REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
(MA)

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to the University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

The degree of Master of Arts (MA) is a postgraduate degree awarded for the satisfactory completion of a prescribed course of study in one of the following fields: Chinese Historical Studies; Chinese Language and Literature; English Studies; Linguistics; and Literary and Cultural Studies. These fields of study will not necessarily be offered every year.

MA 1  Admission requirements

To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the degree of Master of Arts, candidates

(a) shall comply with the General Regulations;¹
(b) shall comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
(c) shall hold
   (i) a Bachelor’s degree with honours of this University;
   (ii) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Chinese Language and Literature, a Bachelor’s degree with honours with a major in Chinese or a closely related subject;
   (iii) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of English Studies, a Bachelor’s degree with honours with a major in English or a closely related subject;
   (iv) in respect of the courses of study leading to the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Linguistics, a Bachelor’s degree with honours with a major in Linguistics or a closely related subject; or
   (v) a qualification of equivalent standard from this University or another comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
(d) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MA 2  Qualifying examination

(a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates’ formal academic ability or their ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent and may include a project report.
(b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.

¹ In addition to the admission requirement specified in General Regulation G 2, the Faculty also requires:

(a) TOEFL: a Test of Written English (TWE) score of 4 or above or a Writing score of 25 or above in the internet-based TOEFL (not applicable to the MA in Chinese Historical Studies and the MA in Chinese Language and Literature); and
(b) IELTS: a minimum overall Band of 7 with no subtest lower than 5.5.
MA 3   Award of degree
To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Arts, candidates
   (a) shall comply with the General Regulations;
   (b) shall comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
   (c) shall complete the curriculum as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in
       accordance with the regulations set out below.

MA 4   Period of study
   (a) The curriculum shall normally extend
       (i) in the fields of Chinese Historical Studies and Chinese Language and Literature, over
           two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of four
           academic years;
       (ii) in the field of English Studies, over one academic year of full-time study or two
            academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of two
            academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study;
       (iii) in the field of Linguistics, over one academic year of full-time study, with a maximum
            period of registration of two academic years; and
       (iv) in the field of Literary and Cultural Studies, over one academic year of full-time study
            or two academic years of part-time study, with a maximum period of registration of
            two academic years of full-time study or three academic years of part-time study.
   (b) Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of
       registration specified in MA 4(a), unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of
       the Faculty.

MA 5   Completion of curriculum
To complete the curriculum, candidates
   (a) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught
       Postgraduate Curricula;
   (b) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work;
   (c) shall complete and present a satisfactory capstone experience on a subject within their
       fields of study;
   (d) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of
       assessment as prescribed in the syllabuses; and
   (e) shall satisfy the examiners in an oral examination if required.

MA 6   Capstone experience
Subject to the provisions of Regulation MA 5(c), the title of the capstone experience (dissertation,
portfolio or individual project) shall be submitted for approval by a date as prescribed in the
syllabuses for each field of study. Similarly, the capstone experience shall be presented by a date as
prescribed in the syllabuses for each field of study. Candidates shall submit a statement that the
capstone experience represents their own work (or in the case of conjoint work, a statement
countersigned by their co-worker(s), which shows their share of the work) undertaken after
registration as candidates for the degree.
MA 7  Assessment

(a) The assessment for each course shall be as specified in the syllabuses. Only passed courses will earn credits. Grades in all fields of study shall be awarded in accordance with TPG 9(a) of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula.

(b) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners on the first attempt in not more than two courses, excluding the capstone experience, in an academic year may be permitted to

(i) present themselves for re-examination in the failed course(s) on a specified date or

(ii) re-submit their work for the failed course(s) for re-assessment within a specified period determined by the MA Board of Examiners, but no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester); or

(iii) repeat the failed course(s) by undergoing instruction and satisfying the assessment requirements; or

(iv) for elective courses, take another course in lieu and satisfy the assessment requirements.

