

## Spring 2018 Chinese 453: Study of Chinese Characters

T TH 9:00-10:15 a.m.      SAKAM A104

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### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

This course aims to introduce the fundamental knowledge of Chinese characters, its origins, and historical development. It explores the characteristics and history of Chinese characters, focusing on the ways in which characters were constructed, the relationship between the characters, physical world, and human cognition, the embodied roots of characters, the myth of their disembodied meaning, learning strategies of characters for learners of Chinese as a second language, and outlines of the field of Chinese characters studies.

Specifically, students will be able to:

1. Understand the general historical development of Chinese characters;
2. Understand the ways in which Chinese characters were constructed in general;
3. Trace the roots and understand with reason of the characters introduced in this course;
4. Research the etymology and evolution of characters of personal interest using the resources and methods utilized in this course;
5. Recognize the form, meaning and sound of key characters and components with their adaptation in independent characters;
6. Revisit the characters one has mastered previously from a historical, developmental and systematic point of view and obtain the foundation of a personal building construction of Chinese characters;
7. Develop personalized strategies of learning and memorizing Chinese characters and be able to use these strategies to master Chinese character writing system in an academic and systematic way.

### **Texts & Materials:**

- Cecilia Linndqvist, 1991. *China: Empire of living symbols*. Da Capo Press, Cambridge: MA. Available at Amazon.com

### **Instructional Approach:**

This course will consist of lectures, discussions and student in class presentations. Students are expected read the required textbook, additional readings and supplementary materials, complete assigned exercises and homework, lead reading discussions or reports, and give in class oral presentations. All these will be the basis for a final research oriented project of approximately 10

to 15 pages. In this final project, the student will define a limited topic related to one the general themes of the course, and offers original comments based on research in documented sources.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

1. Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Absences without valid reasons will affect your grade. Anyone who is late for more than 15 minutes will be regarded as absent.
2. Class preparation and participation: All students are expected to participate actively in the class discussion. Students' class participation and performance will be evaluated and the evaluation will be used as a reference for final grading.
3. Homework and Compositions: All homework and reports must be turned in on the due day. Late homework and Compositions will NOT be accepted even if they are submitted with the others.
4. Quizzes, Midterm and Final Exam: Every effort should be made to take quizzes and tests at the specified times. If you know you must miss a class ahead of time, tell the teacher before that class. Quizzes or tests cannot be made up unless arrangements are made BEFORE being absent from class. No one is allowed to make up a missed quiz without a valid, written excuse.

### **Grading:**

Grades will be determined by

1. Attendance (10%)
2. Class participation (10%)
3. Quizzes (15%)
4. Midterm exam (10%),
5. Final exam (15%)
6. Homework (30%)
7. Final project (10%)

Final grades will be assigned to convey the instructor's assessment of the student's success and readiness to proceed to the next higher level of study: D or E means the student is unready to take a more advanced course in the same subject, the difference being that a D recognizes effort by conferring credit; higher grades show that a student is qualified for more advanced study, and that the instructor believes s/he will easily excel (A), do well with effort (B), or experience some difficulty (C) if s/he chooses to do so. Grades and quantitative evaluations of performance correspond as follows:

#### Points Grade

• 92–100	A	• 76–79	C+
• 89–91	A–	• 72–75	C
• 86–88	B+	• 69–71	C–
• 82–85	B	• 66–67	D+
• 79–81	B–	• 62–65	D

**Tentative Daily Schedule Overview (subject to changes)**

	Date	TUESDAY	THURSDAY
01	1/08-12	Introduction and orientation	A brief history of Chinese characters: origin, formation and development
02	1/15-19	Overview of the characteristics of Chinese characters (1)	Overview of the characteristics of Chinese characters (2)
03	1/22-26	The variations of character forms: a historical point of view	Chinese writing: calligraphy as art
04	1/29-2/2	The way of the characters were constructed <b>Homework 1</b>	The structure of Chinese characters: radicals and components <b>Quiz 1</b>
05	2/5-9	The embodiment of Chinese characters: a cognitive view	Demystifying Chinese Characters: Characters for numbers
06	2/12-16	Basic characters for nature and plants (1)	Basic characters for nature and plants (2)
07	2/19-23	Basic characters for people and body parts (1)	Basic characters for people and body parts (2)
08	2/26-3/2	Basic characters for animals (1) <b>Homework 2</b>	Basic characters for animals (2) <b>Quiz 2</b>
09	3/5-9	Midterm Review	Midterm exam
10	3/12-16	Basic characters for food and clothes (1)	Basic character for food and clothes (2)
11	3/19-23	Basic characters for habitation household utensils (1)	Basic characters for habitation and household utensils (2)
		<b>SPRING RECESS</b>	
12	4/9-13	Basic characters for disasters and religious (1)	Basic characters for disasters and religious (2)
13	4/16-20	Basic characters for transportation and tools (1) <b>Homework 3</b>	Basic characters for transportation and tools (2) <b>Quiz 3</b>
14	4/23-27	Chinese character acquisition for second language learners: theories and research	Chinese character acquisition for second language learners: practices and strategies
15	4/30-5/04	Final Review, Student oral presentation <b>Final project</b> touch up	<b>Study Period</b>
	5/13	<b>FINAL EXAM WEEK</b> ⇒ ⇒ ⇒	