

## CHES1001 Chinese Languages, Past and Present: Sound and Script

Time: Mon 14:30-16:15  
Venue: LSK LT2 (if face-to-face teaching can be resumed)  
Instructor: GAO Yunwen (yunwengao@cuhk.edu.hk)  
Office Hours: Mon 13:00-14:00 @ Room 1107, 11/F, YIA or by appointment via email  
*The course is being held online, all assessments will be conducted online via Zoom, UReply, and Blackboard.*

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course to a range of topics related to the cultural history and linguistic analysis of Chinese languages. The course prepares beginners of Chinese language with a sense of the historical development of sound and scripts of Chinese, and basic knowledge about syntax, and phonetics to facilitate language learning. Topics covered in the class include: 1) historical background of the Chinese languages; 2) Dialects, Topolects, Minority Languages, and the National language; 3) historical development of Chinese characters and writing system; 4) basic Chinese syntax and phonetics. This is not a language skills course: you will not be tested on your ability to use Mandarin. **No prior knowledge of Chinese is assumed or required.**

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) Demonstrate a basic familiarity with classical and modern Chinese languages, and Chinese linguistics;
- 2) Understand the cultural and historical development of the Chinese languages;
- 3) Develop reading, writing, and presentation skills in a professional manner.

### COURSE ASSESSMENT

- 1) **Participation (15%)** Students are required to come to class prepared, having completed the required readings and watched the films. Students are expected to critically engage with the course content and contribute to class discussion. Unexcused absences will result in loss of points, and students with more than 2 unexcused absences will receive no points for participation. Extreme lateness will be counted as absence. **UReply** (or **Zoom Polling**) will be used during the class for participation.
- 2) **Group Presentation (15%)** Each student will be assigned to a group to present a critical reading of assigned materials and external sources for **15-20 minutes** with the aid of PowerPoint or other visual materials. Students will be asked to sign up for a group in **Week 2**. Instructions and grading rubric will be posted on the **Blackboard**.
- 3) **Review Essay (20%)** Students are required to submit a review essay of assigned weekly reading in **Week 5**. The review essay should be **500-700** words (12pt, Times New Roman,

double-spaced), submitted to the Blackboard by **11:59pm, Oct 5** together with a **PDF** file of the signed **Veriguide** receipt. No late submission will be accepted. Instructions and grading rubric will be posted on the **Blackboard**.

4) **Midterm Exam (25%)** Midterm Exam will be held in class in **Week 7**. There will be multiple choices, key term definition, short answer, and short essay questions. Instruction and study guide will be posted on **Blackboard** in **Week 5**.

5) **Final Exam (25%)** Final exam will be held during the examination week. The time and classroom will be announced **during the first week of October**. The exam is not cumulative, but you still need to know the basics to help you understand the questions. There will be key term definition, short answer, and short essay questions. Instruction and study guide will be posted on Blackboard in **Week 12**.

## **COURSE READINGS**

All course readers are available on Blackboard in the form of PDF or CUHK Library Ebook.

1. Sun, Chaofen. *Chinese: A Linguistic Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. (**abbreviated as *Chinese***)

2. Zhou, Minglang. Ed. *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice Since 1949*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004. (**abbreviated as *Language Policy***)

3. Bachner, Andrea. *Beyond Sinology: Chinese Writing and the Scripts of Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014. (**abbreviated as *Sinology***)

**Academic Honesty:** Students should submit the papers to the Veriguide system and print out the Veriguide receipt and scan it into a PDF file before submitting to the Blackboard. See the website: [https://services.veriguide.org/academic/login\\_CUHK.aspx](https://services.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.aspx). Any cases of plagiarism will be severely penalized and reported to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, which could result in failure or expulsion from the University.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 (Sept 7) Course Overview & Chinese Languages in a Nutshell**

➤ “Introduction” in *Chinese*, 1-12.

### **I. History of Chinese Languages**

**Week 2 (Sept 14) From Prehistoric time to Middle Chinese**

➤ “Historical background of the language 1.1-1.4” in *Chinese*, 13-18.

*Sign up for group presentation.*

**Week 3 (Sept 21) From Early modern Chinese to Modern Chinese**

➤ “Historical background of the language 1.5-1.7” in *Chinese*, 18-26.

➤ Bachner, Andrea. “Introduction: Script Politics,” in *Sinology*, 1-17.

➤ Film: *Hero* (dir. ZHANG Yimou, 2002) (Available at CUHK Library)

#### **Week 4 (Sept 28) Language Reforms in China**

➤ Rohsenow, John S. “Fifty Years of Script and Written Language Reform in the PRC: The Genesis of the Language Law of 2001” in *Language Policy*, 21-44.

*Group Presentation 1*

### **II. Dialects, Topolects, Minority Languages, and the National Language**

#### **Week 5 (Oct 5) Dialects and Topolects**

➤ “Formation of Chinese Dialects, 1.9.1-1.9.2” in *Chinese*, 28-33.

➤ Guo, Longsheng, “The Relationship between Putonghua and Chinese Dialects” in *Language Policy*, 45-54.

➤ Mair, Victor. “What is a Chinese ‘Dialect/Topolect’?” *Sino-Platonic Papers*. No. 29. (Sept, 1991), 1-31.

*Group Presentation 2*

***Review Essay Due by Oct 5***

#### **Week 6 (Oct 12) Minority Languages in China**

➤ “Minority Language Policy in China: Equality in Theory and Inequality in Practice” in *Language Policy*, 71-96.

➤ “On the Promotion of Putonghua in China: How a Standard Language Becomes a Vernacular” in *Language Policy*, 163-176.

*Group Presentation 3*

***Week 7 (Oct 19) Midterm Exam in Class***

***Week 8 Oct 26 No Class***

### **III. The Chinese Writing System**

#### **Week 9 (Nov 2) The History of Chinese Script**

➤ “Chinese Writing” in *Chinese*, 101-114.

➤ Bachner, Andrea. “Allographies,” in *Sinology*, 129-164.

*Group Presentation 4*

**Week 10 (Nov 9) Sinoscript beyond China**

- Ng, Kim Chew. “Inscribed Backs” in *Slow Boat to China*, 237-276.
- Bachner, Andrea. “Conclusion: Beyond Sinology,” in *Sinology*, 205-218.

**IV. Chinese Linguistics: Syntax and Phonetics**

**Week 11 (Nov 16) Chinese Syntax**

- “Chinese Syntax 1” in *Chinese*, 147-183.

*Group Presentation 5*

**Week 12 (Nov 23) Chinese Phonetics**

- “Phonetics of Standard Chinese” in *Chinese*, 34-44.

*Group Presentation 6*

**Week 13 (Nov 30) Final Exam Review**

***Final Exam***