METHODS AND MATERIALS IN CLASSICAL CHINESE STUDIES

ASIA 501

ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course introduces students to major research tools and source materials for the study of premodern China. Topics will be guided in part by students' research interests, with particular attention to the expanding and increasingly important universe of digital resources.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the term, students will be able to:

- identify and critically evaluate key research tools used in classical Chinese studies;
- demonstrate practical experience in producing an annotated translation of a classical Chinese text.

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

For more details on the individual components, see the Assessment section.

Attendance/Participation	25%
Research guide	25%
Annotated translation	50%

IMPORTANT DATES

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Leo K. Shin

Departments: History and Asian Studies

Office: Buchanan Tower 1223

Email: Leo.Shin@ubc.ca

Office Hours: By appointment
(sign-ups / Zoom link)

CLASS INFORMATION

Term: 2025W Term 2 (3 credits)

Time: Th 14:00–16:30

Location: Buchanan Tower 1226

Canvas:
https://canvas.ubc.ca/courses/176538

Course Blog:
blogs.ubc.ca/asia501/

Download 2025W Syllabus

Jan. 8	First Session
Jan. 16	Last date to withdraw without the "W" standing
Midterm break	Feb. 16–20
Mar. 6	Last date to withdraw
Mar. 12–15	AAS
Apr. 9	Research guide due
Apr. 23	Annotated translation due

LEARNING MATERIALS

Wilkinson, Endymion. *Chinese History: A New Manual*, 7th ed. Pleco, 2025. Also available through Amazon Kindle Store and Apple Books. For our purpose, students may also opt to use the 6th edition, which is not as up-to-date but is available in the Reference section of both the Asian Library and Koerner.

OFFICE HOURS/LEARNING LOUNGE

If you will have questions, feel free to contact the instructor (preferred to be addressed as Mr., Dr., or Prof. Shin) through email or via Canvas. The usual response time is within 24 hours (except for weekends and holidays). Please use your UBC email address if possible.

Office hours are by appointment (sign-ups).

A Learning Lounge has also been set up under Discussions in Canvas for students to post—and answer each other's—questions. Respectful netiquette is expected and appreciated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 (JAN. 8): ORIENTATION

WEEK 2 (JAN. 15): GUIDES, HANDBOOKS, AND OVERVIEWS

What are some of the more useful guides, handbooks, and/or overviews that would help you learn about what has been done in your area of research?

- Wilkinson (2025/2022), chap. 45 (starting with 45.2);
- For specific period(s), check out one or more of the chapters from 55 to 67.

In addition, depending on your area of research, you may want to consult one or more of the other chapters in Wilkinson, such as:

- Classical studies: 28
- Religion: 29
- Literature: 30
- Vernacular Literature & Folklore (including Drama): 31
- Painting: 32

WEEK 3 (JAN. 22): CATALOGS, BIBLIOGRAPHIES, AND ANTHOLOGIES

What are some of the more useful catalogs, bibliographies, and/or anthologies of **primary sources** available for your area of research?

- Wilkinson, chaps. 46 (to the end of 46.5 [46.6 for 2022]), 69, 73;
- Identify items of interest from the relevant chapters/sections from last week.

WEEK 4 (JAN. 29): USES OF AI

What are some of the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of generative AI in Chinese studies?

WEEK 5 (FEB. 5): LOCATING PHYSICAL TEXTS

What are some of the more useful tools that would help you locate a physical text?

- Wilkinson, chaps. 72, 74–75.
- Locate and examine an item of interest from the UBC Asian Library. This should be either an authoritative modern-day edition of a pre-20th-century work, a title from one of the Siku series, or a manuscript or printed text from the special Puban or Pang Jingtang collection.

WEEK 6 (FEB. 12): EVALUATING DIGITIZED TEXTS

What are some of the more reliable/authoritative platforms for scanned and digitized texts?

- Wilkinson, 45.5.3 (45.5.2 for 2022);
- Chinese Studies Resources (UBC Asian Library);
- Check out also the resources (some are open-access) available through Harvard and Princeton.

