College of Integrative Studies

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-26 **TERM** 1

COURSE CODE : COR-MAND2404
COURSE TITLE : Mandarin

INSTRUCTOR(S) : Wang Shengyu
EMAIL : sywang@smu.edu.sg
OFFICE :

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a basic Mandarin Chinese course starting from the fundamental concepts of the language. The course will cover the phonetic system of Mandarin Chinese, namely, *Hanyu Pinyin*, including the phonetic symbols and tones. More importantly, the written Chinese characters, *Hanzi*, will be introduced with rationale contributing to the ways of writing, to equip the students with knowledge and skills on the form of the language. The students will learn various basic sentence patterns to obtain the skills for simple conversation. Meanwhile, they will gain some perspective of the Chinese culture through their exposure to the language.

To be able to communicate in a foreign language is always an added strength in one's professional development, and with China becoming a world economic power, Chinese has become one of the most popular languages in the world. The course aims to facilitate the students with some basic linguistic skills with Mandarin Chinese, to establish a foundation for their future endeavours in learning the language, which will eventually benefit them in their career. The cultural perspectives gained from this course will hopefully help the students in their China-related case studies and courses.

PRE-REQUISITE/ CO-REQUISITE/ MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S):

Nil.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Students who take this course must not have received any formal education in the Chinese language and should not hold any certificate in official exams such as PSLE, GCE O/A Level and HSK. The course is meant for complete beginners. Please contact the instructor for clarification if you have any background in Chinese.
Meanwhile, even among students who are beginners, progress can vary greatly after a few weeks. For those who are not ready for the iconic writing system, the course can be very challenging, especially when competing with students who have written Chinese characters in their respective mother tongues.

Please also note that even though this is a basic Chinese language course, it is conducted in the Asian context. Hence the course is more challenging than one offered at the same level in the non-Asian universities. Students who do not have prior exposure to Asian culture may feel disadvantaged or pressurized among peers who are from Asia.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Understand the phonetic patterns of Mandarin Chinese to pronounce words and sentences comprehensibly.
2. Recognize up to 400 Chinese written characters and related collocations.
3. Distinguish about 10 basic Chinese sentence patterns.
4. Apply the lexical and syntactic knowledge in daily conversations.
5. Create short pieces of writing to present personal information and feelings.
6. Appreciate the culture and aesthetics of the language.

SMU GRADUATE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Disciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge: Students will be able to

- Understand basic language items in Mandarin with correct pronunciation and tones;
- Recognize the single-component written characters representing the basic concepts of the language.

Intellectual and creative skills: Students will be able to

- Grasp the concept of radicals (*pianpang bushou*) and analyze the rationale in the written Chinese characters;
- Learn basic sentence patterns in daily Chinese conversation.

Interpersonal skills: Students will be able to communicate with Mandarin speaking people in Singapore, as well as those from different regions in the world.

Global citizenship: Students will be equipped with some Chinese cultural perceptions, thus understanding and appreciating the Chinese customs and practices.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Students are assessed throughout the term in different forms of Continual Assessment (CA). There will be NO final examination.

The CA includes the following components:

Assessment method	**Weightage**	**Description**
Class Attendance and Participation	10 %	Students will be graded on attendance and preparedness, as well as quality and frequency of participation in discussions, questions asked, or points brought up.

Copybook of *Hanzi* Writing Practice	10 %	There will be about eight copybooks to be assigned across the semester for the students to trace the written Chinese characters in a given template, in order to truly know the words and become skilful with Hanzi writing.
Quiz 1 (Oral)	10 %	Quiz 1 (scheduled in Week 4) will test students' mastery of Chinese phonetics in terms of pronunciations and tones, as well as their skill in making a simple self-introduction.
Quiz 2 (Written)	10 %	Quiz 2 (scheduled in Week 11) will check students' knowledge of the basic sentence patterns taught in the semester via question and answer, and English to Chinese translation.
Mid-term Examination	20 %	Students will take an about one-hour mid-term examination. The mid-term examination covers all the lessons learned before the mid-term. It will be a closed book exam including listening and writing in the form of MCQs, true or false, sentence forming, blank filling, etc.
Oral Presentation	15 %	Students will be formed into small groups of about five members each to present on a daily topic with the language materials learned in the term, with visual aids such as PPT slides and "stage properties". Each student shall be presenting in about three minutes. Assessment is based on both individual and group performance.
Final Essay	25 %	Students will submit an essay of about 200 written Chinese characters with one of the themes covered in the course, using relevant vocabulary and sentence patterns.
Total:	100%	

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The course is taught in a three-hour session per week, totalling 12 sessions of 36 hours throughout the semester.

