

## CHI 3403 -- CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

Class Number: 11407, section: 7A19, University of Florida, Spring 2020

Days, Periods, and Room: Wednesday, period 10 and Thursday, periods 9&10 at Pugh Hall 120

Instructor: Ruth Sheng (Email, [rsheng@ufl.edu](mailto:rsheng@ufl.edu); Phone, 352-273-2955 or 392-2422)

Office and Hours: 310 Pugh Hall; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 2:00-4:00

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Being one of the most revered arts in China, calligraphy (the art of writing -- 書法 *shufa*) has been an essential part of Chinese culture. This course is designed to introduce the importance of calligraphy in its development integrated with Chinese art, history and culture, with emphasis on incorporating calligraphy into the more comprehensive objective of achieving cultural proficiency. Consequently this class provides students the opportunity not only to learn how to appreciate and to write Chinese calligraphy, but also to understand how the calligraphy intertwining with various aspects of culture element in China and its influence to the neighboring countries.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In addition to the various scripts of calligraphy, students are introduced to many related subjects: the origin and evolution of Chinese writing system, the historical development and aesthetic principles of Chinese calligraphy, inscriptions on the prominent steles/epitaphic stones, writings on scrolls/album leaves by major artists, as well as the calligraphy's close relationship with painting and poetry. Persistent hands-on practice in class and at home is required. Students are able to receive instructor's individualized instruction by voluntarily signing up as weekly office visits.

### READING

***Chinese Calligraphy: an introduction of its aesthetic and technique*** by Chiang Yee (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), though an earlier publication, covers brief and most essential information on the aesthetic and technical aspects of Chinese calligraphy.

***Chinese Calligraphy*** compiled by Ouyang Zhongshi and Wen Fong (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008) offers the more details on the evolution of various scripts and historical development of calligraphic styles.

Most of the designated weekly readings are selected from the above two resources. In addition, a comprehensive bibliography is provided at the end of the syllabus. Items included on the list can be found in the Fine Arts Library and the items on the list marked "reserve" can only be used in the library as the reserved books. Frequent use of these books, which contain numerous fine reproductions of calligraphy, is highly encouraged. Extra selected readings containing mostly in articles can be searched via Canvas "e-Learning" file under this course.

### COURSE FORMAT

This course is designed with multi-media resources including the lectures with visual materials, PowerPoint presentation, open discussions on the selected readings, calligraphy writing demonstrations, as well as hands-on practice with brush and ink. The lectures are usually given during the meetings on Wednesday, while the hands-on practice are mostly taken place on Thursday. Due to the nature of this course, the most valuable learning experience is often acquired in the classroom; therefore, to attend all class meetings is essential and strongly advised.

## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

**Class attendance and participation (20%)** - Perfect **attendance** will be rewarded with a bonus point, while the non-excused absence and tardiness adversely affects your grade (one point deduction for each unexcused absence & half point for the tardiness). 10 non-excused absences results in a failing grade. Absences are only permitted for medical reasons, school related activities, and the matters of emergency. Once in the classroom, the student's participation is strongly encouraged. Previewing and reviewing the readings will enhance your class **discussion/participation**. Good attitude and enthusiasm on hands-on practice is also counted for **participation**.

**Take home calligraphy assignments (20%)** - Be responsible for completing the assigned weekly homework practice, and turn it in on time in order to receive proper credit. The assignment of weekly homework/practice will be instructed during the class and posted on the Canvas as well.

**Quizzes (15%) & Exam (25%)** - Expect many small quizzes throughout the semester, and one major exam is given in the format of multiple choices, script and image identifications/ comparisons, and essay. Make-up exam allows only with medical documentation.

**Class presentation with report (15%)** - Prepare and perform a 15 minutes class presentation on one's own choice of topic. The choice can be wide open, as long as related with calligraphy. It is preferably to be conducted as a group presentation (2-3 students). The format is your choice (Powerpoint, postal display, stage show...) but a prior discussion on the potential topic with instructor is necessary. In addition, one needs to prepare a brief annotative note (about one page in 200-300 words) to record the motivation, participation, and resources related to your presentation, and turn it in on the day of presentation.

**Final piece (5%)** - Towards the end of semester, students need to submit at least one piece of presentable work of calligraphy for the class exhibition held on **April 22** (the last day of class).

