

**This is an unofficial copy of the HONS 3107 course syllabus.
The syllabus of record will be distributed to enrolled members of the course via
Canvas. Contents subject to change.
This unofficial syllabus is for informational purposes only.**

HONS 3107.hn1 : Early Chinese Literature

Fall 2026 | W 2:00–2:50 PM

Prof. J. Michael Farmer
JO 5.612
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Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Description

This readings seminar will focus on major writers and works from medieval China (ca. 200–900 CE). Texts for close reading, discussion, and written analysis include poetry, rhetoric, and historical prose. Background readings for historical and cultural context are provided. No prior background in Chinese language or studies is expected or required.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the literature of early China, develop the skills of close and careful reading of texts, enhance the ability to discuss literature using appropriate literary terms and concepts, and increase intercultural competence.

Required Readings

All required readings will be distributed via eLearning. There are no books to purchase.

Course Requirements

Preparation and Participation:

All students are expected to be prepared for class sessions by reading the assigned texts before class, and to actively participate in discussion of readings during class sessions and on discussion boards.

Discussion Board Activity:

In addition to discussing the reading during class sessions, students will actively participate in discussion of assigned readings on eLearning Discussion Boards. Weekly requirements include an Original Post [OP] consisting of a one-page response to the assigned primary text, and Responses to posts by two other class members. The OP should include a brief summary of the text (or in the case of collections of poems, the collection as a whole or a single poem, or subset of poems; your choice), a brief analysis of the literary features of the text, and your response to the reading. These are submitted weekly, beginning with Week 3. Original Posts due 11:59 PM on Mondays.

Responses to two other posts due by 11:59 PM on Thursdays.

Textbooks and Other Course Materials

All required course readings will be provided on eLearning.

A large portion of the primary documents we will read in this course are from the following anthology:
Birch, Cyril, ed. *Anthology of Chinese Literature, volume 1*. New York: Grove, 1964; rpt. 1994. ISBN: 0802150381.

WK	Date	Early Chinese Literature
1	8/26	Introduction to the Course Ten Things About Early China Ropp, <i>China in World History</i> , Ch. 1-2
2	9/2	Approaching Chinese Literature <i>Form in Fiction</i> , 141-146; 168-176 <i>How Does a Poem Mean</i> , 1-13
3	9/9	The Book of Songs Selections 1-16
4	9/16	The Book of Songs Selections 16-33
5	9/23	The Songs of Ch'u "Encountering Sorrow"
6	9/30	The Songs of Ch'u From "The Nine Songs"
7	10/7	The Songs of Ch'u "The Summons of the Soul"
8	10/14	Chuang Tzu Three Dialogues
9	10/21	Records of the Grand Historian The Biography of Ching K'o
10	10/28	Rhyme-Prose of the Han Dynasty Chia Yi, "The Owl"
11	11/4	Rhyme-Prose of the Han Dynasty Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju, "Shang-lin Park"
12	11/11	Han Poetry "Southeast the Peacock Flies"
13	11/18	Han Poetry "Mulberry Up the Lane" "Chaste Wife of Qiu of Lu"
14	11/24	FALL BREAK: NO CLASS
15	12/2	On Death Chang Heng, "The Bones of Chuang Tzu"
16	12/9	TBA
Final		<i>N/A: There is no final exam for this class.</i>

Course & Instructor Policies

Grading Policy

Percentages for the course assignments have been noted above. The following gradescale will be used: 0–59 [F]; 60–62 [D-]; 63–66 [D]; 67–69 [D+]; 70–72 [C-]; 73–76 [C]; 77–79 [C+]; 80–82 [B-]; 83–86 [B]; 87–89 [B+]; 90–92 [A-]; 93–100 [A]. In narrative form, [F]=failing; [D]=below average; [C]=average; [B]=above average; [A]=exceptional.

The professor reserves the right to curve, round, or otherwise adjust grades at his sole discretion.

Note regarding Canvas's Gradebook

The Canvas Gradebook is a basic record of raw scores for all scored course assignments. I do NOT use the Canvas Gradebook to calculate final grades for the class; I use a stand-alone program that allows me to weight assignment categories (as noted above) and make other calculations. Self-calculated grade estimates made from Canvas's Gradebook are unlikely to be the same as on my gradebook. If you need to know your class average, please arrange an Office Hour session and I will happily give that information to you.

Attendance, Participation, and Discussion

Attendance is mandatory! Please consult the university calendar before scheduling vacations, weddings, or other extra-curricular events that may keep you from your responsibilities in this class. You are responsible for the material and any assignments regardless of whether you were in a given class meeting or not. Any extended absence (two or more consecutive sessions) should be reported to me via email as soon as possible. Every student is expected to actively participate in the discussion of the assigned readings. While there may be no set percentage of the course grade dedicated to this requirement category, students who do not regularly attend and actively participate in class will not fare well in the course.

Allowances will be made in accordance with University policy to students who must miss class due to Covid infection and/or exposure. I will extend this allowance to other students who may be ill with other communicable illnesses. Please contact me directly to arrange accommodations.

Late work

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late work will not be accepted. For all work not completed by the due date, the student will receive a grade of 0 (zero) for the assignment. Exceptional circumstances may be taken into account. If you feel your circumstances merit special consideration, please notify me via email or in person as soon as possible.

All assignments will be submitted via Canvas.

Written assignments (PSAs, Article Captures) must be uploaded in either Word or PDF formats.

These assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in a 10–12 point serif typeface (Times, Palatino, Garamond, Gentium, etc.). Pages must have one-inch margins and contain your name and page number in the upper right-hand corner of each page.

Discussion Board assignments are submitted directly in Canvas (no file attachments).

Assignments not meeting these technical specifications will not be accepted.

Personal Electronics

Any non-class related use of personal electronics in the classroom will result in the immediate confiscation of the device. Confiscated devices will be returned at the end of the class period. Repeat offenses will result in a failing grade in the course.

Class Recordings

Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Class Materials and Intellectual Property

The instructor may provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. These materials may be downloaded during the course, however, these materials are for registered students' use only. Classroom materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Office Gun Policy

All persons entering my office (JO 5.612) will be given oral notice indicating that my office is an exclusion zone.

Sharing Confidential Information

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Per university policy, faculty have been informed that they must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact the Student Counseling Center (972-883-2527 or after hours 972-UTD-TALK or 972-883-8255), the Women's Center (972-883-8255), a health care provider in the Student Health Center (972-883-2747), the clergyperson (or other legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice, or an off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist). Students who are sexually assaulted, harassed, or victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking, are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972-883-2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972-883-2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

Course and Instructor Amendments to the University Policies

Email Use

Email is the preferred method of communication for this course. I generally reply to messages that require a response (and not all messages require or merit a response from the professor!) within two business days. You may also reach me via Teams chat.

Academic Support Resources

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students.

Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus.

Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

Your Responsibility

Students are responsible for all information contained in this syllabus and schedule, as well as any amendments or changes announced by the professor or Teaching Assistant(s) in class. Changes to the course schedule or syllabus will also be announced in class and/or by email. It is your responsibility to regularly check your UTD email account.

Failure to abide by the policies contained in the syllabus and any amendments or changes announced by the professor may result in a failing grade in the course.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.