Course Title: Chinese Architecture and Culture

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As the product of a unique culture and geographic environment, both the architectural form and the philosophy of space in China differed markedly from that of the world outside East Asia until the 20th century. Through critical readings, visual analysis, and field trips, students will learn how cities, palaces, temples, residences, and gardens were designed in China and how their form and space were interpreted in literature. Moreover, the class will look into how form and space reflected Chinese social, ethical and religious values. Unlike conventional Chinese architectural history classes that usually progress in a chronological sequence of dynasties, this course is delivered in a series of themes that are related to important aspects of Chinese civilization. In the end, special attention will be given to controversies between the traditional and the modern China, such as the modernization of the cities and the heritage conservation issues. Previous coursework in Chinese literature, history, or art is recommended but not required. The course readings and discussions will be in English.

A 150 minutes meeting, once a week, approximately consists of 110 minutes of lecture and 40 minutes of student presentation/discussion on reading assignments. Student will be encouraged to discuss the cultural connotations, styles and techniques of architecture, and via their discussions, achieve an understanding of architecture and urban planning as a reflection of culture and history. In order to enhance the understanding of the objects discussed in class, we will take fieldtrips to Beijing Ancient Architecture Museum, and/or other important sites during the classes.

COURSE REQUIREMENT:

Attendance and Participation (10%)
Regular attendance is mandatory and monitored. Every student is allowed 2 unexcused absences during the semester, but you are still obliged to hand in all the assigned work when due. Beyond that, 5% point will be deducted from your final grade for each unexplained and undocumented absence. Excusable reasons include religious holidays, illness with doctor’s note, job interviews and other emergencies with a Dean’s note. Unacceptable excuses include, but are not limited to, oversleeping, alarm clock failure, work for other courses, leaving early or arriving late for a vacation, and medical excuses not documented. Punctuality is expected of every student.

2 Reflection Papers and 2 Presentations (20%)
The students need to write 2 reflection papers (double-spaced, 3 pages) in regard to the lectures and reading assignments through the semester. Please refer to the schedule
of lectures for the due dates. You are strongly encouraged to make line drawings by
yourself to illustrate your arguments in the papers. You are encouraged to raise
questions and provide your own opinions that have not been covered by the lecture.

Midterm Book Report (20%)
The students can select one book from the reading list (except for the textbook) and
write a book report (double-spaced, 4-5 pages) that due right after the spring break
(Mar. 27th). You will also be required to give a short presentation on your book report
in the class. You are encouraged to use line drawings and photographs made by
yourself to illustrate your arguments in the report.

Final Exam (50%)
The final exam will be on May. 5th. It is the College’s policy that final exam will NOT
be rescheduled to accommodate individual travel plans. It is an open-book exam, so
you can bring books, readings and notes to the classroom and your laptop to type.
Source citation is necessary. Internet searching is not allowed.

READING LIST
The following book will be used as the main text for the course and is recommended
to be purchased.

Steinhardt, Chinese Architecture

The following books will be used as secondary texts. It is also useful for you to build
up basic knowledge on Chinese architecture and cities. Supplemental Articles related
to specific topics will be uploaded to the cloud disc.

Esherick, Remaking the Chinese City Modernity and National Identity, 1900-1950
Fairbank, Liang and Lin: Partners in Exploring China's Architectural Past
Guo, The Structure of Chinese Timber Architecture
Ji, The Craft of Gardens
Keswick and Hardie, The Chinese Garden: History, Art, and Architecture
Knapp, China's Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornametation
Knapp, China's Old Dwellings
Lam, Origins And Development Of The Traditional Chinese Roof.
Lee, Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture In China, 1930-1945
Li, Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City
Liang and W. Fairbank, Chinese Architecture: A Pictorial History
Lip, Feng Shui: Environments of Power: A Study Of Chinese Architecture
Miller, The Divine Nature of Power: Chinese Ritual Architecture at the Sacred Site of Jinci
Peissel, Tibetan Pilgrimage: Architecture of the Sacred Land
Qiu and Sun, Islamic Buildings
Rowe and Kuan, Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China
Rowe and Kuan, Shanghai: Architecture & Urbanism for Modern China
Ruitenbeek, Carpentry and Building in Late Imperial China: A Study of the Fifteenth-Century Carpentry’s Manual Lu Ban Jing
Soper, The Evolution Of Buddhist Architecture In Japan
Steinhardt, Chinese Imperial City Planning
Steinhardt, Liao Architecture
Wong, A Paradise Lost: the Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan
WU Hung, Remaking Beijing: Tiananmen Square and the Creation of a Political Space
WU Hung, The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs
Wu, Chinese and Indian Architecture: the City of Man, the Mountain of God, and the Realm of the Immortals
Xu, The Chinese City in Space and Time: the Development of Urban Form in Suzhou
Zhu, Chinese Spatial Strategies: Imperial Beijing, 1420-1911
Zhu, Architecture of Modern China: A Historical Critique