**Students will receive the best grade one deserves:**

**Grading scale** - Grades are tabulated on a 100-point scale and a letter grade is assigned as follows:  
 A = 93 & above, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79,  
 C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D+ = 67-69, D = 63-66, D- = 60-62, E = 59 & below

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**The needed writing tools** can be purchased via Amazon. The followings are the suggestive 3 items: Meiyutang Xuan Paper (Shuan/Rice Paper) 50 sheets/Half Ripe 601, DelieKee 2 Pcs Reusable Chinese Magic Cloth Water Paper with 1 Bamboo Brush & 1 Wrap, and Daiso Sumi Calligraphy Liquid Ink in a 180ml Bottle. Of course you can use your own, if already have any (basically one brush, some rice paper, and liquid ink or ink with ink stone set). Order the needed items soon, though the actual hands-on practice will not occur until the 3rd week.

**The changes** in class scheduling or **special announcement** will be posted via email or in e-Learning. Students are responsible to follow it up timely.

**Disability accommodations** can be requested by registering with the Dean of Students Office for proper documentation, inquiring see web link <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.

**Academic honesty, and student conduct related to the honor code will be strictly enforced.** Be aware that plagiarism will result in a failing grade, see <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/>.

**Online course evaluation is conducted at** <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Students are encouraged to participate in order to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course.

**PASS/FAIL** is allowed in this class; however, completion of all requirements in order to pass is still needed.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- Week 1**      Reading: Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 1-31, 415-37  
Billeter, J. F., "Learning the Craft" in *The Chinese Art of Writing*, p. 109-34
- Jan. 8/W      Organizational introduction with the discussion of course syllabus and requirements  
Jan. 9/R      Highlights of the historical development and aesthetic principles of Chinese calligraphy in general
- Week 2**      Reading: Chiang Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 133-44  
Billeter, J. F., "Maneuvering the Brush" in *The Chinese Art of Writing*, p. 45-84
- Jan. 15/W      Four essential tools on writing Chinese calligraphy (*Wenfang sibao* 文房四寶)  
Jan. 16/R      Correct gesture of holding brush, writing with brush, along with the proper way of rendering the ink; calligraphy demonstration by instructor
- Week 3**      Reading: Chiang, Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 41-67  
Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 34-36, 56-60, 67-131
- Jan. 22/W      Early writing and scripts: oracle bone inscription (*jiaguwen* 甲骨文), bronze inscriptions (*jinwen* 金文- also known as the greater/large seal script, *dazhuan* 大篆), lesser/small seal script (*xiaozhuan* 小篆), and clerical/official script (*lishu* 隸書)  
Jan. 23/R      The small seal script: basic writing technique and practice; Chinese New Year, pt. I
- Week 4**      Reading: Chiang, Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 18-35, 145-65  
Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 47-55
- Jan. 29/W      Conceptual principles on the formation of Chinese characters with the introduction of the first Chinese dictionary, *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字  
Jan. 30/R      "Eight strokes of character *yong* 永" (*yongzi bafa* 永字八法): basics of the standard script; Chinese New Year, Pt. II
- Week 5**      Reading: Chiang, Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 67-105  
Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 133-239 (browsing)  
Ledderose, Lothar, "Chinese Calligraphy: its aesthetic dimension and social function," *Orientalism* 17, no. 10 (Oct. 1986), p. 35-50
- Feb. 5/W      Development of various scripts: standard/regular script (*kaishu* 楷書), running script (*xingshu* 行書), and cursive/grass script (*caoshu* 草書); leading masters from the Six Dynasties to early Tang 唐: Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361), and his followers  
Feb. 6/R      High Tang masters: the stylistic comparison of standard script masters, Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿 and Liu Gongquan 柳公權, and cursive script masters, Zhang Xu 張旭 and Huaisu 懷素; practicing standard script

- Week 6**      Reading: Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 241-69  
 Xu, J., "Opposite Paths to Originality: Huang Ting-chien 黃庭堅 and Mi Fu 米芾"  
 in *The Embodied Image* ed. by Robert Harris and Wen Fong, p. 260-79
- Feb. 12/W      Leading masters of the Song 宋 dynasty.  
 Feb. 13/R      Continuing the practice on the standard script; exploring the running and cursive;  
 introducing the model books in various scripts
- Week 7**      Reading: Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 284-377  
 (browsing)
- Feb. 19/W      Masters of the Yuan 元, Ming 明, and Qing 清 dynasties  
 Feb. 20/R      Refining the techniques on the standard script; getting more familiar with the model  
 books in various scripts
- Week 8**      Reading: Erickson, B., *The Art of Xu Bing, words without meaning, meaning without  
 words*, p. 33-70  
 Barrass, G. S., *The Art of Calligraphy in Modern China*, p. 11-58  
 Ouyang, Zhongshi and Wen Fong, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 378-413  
 Chiang, Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 166-88
- Feb. 26/W      Modern and avant-garde movement in China; introducing contemporary calligraphy—  
 the art of Xu Bing 徐冰 and his "Square Word Calligraphy"  
 Feb. 27/R      Shaping the characters: major principles of how to properly combine components of  
 a Chinese character; reinforcing the strokes, form and correlation in standard  
 script; experimenting contemporary calligraphy
- Week 9**      ☺ Spring Break ☺
- Week 10**      Reading: Harrist, Robert, "The Two Perfections: Reading Poetry and Calligraphy" in  
*The Embodied Image*, ed. by Robert Harris and Fong Wen, p. 281-301  
 Qi Gong, "The Relationships between Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting" in *Words and  
 Images: Chinese poetry, calligraphy, and painting*, ed. by Alfreda Murck and Wen  
 Fong, p 11-20  
 Sullivan, M., *The Three Perfections*, p. 11-80
- Mar. 11/W      Calligraphy and poetry  
 Mar. 12/R      Refining the standard script with text from selected Tang poem

