

PKU International Summer School

Chinese Folklore and Culture

中国民俗与文化

~ Syllabus ~

Dr. Juan Wang

**Summer 2023
Peking University**

Objective

The purpose of this course is to introduce the Chinese people and their culture from perspectives of myths, folktales, festivals, traditional food, folk belief, folk arts and architectures. Within these topics, we will focus especially on some of the key concepts of Chinese culture such as history, safety, family, sacredness, gods, order, and so on.

Proceeding of the Course

Participation and discussion constitute a central part in this course. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to complete all required readings prior to class meetings and to actively participate in class discussion. Absence without legitimate reasons will lead to deduction in scores for participation and discussion, and in extreme cases, may lead to a student's failure in the course.

Paper Assignments

Students need to write two short papers (3-4 pages each, double-spaced and typed with 12-point font) related to Chinese folklore and culture. The instructor will give the topic of the paper one week before the due time of the paper.

No late submission will be accepted unless a legitimate reason is presented to the instructor at least three days in advance. If you have any question concerning how to write papers, please consult with the instructor.

Students also need to prepare an oral presentation on topics of folklore of any culture or country. Students are encouraged to introduce the local custom of their own cultural tradition.

Evaluation

Three parts of the evaluation will be calculated as follows:

Participation and discussion	One oral Presentation	Papers
20%	30%	50%

Texts

There is a course reader for this course and it will be available through PKU Summer School arrangements.

Academic Integrity

Participation in this class commits the students and instructor to abide by a general norm of equal opportunity and academic integrity. It implies permission from students to submit their written work to services that check for plagiarism (such as Turnitin.com). It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism. Violations of the norm of academic integrity will be firmly dealt with in this class.

CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to adjustment)

Session 1

Introduction: Folklore and Culture

Questions:

- What is folklore?
- The relationship between folklore and culture?

Reading:

- *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, Chung Mou Si and Yun Cheng Si, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011.

Session 2

Myths and history

Questions:

- In Chinese myths, how the world, the people, and other things were created?
- The function and value of myths in Chinese history.

Reading:

- *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, Chung Mou Si and Yun Cheng Si, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011, pp3-15.

Session 3

Women in Chinese folktales

Questions:

- Women in Chinese history.
- Compare roles of men and women in Chinese folktales.

Reading:

- *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, Chung Mou Si and Yun Cheng Si, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011, pp15-32.

Session 4

Forbidden City

Questions:

- The meaning of the number of the Forbidden City.
- The meaning of the color of the Forbidden City.

Readings:

- *The Search for a Vanishing Beijing: A Guide to China's Capital Through the Ages*, M. A. Aldrich, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006, pp.89-107.
- *Old Peking: City of the Ruler of the World*: ed. Chris Elder, Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp.31-52.

Session 5

Traditional festivals

Questions:

- Why are there many women's festivals in ancient China?
- The main activities of Spring Festive Eve and their cultural meanings.

Readings:

- *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, Chung Mou Si and Yun Cheng Si, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011, pp33-60.
- *An Album of Chinese New Year Paintings*, Jiangsu Renmin Press, 2009.

Session 6

Siheyuanr: traditional Chinese houses

Questions:

- The materials of Chinese houses.
- The basic fengshui of Chinese houses.

Readings:

- *Chinese Houses: the architectural heritage of a nation*, Knapp, Ronald G., North Clarendon, Vt. Tuttle, 2005.
- *Lectures on Chinese Culture*, ed. Wang Lujiang, Beijing: Beijing Language and Culture University Press, 2011, pp.8-26.

Session 7

Traditional Chinese food: mianhua

Questions:

- Food and etiquette in Chinese culture.
- Food of Chinese rites and festivals.

Reading:

- *Introduction to Chinese Culture*, Chung Mou Si and Yun Cheng Si, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2011, pp89-110.

Session 8
Gongwangfu

Questions:

- The decorations of houses of Gongwangfu.
- Temples inside Gongwangfu.

Reading:

- *Insights into Chinese Culture*, Ye Lang & Zhu Zhiliang, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2008, pp. 79-84.

Session 9
Temples and gods

Questions:

- The function of gods in Chinese culture.
- The features of Chinese folk belief.
-

Readings:

- *Peking: Temples and City Life: 1400-1900*, Susan Naquin, University of California Press, 2000, pp.19-108.
- *The Search for a Vanishing Beijing: A Guide to China's Capital Through the Ages*, M. A. Aldrich, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006, pp.13-34.

Session 10
Paper-cuts and the idea of sacredness

Questions:

- The basic structure of Chinese paper-cut.
- The language of Chinese paper-cut.

Reading:

- *Insights into Chinese Culture*, Ye Lang & Zhu Zhiliang, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2008, pp159-189.

Session 11
Dongyue Temple

Questions:

- What kind of temple that Dongyue Temple is.

- When and why will the Chinese people visit the temple?

Reading:

- *Peking: Temples and City Life: 1400-1900*, Susan Naquin, University of California Press. 2000.

Session 12

Oral presentation

~ **The End of Class** ~

Thank You !