

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	CBS2CN10P
Subject Title	An Exploration of Chinese Characters and Scripts
Credit Value	3
Level	2
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Exclusion: CBS2C10P (Students from CBS are excluded from taking this subject)
Objectives	This subject aims to provide learners with an overview of the various aspects of Chinese characters and scripts which represent a unique writing system different from most existing languages, and which are often considered as hurdles in the learning of Chinese language for both L1 and L2 learners. Through understanding of their structure, patterns of component combination, variations and changes in forms, cultural manifestation, and their use in different settings, it is expected that students' knowledge in the Chinese language can be enhanced and they can make better judgments and more appropriate applications of such knowledge in solving real-life language problems. Students will also be challenged with questions such as the debate involved in simplification and Romanization of the Chinese characters, the difficulties of Chinese character mastery in Chinese L2 learning, the problems of Chinese scripts in adapting to the computer world <i>etc.</i> which would require their critical analysis of a number of issues from historical, educational, social and cultural perspectives.
Intended Learning Outcomes	Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. have an enhanced understanding of the Chinese script which will in turn enhance their understanding of the Chinese language and culture; b. acquire a historical perspective of the development of the Chinese script; c. go beyond the confines of the Chinese script sub-system of everyday use and be informed about other varieties of the Chinese script; d. position the Chinese script sub-system of everyday use in the grand system and grasp the relationship between the two; e. have a better grasp of the present state and the future of the Chinese script; f. apply the knowledge in solving real-life language problems. g. fulfill the Chinese Reading and Writing Requirements.
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>From symbols to characters</u> the origin and “characterization” of the Chinese characters, early form of Chinese characters; • <u>Strokes and components</u> Basic strokes and components, radicals, structure of Chinese characters and Chinese script system; • <u>Changes and proliferation</u> Essential landmarks in script changes, variant forms and dialectal varieties;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Chinese characters in figures</u> Statistical analysis of Chinese characters, use of statistical information in education and language studies; • <u>Diversity and Standardization</u> Simplification and reform of Chinese scripts; Romanization of Chinese scripts; Discussion on the future of Chinese characters: shall we all switch to simplified characters, restore traditional characters, or keep the <i>status quo</i>? • <u>Physiological consideration</u> Stroke order, inscription, alignment; • <u>Practical vs. artistic</u> Characteristics and styles of Chinese calligraphy, variant forms in Chinese calligraphy; • <u>Culture epitomized</u> Chinese characters and “Chinese world view”, Chinese philology and exegesis. • <u>Tradition vs. modernization</u> Chinese Scripts in design, Chinese script in the digital world, codification and linguistic corpus; Discussion on the adaptability of Chinese characters to the input methods of modern IT devices, <i>e.g.</i> keyboard input, audio input, optical character recognition (OCR), <i>etc.</i> 																																																													
Teaching/Learning Methodology	<p>Besides face-to-face lectures, discussions via Blackboard and web-based study materials will be used. Assignments are closely related to the analysis and use of Chinese characters and scripts and thus students are strongly encouraged to apply the concepts and methodologies they learn to solve practical real-world language problems.</p>																																																													
Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="7">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> <th>g</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>(1) exercises & quizzes (CR)</td> <td>25%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(2) group presentation</td> <td>20%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>(3) tutorial discussion</td> <td>10%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>(4) project/essay</td> <td>45% (including 10% for CW, to be assessed by CLC)</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="7"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This subject aims to provide learners with an overview of the various aspects of Chinese characters and scripts which represent a unique writing system different from most existing languages. Topics covered vary from the origin of Chinese characters, evolution of Chinese scripts, structure and variations of Chinese scripts, reform and standardization of the Chinese scripts, Chinese calligraphy, relationship between Chinese characters and Chinese culture, relationship between Chinese characters and IT, and Chinese scripts in design.</p>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed							a	b	c	d	e	f	g	(1) exercises & quizzes (CR)	25%	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	(2) group presentation	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			(3) tutorial discussion	10%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		(4) project/essay	45% (including 10% for CW, to be assessed by CLC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Total	100 %							
Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting			Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed																																																										
		a	b	c	d	e	f	g																																																						
(1) exercises & quizzes (CR)	25%	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓																																																						
(2) group presentation	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																																								
(3) tutorial discussion	10%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																																							
(4) project/essay	45% (including 10% for CW, to be assessed by CLC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓																																																						
Total	100 %																																																													

	<p>It would be difficult to evaluate student's learning outcome with one or two single assignment(s) in term of term papers. Therefore, a number of exercises, each with different focus and covering specific topics, will be given to students to help them grasp the basic concepts and to develop their abilities in handling language issues in relation to Chinese characters and scripts. The following are few examples of the topics to be covered by the assignments: (1) Discussion on why and how the changes from <i>xiaozhuan</i> (小篆) to <i>lishu</i> (隸書) turned out to be a watershed in the evolution of Chinese characters; (2) What are the pros and cons of character simplification motion from cultural, social and educational perspectives? (3) Is romanization the future of Chinese character development? Give your reasons and arguments.</p> <p>Towards the end of the study period, students will be required to conduct a project on resolving a problem in the Chinese writing system or to produce an essay containing in-depth discussion of a phenomenon related to the Chinese writing system. This final piece of work would require students to make use of the knowledge learnt in this subject and to demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes.</p>	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lectures: 2 × 13 	26 hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tutorials: 1 × 13 	13 hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assignments 	40 hrs.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reading 	30 hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>Required readings (for CR):</p> <p>王寧 (2019) 《漢字與中國文化十講》。香港：三聯書店。</p> <p>Other references:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 王鳳陽 (1989) 《漢字學》。長春：吉林文史出版社。 2. 竺家寧 (2000) 《中國的語言和文字》。臺北：臺灣書店。 3. 裘錫圭 (2013) 《文字學概要》，修訂本。北京：商務印書館。 4. 周有光 (2016) 《世界文字發展史》。香港：商務印書館。 5. 李宇明 (2004) 《漢字規範》。武漢：華中師範大學出版社。 6. 蘇培成 (2014) 《現代漢字學綱要 (第3版)》。北京：商務印書館。 7. 黃德寬 (2017) 《書同文字：漢字與中國文化》。香港：中華書局。 8. 李家樹、吳長和 (2005) 《漢字的演變和發展趨向》。香港：香港 	

	<p>大學出版社。</p> <p>9. 《中國語言文字網》 http://www.china-language.edu.cn/</p> <p>10. 《漢語多功能字庫》 https://humanum.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Lexis/lexi-mf/</p> <p>11. 《小學堂》 http://xiaoxue.iis.sinica.edu.tw/</p> <p>12. 《異體字字典》 http://dict.variants.moe.edu.tw/variants/rbt/home.do</p>
--	--