- Week 11**      Reading: Chiang, Yee, "Calligraphy and Painting" in *Chinese Calligraphy*, p. 206-13  
 Fu, Shen, "Format and the Integration of Painting and Calligraphy" in *Traces of the Brush*, p. 179-201  
 Kwo, Da-wei, "Aesthetics of Brushwork" in *Chinese Brushwork in Calligraphy and Painting: its history, aesthetics, and techniques*, p. 53-111  
 Hay, John, "The Human Body as a Microcosmic Source of Macrocosmic Values in Calligraphy" in *Theories of the Arts in China* by Susan Bush, p. 58-74
- Mar. 18/W      Calligraphy and painting  
 Mar. 19/R      Integrating calligraphic skill to create Chinese ink painting
- Week 12**  
 Mar. 25/W      **Reviewing for Exam**  
 Mar. 26/R      **Exam**
- Week 13**      Reading: Yonemura, Ann, "Japanese Calligraphy" in *From Concept to Context, Approaches to Asian and Islamic Calligraphy* by Fu Shen and A. Yonemura, p. 62-100  
 Boudonnat, Louise and Harumi Kushizaki, *Traces of the Brush: the art of Japanese calligraphy*, p. 53-95
- Apr. 1/W      Historical development of Japanese calligraphy and its relationship with Chinese calligraphy  
 Apr. 2/R      Refining the final piece; **due on the presentation topic and group arrangement**
- Week 14**      Reading: Kwo, D. W., "The Role of the Seal" in *Chinese Brushwork in Calligraphy and Painting*, p. 179-83  
 Billeter, J. F. "Notes on Seal Engraving" in *The Chinese Art of Writing*, p. 286-89
- Apr. 8/W      Role of Seal (yin, 印) in calligraphy and painting; learning the seal making  
 Apr. 9/R      Creating seals and applying them on the completed final calligraphy piece, that means **the final calligraphy piece is due**
- Week 15**  
 Apr. 15/W      **Class presentation**  
 Apr. 16/R      **Class presentation**
- Week 16**  
 Apr. 22/W      **Class Exhibition**

- Have a great summer -

## Practicing calligraphy is good for your soul and body

### Bibliography

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- Hearn, Maxwell K. *How to read Chinese Painting*. New York & New Haven: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2008. ND1042 .H43 2008
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- *A History of Chinese Calligraphy*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1993. NK3634.A2 T7381 1993

*Words in Motion: Modern Japanese Calligraphy. An Exhibition by the Library of Congress and the Yomiuri Shimbun, June-September 1984. Japan: Yomiuri Shimbun, 1984. ND1457.J3 W67x 1984*

#### USEFUL CALLIGRAPHY WEBSITES:

Art of Chinese Calligraphy

<http://www.chinapage.com/callig1.html>

Asian Art Appreciation (or Chinese Calligraphy)

<http://www.asia-art.net/calligraphy.html>

Eastern Asian Calligraphy

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_calligraphy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_calligraphy)

Tools and learning Chinese Calligraphy

<http://www.chinese-tools.com/learn/characters>

Chinese characters, script, and writing

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_character](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_character)

Chinese Calligraphy with basic knowledge and step by step instructions.

<http://www.chinavoc.com/arts/>

Learning basic strokes

<http://www.macauweb.com/handwrite/learn.html>

Chinese etymology

<http://internationalscientific.org/>

漢典 Chinese Dictionary for characters and various scripts

<http://www.zdic.net/>

說文解字—篆書字典 Dictionary for the seal script

<http://www.shuowen.org/>

#### WRITING TOOL SUPPLIERS:

Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/>

Yasutomo

<http://www.yasutomo.com/>



Acorn Planet

<http://www.acornplanet.com/>