Midterm break: Feb. 16–20

WEEK 7 (FEB. 26): COMPARATIVE EXERCISE

For this week, please identify a text and compare as many significant versions/editions (both physical and digital) as you are able to examine. In case there are discrepancies, how do you decide which one to use?

- Wilkinson, chap. 70.

WEEK 8 (MAR. 5): LANGUAGE

What are some of the more authoritative general-purpose as well as specialized dictionaries you will consult for your research?

- Wilkinson, chaps. 1–5 (read what interests you) and chap. 6;
- Elman, "Sinological Toolkit: Dictionaries";

- [Notes on Romanization](#) (Library of Congress) and Wilkinson (2025 only), "Style Guide."

WEEK 9 (MAR. 12): NO CLASS (AAS)

Optional individual meetings with the instructor

WEEK 10 (MAR. 19): PEOPLE

What are some of the more authoritative tools you will consult to gather/verify the biographical information of your subjects?

- Wilkinson, chaps. 7–10 (read what interests you);
- Elman, "[Sinological Toolkit: Biographical Searches](#)";
- [Chinese Biographical Database Project](#) (Harvard).

WEEK 11 (MAR. 26): TIME, PLACES, AND INSTITUTIONS

What are some of the more authoritative tools you will consult to gather/verify information regarding time, places, and institutions?

- Wilkinson, chaps. Introduction, 16, 19;
- Elman, "[Chronologies and Dating](#)," "[Geographical Aides](#) ," and "[Official and Institutional Titles](#)";
- [China Historical GIS](#) (Harvard).

WEEK 12 (APR. 2): PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 13 (APR. 9): TBD

[Edit](#)

Spam prevention powered by [Akismet](#)

ASSESSMENT

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION (25%)

Students are expected to attend and participate in our weekly sessions. But please see Support if you need to miss a class.

ANNOTATED RESEARCH GUIDE (25%)

Due by the end of **April 9** (to be submitted through Turnitin). Students should identify a research area (e.g., early Chinese thought, Tang–Song poetry, Ming–Qing fiction, history of borderlands, etc.) and prepare an annotated research guide (30–35 entries; format flexible). The purpose of your guide is to facilitate research by students and scholars alike who would like to familiarize themselves with some of the most useful tools and sources (including databases) available for a particular field of study.

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Scope (20%)	Scope and structure are especially thoughtfully designed.	Scope and structure are generally well-designed.	Scope and structure are reasonable.	Scope and structure not well designed.
Tools/Sources (40%)	Tools and sources are especially thoughtfully chosen.	Tools and sources are thoughtfully chosen.	Tools and sources are chosen with some care.	Tools and sources are not well chosen.

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
Annotations (40%)	Relevance of tools and sources is explained with exceptional clarity.	Relevance is well explained.	Relevance is explained with some care.	Relevance is not well explained.

ANNOTATED TRANSLATION (50%)

About 5,000–6,000 words (incl. introduction and annotations). Due by the end on **April 23** (through Turnitin). Original text to be decided in consultation with the instructor.

Edit

COURSE TOOLS

Here are the online platforms and tools we will be using for this course. For more information and support for any of the UBC-supported tools, please visit Keep Learning (keeplearning.ubc.ca).

PRIVACY AND ACCESSIBILITY MATTERS

Please be mindful that many of the online tools we will be using will capture data about your learning activities (user names, locations, duration of login, etc.). Please check with the instructor if you have any concerns.

COURSE BLOG

Our Course Blog (blogs.ubc.ca/asia501/) is where the **most pertinent information** for this course (schedule, requirements, instructions for assignments, etc.) can be found. When in doubt, check the information there.

CANVAS

We will be making use of the course Canvas site (canvas.ubc.ca/courses/176538). For support, please visit: keeplearning.ubc.ca/technologies/#canvas.

