UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Chinese Culture

2627-1-E2002R009

Course title

Chinese Culture

Topics and course structure

The course is divided into two modules, each corresponding to 28 hours of instruction. MODULE A focuses on the history and culture of ancient and imperial China (Writing; Thought and religions; Literary genres); MODULE B covers the history, culture and society of modern and contemporary China through the concept of modernity.

Objectives

To acquire a basic knowledge of the main lines of development of thought, politics, culture and literature in China, in order to be able to critically engage with the narratives produced today about contemporary China.

Methodologies

The course is primarily lecture-based, with an interactive component involving student participation in classroom discussions.

Online and offline teaching materials

Classes will be held in presence. Slides will be uploaded to the e-learning space, together with any additional material made available by the instructor.

Programme and references

Module A
Required study material
• Lavagnino A.C., Pozzi S., Cultura cinese. Segno, scrittura e civiltà, Roma, Carocci editore, 2025. Readings and other materials provided by the instructor and uploaded to the e-learning space.
Required reading
• One text of your choice: Jin Yong, La leggenda del cacciatore di aquile, Libro primo, Milano, Mondadori, 2021, OR Wu Cheng'en, Lo scimmiotto (trad. di A. Motti, dalla versione inglese di A. Waley), Torino, Einaudi, 1982 or Milano, Adelphi, 2009 (fifth edition).
Suggested readings
• 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 or Torino, Einaudi, 1955.
• Cao Xueqin (Ts'ao Hsüeh-Ch'in), Il sogno della camera rossa (trad. di E. Masi), Milano, BUR, 2008.
Module B
Required study material
• Alessandra C. Lavagnino e Bettina Mottura, Cina e modernità. Cultura e istituzioni dalle Guerre dell'oppio a oggi, Roma, Carocci, 2016.
• Readings and other materials uploaded to the e-learning space.
Required reading
• Fuchsia Dunlop, Invito a un banchetto. Il cibo come cuore della cultura cinese, Milano, ADD Editore, 2025 (the English edition is also acceptable)
• Yu Hua, La Cina in dieci parole, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2012 (trad. di Silvia Pozzi) (the English edition is also acceptable)
Suggested bibliography
Students are encouraged to read and/or consult one of the following general histories of China:
• Roberts J.A.G., Storia della Cina, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2013 (third edition);
• Sabattini M., Santangelo P., Storia della Cina, Bari-Roma, Laterza, 2005.
• Vogelsang, Kai, Cina. Una storia millenaria, Torino, Einaudi, 2012 (and subsequent editions)
• Samarani G., La Cina contemporanea: Dalla fine dell'impero ad oggi, Torino, Einaudi (any edition)
STUDENTS WISHING TO TAKE THE EXAM AS A TWO-YEAR COURSE ARE KINDLY REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR TO AGREE ON THE PROGRAMME.

Assessment methods

The exam will be conducted exclusively in oral form. It consists of questions covering all topics addressed during the course, the assigned textbooks and the required readings. Students will be assessed on their historical, cultural and literary knowledge, as well as their critical thinking and ability to express themselves clearly.

Office hours

To schedule an appointment, please contact the instructor: gloria.cella@unimib.it.

Programme validity

Programmes are valid for two academic years

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION