

Classical Chinese: Language, Text and Context (A005124)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0

Study time 180 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2025-2026

A (semester 1)	English	Gent	group work seminar	0.0h
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Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Heirman, Ann	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
Sokolova, Anna	LW21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Oriental Languages and Cultures)	6	A
Master of Arts in Oriental Languages and Cultures(main subject China)	6	A
Exchange Programme Oriental Languages and Cultures	6	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Wenyan/Classical Chinese, tradition, religion and philosophy of China

Position of the course

The course discusses so-called 'traditional China', on the basis of primary and secondary sources. Each academic year some topics are particularly focused upon, with relevant research questions, and relying (also) on knowledge previously addressed in other courses. Research results are discussed in class. In addition, students analyze one topic of their choice in small teams and present their results in class.

Contents

The course focuses on pre-modern texts, discussed in a historical, religious-philosophical, social and cultural framework. Within this framework, a few topics are focused upon. The topics are analyzed on the basis of research questions and with the help of primary and secondary sources. Attention also goes to the impact of these topics on contemporary society, and to the influence on or from regions outside of China. Research results are discussed in class. Related to the central themes, students choose a topic of their own and analyze it in small teams. The results are presented in class, and are part of the (individual) oral examination.

Initial competences

The course 'Classical Chinese: Language, text and context' requires a thorough knowledge of 'Wenyan/Classical Chinese' (BA 2 level), and a good knowledge of the history of China and of East Asian religions/philosophy (particularly Confucianism and Buddhism).

Final competences

- 1 To be able to translate, analyze and interpret Wenyan/Classical/Pre-modern Chinese texts.
- 2 To be able to translate, analyze and interpret Chinese Buddhist texts.
- 3 To be able to conduct research on the basis of primary sources.
- 4 To be able to relate primary sources to a historical, religious-philosophical, social

and cultural framework.

5 To be able to discuss the impact of classical themes on contemporary China.

6 To be able to relate (traditional) China to other regions.

7 To be able to use academic secondary literature.

8 To be able to use relevant databases.

9 To be able to report on research results in a critical and academic way.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar

Extra information on the teaching methods

Wenyan/Classical/Pre-modern and Buddhist texts are interactively related to previously acquired knowledge, and are discussed on the basis of scholarly studies.

Students are intensively involved, and receive guidance for the interpretation of primary sources. Some of the lessons are prepared by the students (in small groups) and presented to the class (flipped classroom).

In small groups a paper is prepared and presented in class as well as at the oral examination.

Study material

Type: Reader

Name: background literature

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Type: Handouts

Name: Powerpoint presentations

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

References

Dictionaries: Kroll, Paul W., *A Student's Dictionary of Classical and Medieval Chinese*, Leiden, Brill, 2014 (paperback; ca. 49.00 €); W. Soothill and L. Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass (ca. 40.00 € or free online)

Course content-related study coaching

Discussions in class provide a constant feedback. The paper that needs to be presented can be discussed with the lecturer in the course of the semester.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

During the semester a paper (with powerpoint presentation) is presented in class.

The oral examination focuses on the knowledge and contextualization of a text selection studied in class, and on the presentation made in team.

Calculation of the examination mark

Presentation (25%)

Oral examination (75%)

The final score on the continuous assessment (= the presentation) can be transferred to the second examination session.

In case one does not participate in one or more parts of the evaluation, one cannot pass the examination. If the average final score totals 10/20 or more, the score will be reduced to the highest nonpass score (= 9).

Facilities for Working Students

Facilities:

- 1 Student attendance during educational activities is required
- 2 Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same examination period.
- 3 Feedback can be given during an appointment during and after office hours, also online.