

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages**  
**Second Term, 2022-23**

<b>Course Title: LING4401 Special Topics in Linguistics (Historical Linguistics)</b>
<b>Description:</b> This course introduces general aspects of historical linguistics and familiarize students with basic concepts and methods in historical linguistics. Students will develop a general idea of how language changes, in lexicon, semantics and sounds. Students will be trained to appreciate the basic procedures of the methods in historical linguistics and to apply these methods to materials with guidance. This course also introduces basic materials and methods of Chinese historical linguistics. The goal of this course is to help students appreciate linguistic argumentation to further explore historical linguistics or other fields of linguistics.

**Content, highlighting fundamental concepts**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Contents/fundamental concepts</b>
Historical linguistics	Language change
Lexical change	Acronym, Compounding, Taboo, Loanwords
Sound change	Merger, split, Palatalization, common types of sound change; Great Vowel Shift, Chain Shifts
Comparative method	Cognates, sound correspondence, reconstruction, Grimm's Law, regularity of sound change
Internal reconstruction	The glottalic theory; the difference between internal reconstruction and generative grammar
Quantitative methods	Glottochronology, phylogenetic methods
Language classification	The family-tree model (Stammbaum), The Wave theory, regular correspondence
Language contact	Pidgins and creoles, stratum
Chinese historical linguistics	Chinese dialect classification, Middle Chinese, Old Chinese, Layers in Dialectology, Tonogenesis
Theoretical issues in historical linguistics	The uniformitarianism principle, Lexical diffusion

**Learning outcomes**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the basic principles and the methods of historical linguistics</li> <li>• Be able to identify common types of sound change</li> <li>• Be able to appreciate the comparative method and internal reconstruction</li> <li>• Be able to apply the reconstruction procedure with guidance</li> <li>• Develop a general idea of language classification and linguistic change</li> <li>• Understand the basic theoretical assumptions of historical linguistics</li> <li>• Have a basic understanding of Chinese historical phonology</li> </ul>
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**Learning activities**

<b>Lecture</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Interactive tutorial</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Lab</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Discussion of case</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Field-trip</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Projects</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Web-based teaching</b> (hr) in /out class		<b>Other</b> (hr) in /out class	
2		1													
M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA	M;O; NA



	changes; can apply the comparative methods with intensive guidance
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. A basic understanding of some of the concepts of historical linguistics; can identify a few sound changes covered in class; can barely apply the comparative methods
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. Very little understanding of some of the concepts of historical linguistics; cannot identify sound changes; cannot apply the comparative methods at all

### Course schedule

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Requirements
1	12/01	Introduction to Historical Linguistics	Campbell (2013) Ch.1
2	19/01	Semantic and Lexical change	Campbell (2013) Ch.9
<b>3</b>	<b>26/01</b>	<b>Lunar New Year</b>	
4	02/02	Sound change I: common processes	Campbell (2013) Ch.2
5	09/02	Sound change II: systematic changes	Campbell (2013) Ch.2
6	16/02	Chinese historical linguistics: Basic materials	supplementary
	<b>17/02</b>	<b>1st assignment due</b>	
7	23/02	Methods in historical linguistics: the comparative method	Campbell (2013) Ch.5
8	<b>02/03</b>	<b>Mid-term exam</b>	
9	09/03	Reading week	
10	16/03	Methods in historical linguistics: internal reconstruction	Campbell (2013) Ch.8
	<b>17/03</b>	<b>2nd assignment due</b>	
11	23/03	Methods in historical linguistics: quantitative methods	Campbell (2013) Ch.17
12	30/03	Language contact	Campbell (2013) Ch.12
13	06/04	Language classification and the wave theory	Campbell (2013) Ch.6
14	13/04	Chinese historical linguistics: Methods and reconstructions	supplementary
	<b>14/03</b>	<b>3rd assignment due</b>	
15	20/04	Theoretical issues in historical linguistics: lexical diffusion and the uniformitarianism principle	supplementary
	TBC	<b>Final Exam</b>	

### Teachers' or TA's contact details

<b>Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:</b>	
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<b>Teaching Assistant/Tutor:</b>	
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Name:	Meihao Wan
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Other information:	

### **A facility for posting course announcements**

Announcements will be posted on the course Blackboard platform, and be emailed to students. Course materials will also be posted on the Blackboard platform.

### **Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

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