(c) Subject to the provisions of Regulation MA 5(c), candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory capstone experience may be permitted to revise and re-present the capstone experience within a specified period determined by the MA Board of Examiners.

(d) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners in the final review in the field of English Studies may be permitted to present themselves for re-examination on a specified date determined by the MA Board of Examiners, but no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester).

(e) There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MA 8  Discontinuation

Candidates who

(a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination/re-submission in any written examination or coursework assessment in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners or to repeat the failed course(s); or

(b) are not permitted to revise and re-present the capstone experience; or

(c) have failed to satisfy the examiners on second attempt in any coursework assessment, examination, or the capstone experience; or

(d) have failed more than two courses, excluding the capstone experience, on the first attempt in an academic year; or

(e) have exceeded the maximum period of registration as specified in MA 4

may be required to discontinue their studies under the provisions of General Regulation G 12.

MA 9  Assessment results

On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates’ degree diploma.

MA 10  Supplementary examination

Candidates who are unable because of illness to be present at the written examination of any course may apply for permission to present themselves for a supplementary examination of the same course.
Any such application shall be made on the form prescribed within two weeks of the first day of absence from any examination. The supplementary examination shall be held at a time to be determined by the MA Board of Examiners. Candidates who fail to satisfy the examiners in the supplementary examination shall be considered as failure on the first attempt.

SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

CHINESE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

PURPOSE

The curriculum aims to explore topics of interest in the field of Chinese Studies, to familiarize students with the latest trends in and the methodological approaches to the study of Chinese Language and Chinese Literature and to prepare them to engage in independent scholarly activities by honing their research and presentation skills.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

Students in this curriculum are required to complete 8 courses and a capstone experience (dissertation), i.e. to complete 60 credits in 4 consecutive semesters. Teaching and assessment are held from September of the first academic year until August of the second academic year. There is one session of two contact hours per week for each course.

13 courses will be selected from the following 3 categories and be taught in each cycle.

A Chinese Language

CHIN6101. Special Topics in Chinese Etymology (6 credits)

The course comprises of three parts. The first part is entitled “Chinese paleographic sources and their application”. Paleographic sources presumably refer to the written or engraved texts on different forms of writing materials of the pre-Qin period, including oracle bone scripts, bronze inscriptions, and Chu bamboo manuscripts. At present, paleographic sources have already become the most indispensable research materials in Chinese etymological studies. Thus, on the basis of the fundamental etymological theories, we will provide an in-depth introduction to the recently excavated paleographic sources. In addition, emphasis on the synthesis between excavated sources and transmitted texts is especially placed, in order to examine the methods and theories relating to the utilization of paleographic sources in the historical and cultural studies of early China. By the end of the course, students will be able to have a profound understanding on the contemporary significance of paleographic sources in scholarly research.

The second part will introduce to students the essential features of the Chinese characters, the principles underlying their constructions and the process of their evolution. The third part focuses on the modern Chinese writing system. Chinese characters constitute the oldest continuously used system of writing in the world. Functional literacy in written Chinese requires a knowledge of between three and four thousand characters. In Old Chinese, most words were monosyllabic and there was a close correspondence between characters and words. In modern Chinese, characters do not necessarily correspond to words; indeed, the majority of Chinese words today consist of two or more characters because of the merging and loss of sounds in the Chinese language over time. Rather, a character almost always corresponds to a single syllable that is also a morpheme. In the earliest Chinese writing its pictographic origins are still quite obvious. Over the course of time, however, the script underwent many changes, the present-day standard scripts (kaishu楷書) are written in strokes and had lost most of its pictorial quality. This course aims
to examine the characteristics of the modern Chinese writing system and its functions in connection with the rapid changing modern world.
Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**CHIN6102. Special Topics in Chinese Phonology (6 credits)**

A thorough investigation into the distinctive characteristics of the history of Chinese phonology and a detailed study of “rhyme books” and “rhyme tables”.
Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**CHIN6103. Special Topics in Chinese Textual Interpretation (6 credits)**

