

# The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

## Subject Description Form

Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.

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| <b>Subject Code</b>  | CLC2M01P   |
| <b>Subject Title</b>   | History and Culture in Chinese Characters 漢字中的歷史與文化  |
| <b>Credit Value</b>  | 3  |
| <b>Level</b>   | 2  |
| <b>Pre-requisite/<br/>Co-requisite/<br/>Exclusion</b>        | None   |
| <b>Objectives</b>  | <p>This subject aims to provide learners with an overview of the historical and cultural aspects of Chinese characters which represent a unique writing system different from most existing ones. Through understanding of their origins, developments, variations and changes in forms, unification and simplification, it is expected that students' knowledge in the Chinese Characters can be enhanced and they can make better judgments and more appropriate applications of such knowledge in exploring thousands of characters used in their daily life. Students will also be challenged with questions such as the comparison between different forms of Chinese characters in ancient dynasties, debate involved in simplification, revolution, and Romanization of the Chinese characters etc., which would require their critical analysis of issues from historical, social and cultural perspectives.</p> |
| <b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b><br>(Note 1)                | <p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have an enhanced understanding of the historical and cultural perspective of Chinese characters which will in turn enhance their understanding of the Chinese history and culture;</li> <li>cultivate a critical thinking on Chinese characters' meanings and developments;</li> <li>appreciate Chinese history and culture for cultivating a sense of belonging towards the country and a sense of national identity;</li> <li>have a better understanding of the Chinese characters today and in the future;</li> <li>apply the knowledge in understanding daily life Chinese characters in a deeper sense;</li> <li>fulfil the Chinese Reading and Writing Requirements.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>Subject Synopsis/<br/>Indicative Syllabus</b><br>(Note 2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Chinese characters among world writing systems: An Overview</u><br/>A brief introduction to different writing systems in the world. Compare their differences. Highlight the facts that Chinese characters are the existing writing system with the oldest origin, and the key features including logogram, heteronym, and homophone. Factors for its longevity will also be discussed.</li> <li><u>Legend or Truth: Chinese characters in the Xia and Shang dynasties.</u><br/>Introduce the origin and "characterization" of Chinese characters, and how they developed from symbols to characters. Criticize the different stories on Chinese characters.</li> </ul>  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>War, Sacrifice, and Divine: Chinese characters in the Shang and Zhou dynasties.</u><br/>Explore the cultural aspect of Chinese characters, how they connected with war, sacrifice, and divine in early China. Oracle bones and bronze inscriptions will be scrutinized.</li> <li>• <u>Countries and Clans: Chinese characters in the Warring States Period.</u><br/>Investigate the different forms of Chinese characters in Warring States, and how they reflected <i>Qi</i> 齊, <i>Yan</i> 燕, <i>Jin</i> 晉, <i>Chu</i> 楚, and <i>Qin</i> 秦 people's thoughts.</li> <li>• <u>Unification and Standardization: Chinese characters in the Qin and Han dynasties.</u><br/>Examine the political significance of unification and standardization in medieval China, and how they laid the foundation for today's Chinese characters.</li> <li>• <u>Arts and Culture: Seal Carving</u><br/>Appreciate and analyze a series of featured seal carvings, find out the cultural significance of Chinese characters.</li> <li>• <u>Literature and Culture: Calligraphy</u><br/>Appreciate and analyze a series of featured calligraphies, e.g. works of <i>Wang Xizhi</i> 王羲之, <i>Ouyang Xun</i> 歐陽詢, <i>Yan Zhenqing</i> 顏真卿, and <i>Su Shi</i> 蘇軾. Find out the cultural significance of Chinese characters.</li> <li>• <u>Simplified or Traditional: Contemporary Chinese characters</u><br/>Review the evolution and reform of Chinese characters in 20<sup>th</sup> century, compare the differences between simplified and traditional Chinese characters. Debate on the necessity of simplification.</li> <li>• <u>Cultural Influences: Chinese Characters in the world.</u><br/>Evaluate the impact of Chinese characters through times, especially its dissemination in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, ethnic minorities and other countries.</li> <li>• <u>The future of Chinese Characters.</u><br/>The feasibility of Romanization under globalization will be discussed. Challenges that Chinese characters should overcome under the digital world will also be discussed.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Teaching/Learning Methodology</b><br><i>(Note 3)</i> | <p>Flipped classroom and inquiry-based learning approach will be adopted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-class activities that introduce students to a topic through self-learning materials, such as reading assignments;</li> <li>A mechanism to check students' understanding of pre-class learning materials, such as tutorial worksheets, Q&amp;A sessions, and discussion boards (Blackboard or Padlet);</li> <li>In-class active learning activities that focus on application or deeper learning, such as preparing group presentations and tutorial worksheets.</li> <li>In-class learning activities focus on cultivating inquiry-based learning skills, such as debates, discussions, text analysis, creative design of Chinese characters, and deciphering ancient scripts.</li> </ol> <p>Assignments are closely related to the analysis and use of Chinese characters and thus students are strongly encouraged to explore Chinese characters' historical and cultural context in their daily life.</p>   |