ZOOM (BACKUP)

Class sessions are in-person only. But just in case we need to go online, here's the Zoom link:

Topic: [2025W-ASIA 501] Class Session (Backup)
https://ubc.zoom.us/j/67301073780?pwd=CgXq15EHmSti21mZ8koyz3PKTZoLE5.1

Meeting ID: 673 0107 3780
Passcode: 457534

TURNITIN

Students will be asked to submit their assignments through Turnitin. Please follow the steps below:

1. Visit the Turnitin page (lthub.ubc.ca/guides/turnitin/) of the Learning Technology Hub for background information and for instructions regarding privacy matters.
2. If you would like to create a new account, select "Get Started" and follow the instructions to create a user profile.
   - Note that since the server of Turnitin is not located in Canada, students may opt to use an alias when when they sign up for an account.
3. Log in
4. Select "enroll in a class" and provide the following information:
   - class/section ID: 51239112
   - enrollment password: asia501
5. Select "25W-ASIA 501" from the list.
6. Select "submit" (next to the appropriate assignment):
   1. Choose "file upload" (preferred) or "cut & paste" (for privacy reasons, please delete your name and any identification information from the original document before uploading)
   2. Provide the required information
   3. Upload your file *or* copy and paste your document (including endnotes and bibliography, if applicable)
   4. Select "submit"
   5. ****Confirm submission****

Further Information

- Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Turnitin service as soon as possible.
- Students are responsible for the safekeeping of their own work and may be asked to resubmit their assignments to the instructor.
- Students who are new to Turnitin and who would like to get a sense of how the service works may submit a draft assignment under "Trial submission."
- Students who are unable to access Turnitin may submit their assignments to the instructor as e-mail attachments (which will then be forwarded to Turnitin). Please contact the instructor in advance.

Edit

SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

If you are ill, it is important that you stay home. The marking scheme for this course has built-in flexibility so that you can prioritize your health and still succeed.

If you are unable to attend class or complete a required activity due to illness or another reasonable cause, you should let the instructor know as soon as possible. If appropriate and necessary, an alternative arrangement will be made.

As the instructor, if I am ill, I will not show up in the classroom, and I will communicate plans for class as soon as possible through Canvas and/or email. If we must shift to online mode (see Zoom info), our classroom will be available for you to attend the session.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodation is designed to enable students with disabilities or ongoing medical conditions to overcome challenges that may affect their academic performance. Students who require academic accommodation must register with the Centre for Accessibility (previously known as Access & Diversity), which will make an assessment concerning accommodation in accordance with Policy LR7: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. Academic accommodation is not determined by the instructors, but an instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility if the accommodation prescribed is interfering with the essential learning outcomes of a course.

RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

Our interactions in this class must adhere to the Respectful Environment Statement.

When we gather to learn, we come together with a diversity of human attributes and perspectives, and we share the responsibility to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment that respects differences of all sorts. Please treat each other with kindness and alert the instructor of any concerns.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity (for detailed explanations, please visit Academic Integrity for Students). At the most basic level, this means you should submit only your own original work and clearly acknowledge in your submissions all external sources of information, ideas, or assistance. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) undermine the academic enterprise and will be handled seriously. Incidences of plagiarism or cheating will result in a mark of zero for the assignment or examination, and more serious penalties may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean.

USE OF GENERATIVE AI TOOLS

As technology continues to evolve, we will have a conversation during the term about how best to balance the utility of the latest AI tools and the learning objectives of the course.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Out of consideration for others, during class, please use your electronic devices only for class-related activities. We will take breaks. So, water is allowed in the classroom, but not food.

LEARNING RESOURCES

- Health and Well Being
  https://students.ubc.ca/health
- Centre for Accessibility
  https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility

- Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication
  https://writing.library.ubc.ca/
- Chapman Learning Commons
  https://learningcommons.ubc.ca/

OTHER RESOURCES

- Classical Historiography for Chinese History (Benjamin A. Elman)
- Song Research Tools (Hilde De Weerdt)
- Guide to Ming Studies (permanently beta) (Leo K. Shin)
- Cohen, Alvin, P. Introduction to Research in Chinese Source Materials. New Haven, Conn.: Far Eastern Publications, Yale University, 2000.
- Chinaknowledge (Ulrich Theobald)
- Chicago Manual of Style (Quick Guide)
- How to Cite Asian-Language Sources (UBC)
- Notes on Romanization (Library of Congress)

Edit

Spam prevention powered by Akismet