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

Week 1: Introduction

About this Course

Introduction 1: Conceptualize architecture in Modern China
- Atkin, “Chinese Architecture Students at the University of Pennsylvania in the 1920s: Tradition, Exchange, and Search for Modernity,” 45-72
- Documentary “Liang and Lin” (Supplemental)

Introduction 2: A brief history of China
- History of China for Art Historians

Week 2: THEME I: Dominance of Timber: Structure, History, Pros and Cons

1 All reading assignments are subject to change.
Timber Architecture I: The First Millennium (“The Period of Vigor”)
- Steinhardt, 58-9; 112-8; 127.
- Thorp, “Architectural Principles in Early Imperial China: Structural Problems and Their Solution”, 360-378
- Steinhardt, “The Tang Architectural Icon and the Politics of Chinese Architectural History”, 228-254

Contextualize Chinese Architecture in East and South Asia
- Soper, Dome of Heaven

Week 3:
- Steinhardt, 152, 166-77, 189-97, 340-3

Week 4:
Timber Architecture II: The Second Millennium (“The Period of Rigidity”)

“Neo-Classism” and Beaux Arts in Early 20th Century China

Foreign Influence: Western Architecture in China
- Rowe, Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China, 24-55

Week 5:
A field trip to Beijing Ancient Architecture Museum or the Temple of Heaven.

THEME II: Space for Different Social and Religious Identities

Week 6:
**Reflection Paper 1 Due**
Imperial Palatial Architecture: Palaces of the First Emperor; Daminggong and the Forbidden City

- Nancy S Steinhardt, ed., *Chinese Architecture*, 39-43; 100-6; 210-2; 266-72.
- Documentary Film “Inside the Forbidden City” (Supplemental)

**Week 7:**
The Mundane World and the Ideal World: Imperial Gardens and Private Gardens


**Week 8:**
Funerary Architecture: the Changing Ideas of After Life


**Book Report Presentation, Book Report Due**

**Week 9:**
Buddhist Monasteries and Pagodas


**Week 10:**
Taoist Architectures

- Nancy S Steinhardt, Taoist Architectures

Non-Han Chinese Architecture: Mosques and Lama Buddhist Temples

Week 11: THEME III: Chinese City Planning

**Reflection Paper 2 Due**

City of Universal Virtues: *Records of Craftsmen of Zhou Rituals* (770-476 BCE); Grid Plan: City of Discipline and Rituality: Chang'an and Luoyang
- Nancy S Steinhardt, ed., *Chinese Imperial City Planning*

The Imperial Beijing
- Zhu Jianfei, *Chinese Spatial Strategies: Imperial Beijing, 1420-1911*, 17-93

Beijing as a Communist Capital

Shanghai: A Key to Modern China (optional)

Week 12:

THEME IV: Chinese Architecture in the Modern Time

A National Form: The Republican Era
- Wagner, “Ritual, Architecture, Politics and Publicity during the Republic: Enshrining Sun Yat-sen”, 223-278

The Great Ten Buildings in the first 10 years of the P.R. China

Some Contemporary Chinese Architects and Their Architectures
- I.M.Pei, Yonghe Chang, Wang Shu and Ai Weiwei
- Wang Shu’s lecture, “Geometry and Narrative of Natural Form”
- Documentary: “I.M.Pei: Building Modern China”
- Caroline Klein, *AI WEIWEI: Architecture*
Chinese Architecture and Culture

Imperial & Bureaucratic Culture
- Originated in the Yellow River region (the center of China); mainly based on Confucian principles and *the Book of Rituals*; more ethical than religious.

Religious Culture
- Appeals to transcendental power to rule human life; originated from *The Book of Changes*, Buddhism, Daoism and etc.; some religions combine with Confucianism.

Literati Culture
- Popular from the Song Dynasty; manifests in Chinese painting and calligraphy; combines Confucianism with Taoism; seeks the ideal society through self-cultivation

Cities
- Palaces
- Residential Units

Domestic religions:
- worship of ancestors, heaven and after-life.

Foreign or hybrid religions:
- Buddhism

Gardens (yuanlin)
- Temples for heaven, ancestors, domestic deities.
- Tombs
- Buddhist temples
- Pagodas
- Buddhist Caves

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2 This table is suggestive but not conclusive of the relationships between Chinese architectural forms and Chinese cultural groups. Sometimes, the cultural groups listed above interact with one another. No cultural group is exclusive of others.