

Kaleidoscope of Chinese Language

Last Updated: Thu, 07/31/2025

Course prefix: CHIN

Course number: 3401

Section: OL1

CRN (you may add up to five):

94418

Instructor First Name: Jin

Instructor Last Name: Liu

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course explores the Chinese language from multiple perspectives, examining its multifaceted and intriguing interactions with society, culture, gender, music, politics, and media. The five topics we will discuss this semester include: **Linguistic Diversity** (What's the difference between a "language" and a "dialect," When and how was Mandarin selected as the national language?); **Chinese Writing and Contemporary Art** (Are Chinese characters "pictographs" or "ideographs"? What are other myths about the Chinese writing? How the contemporary artists are reinventing Chinese characters in their artwork?); **Language and Gender** (How Nǚshū was developed among peasant women in Hunan province and how language signifies masculinity?); **Language and Music** (How can the lyrics of a song in a tonal language be understood; how to explain the unintelligibility in Higher Brothers' "mumble rap"?); **Language and Globalization** (Is Chinese highly resistant to outside linguistic influence? What's the significance of the Internet language and the coded language? Should Chinglish be "sentenced to death"?).

Taught in English. Prior knowledge of the Chinese language is not required.

Course learning outcomes:

After this course, students will be able to:

1. analyze (the Chinese) language as a social and cultural construct
2. engage in intellectual inquiries and strengthen your critical thinking
3. enhance your intercultural competence and intercultural communication skills

4. conduct basic research and enhance their academic writing skills

Required course materials:

Required readings will be uploaded on the Canvas.

Grading policy:

1. Attendance and Class Participation (10%)

1. Arrive more than 10 minutes late or leave more than 10 minutes early (without permission of the instructor) will result in being marked late/early. If you must leave the class early please notify the instructor before the start of the class.
2. Each **three lateness** will be treated the same as one missed class. **Three unexcused absences** will automatically lower one level of your grade.
3. You are expected to actively participate in the class discussions, teamwork, and other class activities. No or little participation of discussion will strongly affect your participation grade.
4. If for any reason the instructor is late you will be required to wait $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before you can assume the class will not be held and you are free to leave.

2. Reading Homework/Assignments (48%, 16x3 points)

Reading guide and questions for each article will be posted, and **you are expected to read every paper (19 homework assignments in total)** and be well prepared for class participation and discussion. But you are **only required to complete 16 assignments**, each **due one day before the class covers it**. Grading will be based on the quality of your work. An excellent response is not only accurate, but also demonstrates thoughtful reading of the papers. In addition, there is a short film review essay, with 2 points.

Grading: close reading and accuracy (60%), arguments and critical thinking (20%), timely submission (20%)

3. Unit Review Essay and Presentation (30%, 3x10 points)

You are required to write 3 unit review essays. Each essay about 3 pages, double spaced.

Besides the summary of what you have learned in this unit, I am interested in YOUR thoughts on issues discussed in the papers, asking interesting, challenging questions about the author's argument and analysis, integrating the class discussions and student presentations, relating the articles to issues we have discussed earlier, applying what you have read or learned from the class to relevant examples and phenomena from your own experiences.

Grading: close reading (30%), arguments and critical thinking (30%), length and content (20%), timely submission (10%), oral presentation (10%).

4. Group Project (5%)

This project is collaborative research on the Chinese tones and rap music. More information will be posted later.

Grading: research (40%), data analysis (20%), oral presentation (20%), teamwork (10%), timely submission (10%).

5. Topic Presentation (5%)

Each student will have an opportunity to give an oral presentation on a suggested topic.

Grading: Research (60%), arguments and critical thinking (20%), organization and structure (10%), and Q/A skills (10%).

GA. Tech Scale: 100—90 A; 89—80 B; 79—70 C; 69—60 D; 59—0 F.

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Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals. This course should direct students toward a broad orienting question: How do I interpret human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works? Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following learning outcome: students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning,

cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary and philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts. Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following career-ready competencies: ethical reasoning, information literacy, and intercultural competence.