A close scrutiny of the philological traditions in classical Chinese studies.
Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**CHIN6104. Special Topics in Ancient Chinese (6 credits)**

Ancient Chinese is a written form of the classical language used by the Han nationality. This course will provide students with a comprehensive introduction to a broad range of significant topics and issues in the research of ancient Chinese. Research areas highlighted in the course will include Chinese lexicology, semantics, grammar, exegetics, and etymology. Aside from synchronic discussions on the language, this course places particular focus on a diachronic analysis of the language characteristics as revealed by sources from different historical periods, aiming to explore and examine the internal principles and rules governing the language development and changes. After completing this course, students are expected to have profound understanding on the language system of ancient Chinese, enabling them to enhance their capability in reading classical Chinese texts and lay a solid foundation for further research in Chinese philology and linguistics.
Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**CHIN6105. Special Topics in Modern Chinese (6 credits)**

This course introduces and examines three selected special topics in modern Chinese. “Characteristics of Chinese language”, “Ambiguity in modern Chinese”, and “Chinese language, society and culture” will be comprehensively discussed from various perspectives including etymology, grammar, lexicology, pragmatics and rhetoric. Issues like the special features and common features of modern Chinese, the overlapping of linguistic form and meaning, the mutual relationship and interaction between Chinese language and society/ culture, and the development and usage of modern Chinese are explored and analyzed with relevant examples. After completion of the course, students will have a concrete and in-depth understanding of the characteristics, usage, and social and cultural embodiment of modern Chinese.
Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**CHIN6106. Special Topics in Modern Chinese Dialects (6 credits)**

A variety of modern Chinese dialects will be examined according to their phonological, syntactic and lexical characteristics.
Assessment: 100% coursework
B Chinese Literature

CHIN6201. Special Topics in Classical Poetry (6 credits)

This course mainly introduces classical poetry which based on the study of the prominent Chinese poet Du Fu, 712-770. In the introduction, students learn to distinguish the definition of poetry (shi) and song (ge). The forms and prosody of ancient-style poetry (gu-ti shi) and modern-style poetry (jin-ti shi) are also introduced in the course. In the monograph, the course discusses about Du Fu’s Confucianism and explains the three respects of Du Fu: Sage of Poetry/ Poet-historian (shi shi), History of Verse/ Poet-historian (shi shi), and Sage of Love (qing sheng). The course will also analyse the themes, styles, forms and subject-matter of Du Fu's poetry based on Du Fu's master pieces. The last section of the course is about the reception of Du Fu and his poetry from mid-Tang to Qing and the reinvention of Du Fu in modern times.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6202. Special Topics in ci and qu Verse (6 credits)

The course comprises of two parts. The first part of the course provides a general survey of ci poetry from its beginning in the Tang period to the Qing period, with special emphasis on origin, generic features, stylistic schools, principal exponents, and historical development. The diverse forms and styles are examined through discussion of selected works taken from the most representative as well as best known authors. As a postgraduate level course, students will be introduced to key contributions to the academic study of ci and be expected to become familiar with scholarly debates in ci research during class discussion and be able to refer to them in the completion of assessment exercises. The second part of this course focuses on the rich theatrical traditions flourishing during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods and the methods used to approach these traditions. It helps students use the major collections of the Yuan variety plays and Southern plays, the Ming and Qing chuanqi plays, theories of theatrics, and records of the Qing regional popular theater. It also helps students develop skills of interpreting the best-known works and engage in current scholarly discussions, with an aim of helping them develop their own research interests that can enrich these discussions.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6203. Special Topics in Ancient Prose (6 credits)

The course comprises two parts. The first part traces the development of prose in ancient China and selects famous pieces from Zuo Zhuan, Guo Yu, Zhanguo Ce, Shi Ji, etc. for detailed analysis and discussion. The second part focuses on a critical appreciation and thorough discussion of representative pieces of prose by Han Yu, one of the most famous and important prose writers in the Tang dynasty.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6205. Special Topics in Fiction (6 credits)

