

# 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 dues right after the spring break (Mar. 27<sup>th</sup> ). 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. 5<sup>th</sup>. 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.

Cody, Building in China: Henry K. Murphy's "Adaptive Architecture," 1914-1935

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

Guo, The Mingqi Pottery Buildings of Han Dynasty China, 206 BC-AD 220: Architectural Representations and Represented 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 Ornamentation

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<sup>1</sup>**

### **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
- Fairbank, *Liang and Lin: Partners in Exploring China's Architectural Past*.41-98.
- 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**

<sup>1</sup> 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

- Qinghua Guo, “Timber building structures in Choson Korea: a comparative approach,” in *Chinese Architecture and Planning Ideas, Methods, Techniques*, 90-6.
- Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, “The Monastery Horyuji: Architectural Forms of Early Buddhism in Japan”, *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan* (New York: Japan Society, 2003), 154-167.
- Steinhardt, "Early Chinese Buddhist Architecture and Its Indian Origins," *The Flowering of a Foreign Faith*, 38-53
- Soper, Dome of Heaven

### **Week 3:**

### Timber Architecture II: The Second Millennium (“The Period of Elegance”; “The Period of Rigidity”)

- Steinhardt, 152, 166-77, 189-97, 340-3
- Guo, “*Yingzao Fashi*: Twelfth-Century Chinese Building Manual”, 1-13

### **Week 4:**

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

### “Neo-Classism” and Beaux Arts in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century China

- Cody, *Building in China : Henry K. Murphy's "adaptive architecture," 1914-1935*, 107-142

### 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.
- Jianfei Zhu, “The Palace: Framing a Political Landscape,” in *Chinese Spatial Strategies: Imperial Beijing* (London: Routledge, 2004), 119-48.
- Documentary Film “Inside the Forbidden City”(Supplemental)

**Week 7:**

The Mundane World and the Ideal World: Imperial Gardens and Private Gardens

- Nancy S Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture*, 46; 163-6; 247-59; 276-317.
- Keswick, *The Chinese Garden: History, Art, and Architecture*, 84-101.

Vernacular Buildings and Their Conservation Works in China

- Knapp, *Chinese Landscapes: The Village as Place*

**Week 8:**

Funerary Architecture: the Changing Ideas of After Life

- Wu, Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs*, 17-84.

**\*\*Book Report Presentation, Book Report Due\*\***

**Week 9:**

Buddhist Monasteries and Pagodas

- Nancy S Steinhardt, ed., *Chinese Architecture*, 43-6; 78-89; 110-23; 150-53; 166-83; 219-47; 317-35.
- Liang Sicheng, *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture: A study of the Development of Its Structural System and the Evolution of Its Type*, 123-66.

**Week 10:**

Taoist Architectures

- Nancy S Steinhardt, *Taoist Architectures*

Non-Han Chinese Architecture: Mosques and Lama Buddhist Temples

- Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, “China’s Earliest Mosques”, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (September 2008),330-361.

## **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 Architecture*, 21-5; 34-7; 64-8.
- Nancy S Steinhardt, ed., *Chinese Imperial City Planning*
- Saehyang P. Chung, "Symmetry and Balance in the Layout of the Sui-Tang Palace-City of Chang'an", *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 56, No. 1/2 (1996), 5-17.

The Imperial Beijing

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

Beijing as a Communist Capital

- Zhu, *Architecture of Modern China: a Historical Critique*, 75-104, 199-214

Shanghai: A Key to Modern China (optional)

- Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945*, 3-42

## **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

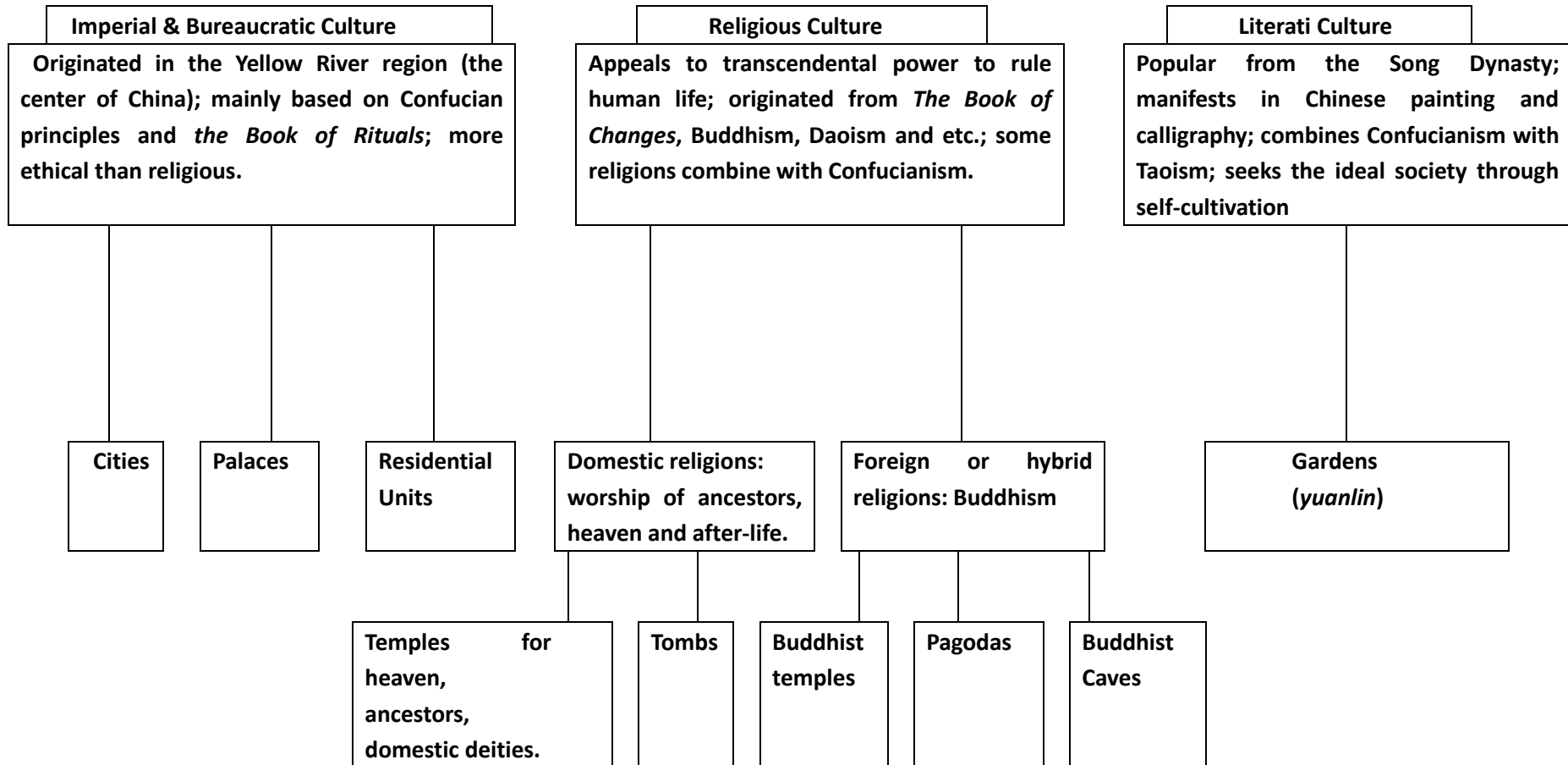
The Great Ten Buildings in the first 10 years of the P.R. China

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 <sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> 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.