

CHES5150 Chinese Painting: Aesthetics and History

2020-2021, Term 1, Mondays 3:30pm – 6:15pm,

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Course Description

This course looks at the history and aesthetics of Chinese painting and its role in Chinese culture, showing that art and life often are closely intertwined with each other. The following themes will be dealt with: the aesthetic evaluation of painting; the pictorial features unique in Chinese ink painting; the roles of the artist and the spectator; the aesthetic principles of Chinese painting; the cultural hierarchy of painting, poetry and calligraphy; the aesthetic valuation of expressiveness and descriptiveness in painting; and the cultural correlation between the quality of a painting and the virtue of the painter. Historically, we will cover landscape painting since the Five Dynasties (907 to 960), the evolution of literati painting since the Song dynasty (960-1279), the evaluation of painting in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the eccentric culture in big cities in Qing China (1644-1911), and the cultural assimilation of European painting since the 20th century. We will deal with these topics by examining major works of painting and by analyzing primary texts as well as contemporary scholarly writings.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, students should:

- be equipped with the essential techniques to examine the pictorial features of any Chinese painting;
- have a basic understanding of Chinese painting history;
- be able to critically analyze various aesthetic and artistic issues in Chinese painting, and to participate in relevant scholarly debates.

Assessment Scheme

Students are required to express themselves in the form of an in-class seminar, a presentation, and a final paper. Students will need to do a short presentation and a written report of it examining an art work's visual features. They are also required to write an academic paper in order to demonstrate their understanding of contemporary Chinese art by participating in the scholarly debates about the various aesthetic and artistic issues put forth in the course (please see the grading system below).

Remarks: *If in-person contact is not allowed, all the assessments will be conducted online and be submitted in soft copy.*

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of the policies, regulations and procedures.

Grading System (details will be provided in separate documents available in due course)

- Visual analysis – presentation (10%) and written report (10%)
- In-class seminar on one special topic (30%)
- Final paper (50%)

Course Schedule

Remarks: If in-person contact is not allowed, all the course contents will be conducted online.

Unit 1 – Introduction: Prejudices and Misconceptions (7 Sep)

Zhang, Hongxing. "Introduction." In *Masterpieces of Chinese Painting, 700-1900*, edited by Hongxing Zhang, 11-39. London: V&A Publishing, 2013.

Unit 2 – The Neolithic to the Han Dynasty: Picturehood vs Objecthood (14 Sep)

Rawson, Jessica. "Jades and Bronzes for Ritual." In *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art*, edited by Jessica Rawson, 44-74. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993, c1992.

Unit 3 – The Three Kingdoms to the Tang Dynasty: The Six Laws (21 Sep)

Xie He 謝赫 (fl. 5th century). "Gu Hua Pin Lu 古畫品錄 (Old Record of the Classifications of Paintings)." In *Some T'ang and Pre T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*, translated and annotated by William Reynolds Beal Acker, 3-5; 18-19. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954-74.

Unit 4 – The Five Dynasties to the Northern Song Dynasty: Nature and Culture (28 Sep)

Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (fl. 1070-1075). *Kuo Jo-Hsu's Experiences in Painting (T'u-hua Chien-wen Chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting, together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile*, translated and annotated by Alexander Coburn Soper, Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951. 9-17.

Unit 5 – The Southern Song Dynasty to the Yuan Dynasty: The Artist & the Personified (5 Oct)

Tang Hou 湯屋 (fl. 1322). *A Study and Translation from the Chinese of Tang Hou's Huajian (Examination of painting): Cultivating Taste in Yuan China, 1279-1368*, translated with commentary by Diana Yeongchau Chou, Lewiston, Edwin Mellen Press, 2005. 94-100; 126-127; 143-145.

Unit 6 – The Ming Dynasty: Art and Society (12 Oct)

Dong Qichang 董其昌 (1555-1636). "Theories on Calligraphy and Painting, Running Scrip." In *The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 1555-1636*, Wai-kam Ho, editor, vol.II, 3-6. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992.

Unit 7 – The Qing Dynasty: Art, Society, and China-Europe Interactions (19 Oct)

Shi Tao 石濤 (1642-1707). *Enlightening Remarks on Painting by Shih-t'ao*, translated with an introduction by Richard Strassberg, Pasadena: Pacific Asia Museum, 1989. 61-65; 86-91.

NO class on 26 Oct (public holiday)

Unit 8 - The 20th Century: Art, Chineseness and Global Context (2 Nov)

Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976). *Mao Zedong's "Talks at the Yan'an Conference on Literature and Art": A Translation of the 1943 Text with Commentary*, translated by Bonnie S. McDougall, Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1980. 68-80. (delivered on 2 May 1942)

Unit 9 – Visual Analysis Presentation & Written Report Due (9 Nov)

Late submissions will NOT be accepted. Details will be provided in a separate document available in due course.

Unit 10 – Special Topic 1: Landscape Painting (16 Nov)

Fong, Wen C. (方聞) (1930-). *Beyond Representation: Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, 8th-14th Century*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. 71-117.

Powers, Martin J. "Character (*Ch'i*) and Gesture (*Shih*) in Early Chinese Art and Criticism." *International Colloquium on Chinese Art History, 1991: Proceedings Painting and Calligraphy, Part 2*, Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1992.

Unit 11 – Special Topic 2: Literati Painting (23 Nov)

Ho, Wai-Kam. "Late Ming Literati: Their Social and Cultural Ambience." In *The Chinese Scholar's Studio: Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period: An Exhibition from the Shanghai Museum*, edited by Chu-Tsing Li, and James C. Y. Watt, 23-36. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987.

McDermott, Joseph. "The Art of Making a Living in 16th Century China." *Kaikodo Journal*, no. 5 (Autumn 1997): 63-81.

Unit 12 – Special Topic 3: Chineseness and Aesthetic Essences (30 Nov)

Jullien, François. *The Great Image Has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting*, translated by Jane Marie Todd, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 1-14.

Powers, Martin J. "Art and History: Exploring the Counterchange Condition." *Art Bulletin*, vol. 77, no. 3 (Sep, 1995): 382-387.

Final Paper Due (7 Dec)

Late papers will NOT be accepted. Details will be provided in a separate document available in due course.

Remarks: PDF versions of all readings and assignments can be found on the CUHK Blackboard. Registered students may access the CHES5150 page by using their Student ID and OnePass password.