Occupying a pivotal position in Chinese literature, fictional works of various forms and styles are examined with reference to representative specimens drawn from the corpus of Chinese fictional writings.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6206. Special Topics in xiqu (Traditional Chinese Opera) (6 credits)
The defining characteristics of traditional Chinese opera will be highlighted through a close examination of specimen works created by distinguished “playwrights”.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6208. Special Topics in Modern and Contemporary Literature (6 credits)

This course will introduce and examine special topics in modern and contemporary literature in Chinese with emphasis on historical and cultural context, artistic achievement, as well as the influence of western thoughts. Selected works will be analyzed and commented with reference to literary theories and background contexts. A series of topics including the complicated relationship between Chinese literature and politics in the twentieth century, the evolution of realism and development of modernism, Romanticism, New Historicism etc., will be discussed. The objectives of this course are to initiate critical discussion of writers, works and literature phenomena of modern and contemporary literature that arouse students’ attention to the particularities and development of Chinese literature, and to develop students’ analyzing ability.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6209. Studies in Literary Creation (6 credits)

This course aims to cultivate students to produce original works of modern poem and prose. The mechanics of literary creation will be explored in the light of modern literary theories. This course consists of two parts: (1) Introduction to the development of Chinese contemporary poems, the language and rhythm of modern poem, the writing skill of modern poem including metaphor, image, symbol, irony and dramatization. (2) Introduction to the development of Chinese contemporary prose, the artistic features of prose, the writing skill of narrative prose, lyric prose and argumentative prose. Selected works of representative contemporary poets and prose writers will be closely examined.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6210. Special Topics in Chinese Literary Criticism (6 credits)

An in-depth study of the distinctive features of different critical traditions through a detailed examination of the literary theories put forward in different periods.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN7101. Literature from Hong Kong and Taiwan (6 credits)

This course will introduce and examine the 20th century Hong Kong and Taiwanese literature through representative writers and their works in various forms like novels, poetry and critical texts, with particular discussions on the social, cultural and historical issues arising from modern Hong Kong and Taiwan contexts, e.g. the quest for a Hong Kong identity, the urban imagination of Hong Kong, the handover of 1997, the major intellectual currents and literary movements/debates including realism, modernism, nativism, the debates surrounding Taiwanese identity and the periodization of Taiwanese history, and the notions of postcolonialism and postmodernism. Selected works will be analyzed and commented with reference to literary theories and background contexts, and investigated through the critical engagement of recent academic scholarship. The issues from literary communication, sinophone studies, minor literature in relation to the context of Hong Kong and Taiwanese literature will also be explored.
Assessment: 100% coursework
C Chinese Culture

CHIN6011. Education and Examination: the Chinese Experience (6 credits)

This course examines the history of the Chinese education and examination systems, surveys the changing thoughts about the relation of education, examination and talent nurturing, analyses the impacts of education and examination on politics, economics and society, and critically assesses the roles played by Western education and examination models in the modernization of China.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6301. Special Topics in Confucian Classics (6 credits)

