UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Institutions of Chinese Culture

2021-1-E2001R039

Course title

Foundations of Chinese Culture

Topics and course structure

The main aim of the course is to provide useful tools to understand China and the contemporary Sinophone world through the acquisition of fundamental knowledge on the evolution of the history, the systems of thought, the cultural dynamics as well as the social, political and institutional structures of the country from its origins to the present day.

The course is divided into 2 modules one on traditional culture, and another on modern culture and 21st century China

The first module traces a general profile of the historical and cultural evolution of the period from pre-imperial China to the Opium Wars, with a special focus on the construction of the idea of ??"Chineseness", from the origins of the writing system to the foundations of the philosophical and literary heritage.

The second module, on the other hand, focuses on the analysis of the changes that have taken place in China following the encounter / clash with the West and follows the profound historical transformations that, throughout the twentieth century, have led the country to achieve the current status as a great world power. The basic knowledge acquired through the course will be used to analyze the main characteristics of the political and government system of the People's Republic of China, promoting the study of issues related to the main cultural, political and economic spheres of China in the 21st century. Furthermore, in this second module, students will be introduced to the concepts of the Sinophone and Sinophone studies which examine Chinese language and culture outside the geographical borders of China: in Southeast Asia, North America, but also in Peru and Europe.

Objectives

The course aims to provide the basic competences and fundamental skills necessary for the study and understanding of Chinese culture and the Sinophone world. At the end of the course, students will be able to navigate through Chinese history and to develop logical connections among the topics covered. Furthermore, learners are expected to acquire a good knowledge of the historical evolution of the Chinese world from ancient times to the present day and are expected to be able to analyze the main historical events, by contextualizing them both over time and vis-à-vis Chinese society.

Additionally, students will develop critical skills and communication skills through participation in debates, seminars and other activities

Methodologies

Online ex cathedra teaching

Online and offline teaching materials

Programme and references for attending students

Required readings

1. Lavagnino A.C., Pozzi S., *Cultura cinese*. *Segno, scrittura e civiltà*, Roma, Carocci editore, 2013.

2. One chapter from:

Lavagnino A.C., Mottura B., *Cina e modernità. Cultura e istituzioni dalle Guerre dell'oppio ad oggi*, Roma, Carocci editore, 2016.

Required readings

1. Buck P. S., *Vento dell'est, vento dell'ovest. Saga di una famiglia cinese*, Milano, Mondadori, 2014.

2. Yu Hua, *Vivere*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2018 (quarta edizione o edizioni anteriori).

3. Yu Hua, *Lezioni milanesi. Letteratura, cultura, civiltà*, Milano, Unicopli, 2019.

Required multimedia materials

Podcast: https://www.spreaker.com/show/riscio

Suggested readings

To acquire a good knowledge of the historical evolution of the Chinese world, it is strongly recommended that students read one of the following texts:

- Roberts J.A.G., *Storia della Cina*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2013 (terza edizione).

- Sabattini M., Santangelo P., *Storia della Cina*, Bari-Roma, Laterza, 2005.

- Vogelsang K., *Cina. Una storia millenaria*, Torino, Einaudi, 2014.

Students are highly encouraged to read the remaining chapters from: Lavagnino A.C., Mottura B., *Cina e modernità. Cultura e istituzioni dalle Guerre dell'oppio ad oggi*, Roma, Carocci editore, 2016.

For those interested in the Sinophone world: Shih, S. "The Concept of the Sinophone." *PMLA*, vol. 126, no. 3, 2011, pp. 709–718. (Available on JSTOR at the following address*:* www.jstor.org/stable/41414144)

Suggested readings

Cao Xueqin (Ts'ao Hsüeh-Ch'in), *Il sogno della camera rossa* (trad. di E. Masi), Milano, BUR, 2008.

Jin Ping Mei (Chin P'ing Mei), *Romanzo erotico cinese del sec*. XVI (trad. di P. Jahier, dalla versione inglese di A. Waley), 2 voll., Milano, Feltrinelli, 1980 oppure Torino, Einaudi, 1955.

Wu Ch'êng-ên, *Lo scimmiotto* (trad. di A. Motti, dalla versione inglese di A. Waley), Torino, Einaudi, 1982 oppure Milano, Adelphi, 2009 (quinta edizione).

Programme and references for non-attending students

Lessons will be recorded and available on the platform, therefore, there is no specific program for non-attending students. However, students who have doubts about which programme to prepare can contactme (well in advance, not the day before the exam!) by writing to: antonio.paoliello@unimib.it

Assessment methods

Oral exam

Office hours

Online. Please write an email to antonio.paoliello@unimib.it to arrange a meet/zoom/skype meeting

Programme validity

Two academic years

Course tutors and assistants