The course expects interaction, where students' participation and involvement are of vital importance. While the instructor seeks to explain the concepts in an interactive manner through multimedia, the students should apply and practice the language items immediately in class via dialogue, individual/pair presentation, group discussion, role play, etc.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultation hours and mode(s) (online and/or face-to-face) will be decided as the semester progresses, depending on students' individual needs.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS AND READINGS

Textbook to be used:

Author/s Name: Lucy Chu Lee, Chen Lixia *et al*
Title, which edition: 《成长》 (*Step up with Chinese*), Textbook Volume 1, 2019 edition
Publisher: Cengage Learning Asia Pte Ltd
Year of Publication: 2019
Preview of the textbook is available at:
https://www.cengageasia.com/TitleDetails/isbn/9789814962254
You can access the electronic companion at: https://stepup.cengageclt.com/#/flashcards

EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to meet the following expectations:

Assessment method	***Description (Purpose/Format)***	***Expectation(s)***
Class Attendance and Participation	Ensure contact hours and keep in pace with classroom instructions.	Punctuality, attentiveness and actively participating in class activities.
Copybook of *Hanzi* Writing Practice	Practice writing Chinese characters.	Neat and proper tracing of the Chinese characters in the template and timely submission.
Quiz 1 (Oral)	Test mastery of Chinese phonetics in terms of pronunciations and tones.	Timely submission of a sound file containing a brief self-introduction and a short poem reading with acceptable to good phonetic production.
Quiz 2 (Written)	Check students' knowledge of the basic sentence patterns taught in the semester.	Online completion of the quiz showing command of asking and answering basic questions in Chinese, as well as translating simple sentences from English into Chinese.
Mid-term Examination	Examine students' listening comprehension of contents taught in the first half of the semester.	Online completion of MCQs, true or false questions, etc. with a moderate to high degree of correctness.

Oral Presentation	Demonstrate Mandarin Chinese skills learned in the semester, including vocabulary, sentence patterns and cultural knowledge.	Converse with acceptable to good fluency and accuracy after group-based planning and rehearsal with both individual demonstration and group dynamics.
Final Essay	Show command of relevant vocabulary and sentence patterns learned.	Handwrite an essay of about 200 written Chinese characters with one of the themes covered in the course in students' own time, with fair to good accuracy and expressiveness.

WEEKLY LESSON PLAN

Week	Topic	Course Readings
1	General knowledge of Chinese (Part 1)	History, feature, and current state of Mandarin Chinese. *Hanyu Pinyin*: initial and final speech sounds; tonal patterns.
2	General knowledge of Chinese (Part 2)	*Hanzi*: fundamental concepts for written Chinese characters—strokes, stroke sequence, radicals, ways to form characters.
3	Unit 1 Nice to meet you	Greeting people; making introductions; asking after people ; and finding out someone's name.
4	Unit 2 Getting to know you	One's nationality; one's hometown; where one lives.
5	Unit 3 What time is it?	Counting and saying numbers; different types of numbers; different segments of a day; and asking and telling time.
6	Unit 4 What's today's date?	Year, month, week and day; counting years, months, weeks and days; age and birthday.
7	Unit 5 My family	About one's family; number of members in a family; introducing one's siblings; describing people.
8	**RECESS WEEK**	
9	Unit 6 My pet	Types of animals; expressing likes and dislikes; counting animals; how animals move.

10	Unit 7 My school	Describing one's school; describing one's classroom; talking about courses and classes.
11	Unit 8 My busy schedule	One's class schedule; school activities; daily schedule.
12	Unit 9 My interests, my dreams	Interests and hobbies; abilities and skills; dreams and aspirations.
13	Group oral presentation	
14	Reading week	

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorised possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offence.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOSWKLSWC/UCSC.aspx.

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Digital Readiness for Teaching and Learning (DRTL)

As part of emergency preparedness, instructors may conduct lessons online via the Zoom platform during the term, to prepare students for online learning. During an actual emergency, students will be notified to access the Zoom platform for their online lessons.

The class schedule will mirror the current face-to-face class timetable unless otherwise stated.