The course comprises of three parts. The first part focuses on the Book of Documents, Shujing, a collection of rhetorical prose attributed to figures of ancient China and served as the foundation of Chinese political philosophy for over 2,000 years. A new idea of supreme deity arose during the Zhou Period called Tian (Heaven 天). Tian was a comprehensive, universal, and impersonal force. Tian was believed to get involved in human affairs and examine human conduct. It was not capricious but moral and righteous and expected humans to live by these principles of virtue, de 德. To justify the overthrow of the Shang ruler and their right to govern, the founders of the Zhou dynasty developed and enhanced this belief, which held that Tian determined who had the right to rule according to de. A failure to fulfill de caused the Shang to forfeit their right to rule, which was given to the founders of Zhou because of their de. An important practice that developed to regulate human behaviors was li (rites or rituals 礼). Li was intended to establish a harmonious relationship between the cosmic and social hierarchies. This part focuses on examining the political philosophy originated in this period which had formulated the key belief that became fundamental to Chinese thought until nowadays. The second part thoroughly examines the intense debates over the authenticity of Zuo Zhuan with comparison of Guo Yu, another ancient book of the Spring and Autumn Period. The authorship, style and nature of Zuo Zhuan will also be discussed. The third part focuses on Lun Yu or the Analects, widely considered as the most reliable record of the Confucius’ conversations with his contemporaries in the past. Its authenticity was yet called into question by some scholars of the Qing Dynasty. The documentation issues of the Analects will be examined in depth. The image of the Confucius as well as his ideas will also be discussed through analysis of selected passages from the Analects.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6303. Special Topics in Chinese Thought and Chinese Literature (6 credits)

The intimate relation between Chinese thought and Chinese literature will be examined with reference to sample literary works.
Assessment: 100% coursework

CHIN6304. Special Topics in Chinese Culture (6 credits)

The course comprises of two parts. The first part: This part will examine and analyse traditional Chinese culture in different dimensions, including political, religious, ethnic and social etc. Autocratic politics stood firm in China soil after unity of dynastic China in 221 BC, though most of the emperors in dynastic history seemed to approach Confucius theory but they were truth followers of the legal school instead. The aim of lecture is to explore why autocracy appeared to become a long term political policy in China. In the field of religion, Chinese folk beliefs are different from religious beliefs of western world nowadays. Personification of folk gods and goddess may be related to political influences and its reasons will be also tackled in lecture. With no doubt, China’s continuous
communication with ethnic minorities such as the Hun, Turk, Tubo, Uyghur, Jurchen, Mongolian, etc. and the interchange of material civilization as well as cultural is an interesting topic to investigate. On the other hand, gender equality was supposed to be more popular among ethnic minorities than the Han society, female status of the nomads might have affected ancient China in some decades, it was said that female power rose to its peak when Empress Wu declared emperor during seventieth century. The purpose of female status and chastity concept review is to define to what extend orthodox theories influence the Chinese. Obviously, the wide spread of homosexuality in Ming-Qing China reflected at certain extend, the actual effect of Confucianism in dynastic history of China. The second part: Chinese is one of the world's oldest cultural systems, intricately woven by political, diplomatic, economic and social histories, with multiple layers of their subtexts and interpretations. Observing the customary practices by common people yields more perspective. This part of the course is an in-depth study in Chinese culture by looking into humble and tangible topics such as practices in cuisine, imagery, hunting, inheritance and various other customs. These topics map the transformation of traditional and mainstream Chinese culture in face of challenges from Chinese regional, foreign and modern cultures.

Assessment: 100% coursework
Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**CHIN7011. History Education: the Chinese Experience (6 credits)**

This course provides a broad and systematic overview of the origins and development of history education from ancient time to the present in China. It examines in detail the changing thoughts about history education and analyses the impacts of history education on different aspects of the society.

Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**Capstone Experience**

**CHIN7997. Capstone Experience: Seminars and Dissertation in Chinese Language and Literature (12 credits)**

Students are required to attend seminars and complete a dissertation as a capstone experience.

(a) Seminars: The dissertation writing guide including research methodology and skills will be introduced. Students will present their writing plans individually in oral and written form for discussions and interchange of views and ideas with their peers and teachers.

(b) Dissertation: In their second year of study, each student will be assigned a dissertation adviser in October and then has to submit a dissertation topic for approval in April. The dissertation, which should normally be around 20,000 characters in Chinese or 15,000 words in English, should be submitted by August 1 of the second year of study. For students who have got a pass in their seminar presentations, their dissertations can be a minimum of 15,000 characters in Chinese or 12,000 words in English.

Assessment: 100% coursework

---

**Medium of Instruction**

Courses will be conducted in Cantonese or Putonghua.