

CLDP0012 Highlight of Chinese Dynasties

I. Course Duration:

26 to 28 contact hours

2 hours per week

Offered in the 1st and 2nd semesters

II. Target Learners:

Foreign exchange students who are interested in Chinese history and culture.

III. Credit Units: 3

IV. Course Objectives:

The course will provide a clear timeline of China, its culture, its language and its complexity. Instead of knowing “who is who”: the course ties China’s long history together through legends, stories and historical events. Through introduction to the most notable people and events in Chinese history, students will gain a picture of China in the past. This will be placed in the context of contemporary major world events to provide a broad overview.

V. Course Content:

A broader perspective/background picture of China is presented in 10 chapters, which will follow the time line of Chinese history. Topics include:

- major events which lead to the downfall of the dynasties
- major schools of thought
- great inventions
- exchanges with other parts of the world
- art, poetry, drama, food, festivals, sports
- geographical features
- myths, legends and stories about the origin of China
- brief cross-reference to what was happening around the world

Following questions will give a glimpse of the scope:

How did the Chinese people imagine the origin of the universe?

Who are the other famous thinkers and philosophers besides Confucius?

Why Confucius and his teaching is far better known than others?

What is old Chinese writing like?

Why is the first but short-lived dynasty, Qin, so significant in Chinese history?

What is the religion of China?

What are the major inventions of China that changed the world?

Where is the Silk Road? How and when did it first come into being?

Where is the oldest irrigation system that is still working today?

Beijing is not the only capital of China. Where were the others?

What are the backgrounds of some most influential emperors in Chinese history?

Why China still emphasizes the importance of unity of the country?

What is the impact of foreign cultures on China?

How China did and will influence the world?

VI. Course Materials:

Lecture handouts and selected chapters from works including:

1. Armstrong, Karen: *The Great Transformation – The World in the Time of Buddha, Socrates, Confucius and Jeremiah*, Atlantic Books. London, paperback edition, 2007
2. *Atlas of the People's Republic of China*, Map Publishing, Beijing, 1979
3. Bai, Shouyi: *An Outline History of China* (revised edition), Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1998
4. Barraclough, Geoffrey, et al: *The Times Atlas of World History*, Times Books Limited, London, 1979
5. Gascoigne, Bamber: *A Brief History of the Dynasties of China*, Constable & Robinson Ltd, London, 2003
6. Huang, Renyu: *China: a Macro History*, Lian Jing Publisher, Taipei, 1993
7. Shaughnessy, Edward L.: editor, *China, Empire and Civilization* Oxford U. Press, 2000
8. Toynbee, Arnold: *Mankind and Mother Earth, A Narrative History of the World*, Oxford U. Press, New York and London, 1976
9. Zhang, Qizhi: editor, *Traditional Chinese Culture*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2004
10. other reference books: details will be given during the first lecture
11. newspaper articles related to topics discussed

VII. Course Requirements:

No prerequisite.

Attend all lectures, pass both tests and finish presentation or final essay on time.

VIII. Mode of Assessment:

2 quizzes: around weeks 5 and 10

1 presentation, in week 12 or 13 or final essay 1,500 words due 2 weeks after last lecture

attendance 20%, two quizzes 30% and presentation or final essay 50%

IX. Teacher

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