# **Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes**

(Note 4)

| Specific assessment methods/tasks                | % weighting  | Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate) |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | a  | b | c | d | e | f |
| 1.exercises/assignments (CR)                     | 25%  | ✓  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |
| 2. pre-class activities and tutorial performance | 10%  | ✓  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |
| 3. group presentation                            | 15%  | ✓  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |
| 4. project/essay                                 | 50%<br>(including 10% for CW, to be assessed by CLC) | ✓  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Total  | 100 %  |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|  |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |

Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:

This subject aims to provide learners with an overview of the historical and cultural aspects of Chinese characters. Topics covered vary from origin of Chinese characters, development in different dynasties, variations in different countries, unification and standardization, seal carving, calligraphy, simplification, influences, and challenges.

Exercises or small assignments will be designed to cultivate students' knowledge aesthetic on Chinese characters. The following are few examples of the topics to be covered by the assignments:

1. Handwriting: 540 small seal 小篆radicals from ancient dictionary Shuowenjiezi 說文解字.



2. Discussion on why and how the changes from oracle bone inscriptions 甲骨文 to Kaishu 楷書.
3. Criticize the pros and cons of character simplification motion from cultural, social and historical perspectives

Tutorials will be focused on assigned topics and articles from selected books. Pre-class activities will also include relevant multimedia learning content wherever appropriate.

Towards the end of the study period, students will be required to conduct a project on exploring the historical and/or cultural issues of Chinese characters, or to write a 3000-word essay containing an in- depth discussion of the historical and cultural aspects of selected Chinese characters, for example, students' own Chinese names. This final piece

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|                                      | <p>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> <p>All the assessments will use a letter-grading system.</p>   |                 |
| <b>Student Study Effort Expected</b> | Class contact:  |                 |
|                                      | ▪ Lectures: 2 x 13  | 26 Hrs.         |
|                                      | ▪ Tutorials: 1 x 13   | 13 Hrs.         |
|                                      | Other student study effort:   |                 |
|                                      | ▪ Assignments   | 40 Hrs.         |
|                                      | ▪ Pre-class activities (including reading and viewing multimedia materials)   | 30 Hrs.         |
|                                      | Total student study effort  | <b>109 Hrs.</b> |
| <b>Reading List and References</b>   | <p>Required readings (for CR) and multimedia materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 裘錫圭（1988）《文字學概要》。北京：商務印書館。</li> <li>2. 《中國通史》：中國發現神秘甲骨文字<br/><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hnGkXuGTl4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hnGkXuGTl4</a></li> <li>3. 【藝術欣賞101】第十一集 — 中國書法多面睇<br/><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSMqW9t-vLA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSMqW9t-vLA</a></li> <li>4. 【藝術欣賞101】第十二集 — 香港城市中的書法<br/><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BdTVTLzjMk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BdTVTLzjMk</a></li> </ol> <p>Other references:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. 白川靜著，溫天河、蔡哲茂譯（1977）《甲骨文的世界》。臺北：远流圖書公司。</li> <li>6. 段玉裁（1981）《說文解字注》。上海：上海古籍出版社。</li> <li>7. 《漢字五千年》編委會（2013）《漢字五千年》。香港：三聯書店。</li> <li>8. 黃德寬（2017）《書同文字：漢字與中國文化》。香港：中華書局。</li> <li>9. 李家樹、吳長和（2005）《漢字的演變和發展趨向》。香港：香港大學出版社。</li> <li>10. 林西莉（2008）《漢字王國》。北京：三聯書店。</li> <li>11. 饒宗頤（1998）《符號・初文與字母：漢字樹》。香港：商務印書館。王寧（2019）《漢字與中國文化十講》。香港：三聯書店。</li> <li>12. 蘇培成（2014）《現代漢字學綱要》。北京：商務印書館。</li> <li>13. 竺家寧（1998）《中國的語言和文字》。臺北：臺灣書店。</li> <li>14. 《漢典》：<a href="https://www.zdic.net/">https://www.zdic.net/</a></li> <li>15. 《漢語多功能字庫》<br/><a href="https://humanum.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Lexis/lexi-mf/">https://humanum.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Lexis/lexi- mf/</a></li> </ol> |                 |

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|  | 16. 《書法字典》 <a href="http://www.shufazidian.com/">http://www.shufazidian.com/</a><br>17. 《小學堂》 <a href="http://xiaoxue.iis.sinica.edu.tw/">http://xiaoxue.iis.sinica.edu.tw/</a><br>《異體字字典》 <a href="http://dict.variants.moe.edu.tw/variants/rbt/home.do">http://dict.variants.moe.edu.tw/variants/rbt/home.do</a> |
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Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon subject completion. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time, overcrowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method is intended to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.

(Form AR 140) 8.