to train them to be able to follow and engage in discussions on some of the major topics and issues in such discourse.

The Rationale

Conscious of being inheritors of the longest continual historical tradition of any nation on Earth, historical issues inform the public and private discourses of most modern Chinese. Being able to participate in the discourse of Chinese civilization is basic for anyone wishes to be received as a serious and capable player in China, regardless what particular domain one is specialized in. With many courses focusing on enabling the learners to comment on China affairs as outsiders by employing outsiders' perspectives, discourse styles and vocabulary, we need a course to prepare the learners for discourses of Chinese civilization conducted in Chinese terms. In other words, in order to have real dialogues—people talking to each other instead of just talking at each other, a foreign student of Chinese needs to master not only the necessary linguistic codes of the target language but also the major perspectives and basic ways of presentation favored in the target culture. The key issue here is not whether or not one should be more sympathetic or more critical towards Chinese culture, but how to properly interpret what is really going on in Chinese discourses and how to express oneself with the kinds of languages and presentations that facilitate desirable perception of one's own intends.

《中国历史十五讲》(*Fifteen Lectures in Chinese History*) has been chosen as the main text for this course. One of the textbooks in the University Basic Education General Knowledge Courses Textbook Series (大学素质教育通识课系列教材) published by Peking University Press in 2003, *Fifteen Lectures in Chinese History* is especially designed for Chinese civilization courses for non-history-major university students in China. Instead of treating the subject matter purely chronologically, this lectures are arranged around 15 major topics and issues in Chinese

civilization such as: the scientific study of the origins of the Chinese civilization, Chinese ancient societies and dynastic changes, ethnic relationships in China's history, transportation and cultural transmission in ancient China, the zigzag course of searching for socialist modernization by the Republic, etc. It is fair to say that the textbook reflects the current expectations for how conversant a non specialist university educated Chinese person should be in the area of Chinese civilization. As a supplement, 《中华文明之光》 (*Lights of the Chinese Civilization*) is also adapted for this course. Also published by Peking University Press, this text can serve as a cross-reference companion of the textbook for it is arranged with concise and at times sentimental discussions of a detailed list of chronologically ordered key terms/events such as: 说龙、大禹治水、《周易》与八卦、先秦诸子与百家争鸣、秦陵兵马俑、马王堆汉墓、《史记》、三国、大运河、敦煌莫高窟、etc. (This text is developed from the scripts for a 160 episode television "docu-commentary" series sharing the same title. All 160 episodes are available for sale in VCD format for about RMB\$800.)

Textbooks

1. 《中国历史十五讲》 (大学素质教育通识课系列教材)
张岂之 主编
北京大学出版社2003年3月
Pages: 423
ISBN: 7301060416
RMB: ¥25.00
2. 《中华文明之光》 (上、下卷)
袁行霈 主编
北京大学出版社2004年7月
Pages: 807
ISBN: 7301075561
RMB: ¥118.00

Course Structure/Procedure

This is a reading and discussion intensive course that has daily reading assignment and in class discussion, weekly quizzes on the concepts and terms learned through the week, and a final project demonstrating the student's familiarity with the particularities of the discourse of Chinese civilization. The class meets one hour a day, five days a week for 10 weeks. In general, while the first four days of the week are devoted to the discussion of the topics and issues assigned for the week, the last day of the week is reserved for review of the perspectives and their presentations discussed, and quiz on the vocabularies and sentence structures learned through the week. Students are expected to follow the reading assignments closely, to actively participate in class discussions, and to be well prepared for the weekly quizzes and the final project.

The course grade (100%) consists of:

40%—10 weekly discussion participation/performance grades (4% each);
40%—10 weekly quiz grades (4% each);
20%—final project.

Course Schedule

*The weekly topics correspond with the titles of the chapters/lectures presented in the textbook.

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| Week 1 | (1) | 中国文明起源的科学探索
The Scientific Exploration of the Origins of Chinese Civilization
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapter One of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》 |
| Week 2 | (2) | 中国古代社会与朝代更替
Chinese Ancient Societies and Dynastic Changes
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapter Two of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》. |
| Week 3 | (3) | 汉代、唐代、清代“盛世”的透视
Thorough Examinations of the “Golden Ages” of the Han, Tang, and Qing Dynasties
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapter Three of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》. |
| Week 4 | (4) | 中国古代交通与文化传播
Transportation and Cultural Transmission in Ancient China |
| | (5) | 中国历史上的民族关系
Ethnic Relationships in the China’s History
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapters Four and Five of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》. |
| Week 5 | (6) | 中国古代的政治、法律和选官制度
The Political, Law and Official Selection System in Ancient China
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapter Six of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》. |
| Week 6 | (7) | 中国古代农业、手工业和商业
Agriculture, Handcraft Industry and Commerce in Ancient China |
| | (8) | 中国古代的军事思想与军事制度
Military Thought and Systems in Ancient China
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapters Seven and Eight of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》. |

- Week 7 (9) 中国古代丰富多彩的社会
The Rich and Colorful societies in Ancient China
- (10) 中国古代思想的演变
Transformation of Thought in Ancient China
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapters Nine and Ten of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》.
- Week 8 (11) 中国古代文学艺术宝库
Artistic and Literary Treasures in Ancient China
- (12) 中国古代史学的形成与发展
The Formation and Development of Historiography in Ancient China
- (13) 关于中国古代科学技术的思考
Reflections on Science and Technology in Ancient China
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapters Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》.
- Week 9 (14) 中国近代历史的新课题
New Issues in Modern Chinese History
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapter Fourteen of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》.
- Week 10 (15) 共和国探求社会主义现代化的曲折历程
The Zigzag Course of the Republic's Search for Socialist Modernization
Reading, discussion and examination on Chapter Fifteen of 《中国历史十五讲》 and related key terms discussed in 《中华文明之光》.
- Week 11 Final Project Presentation

Academic misconduct statement
Disability Statement