THE ART OF MEMORY IN CHINA AND THE WEST

This course is a comparative exploration of conceptions and practices of memory among thinkers in pre-modern China and Europe, from antiquity through the middle ages. Addressing both the psychology of memory and the place of memory in cultural life, it considers such issues as: images for describing and explaining memory; techniques for cultivating memory; the relationship between memory and time; memory and spatial organization; and the uses of memory and its ethical implications. Reading through parallels as well as divergences in the conception of memory in east and west, this course invites reflection on how thinking about memory is bound up with thinking about the self and about the sources of subjective identity. Sources will be read in English translation.

Every week we will engage in reading and analysis of primary texts and visual materials for the topic under investigation, as well as relevant secondary readings. We will be working with English translations of all texts but students familiar with the source languages are welcome to read the texts in the original.

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E-mail policy
I will try to respond to e-mails within 24 hours. E-mails arriving over the weekend will be answered by the following Monday.

E-Learning
We have a course website on which I will post handouts and readings, and announcements. The website will also be used for our on-going discussion forum and for the posting of short assignments.

Learning outcomes
1. An understanding of the distinct ways in which Chinese and Western thinkers understood memory, and how the cultural practices and techniques of memory diverged.
2. An understanding of the historical and conceptual foundations behind diverging approaches to memory.
3. Development of critical reading and writing skills.
4. Practice in translating past methods into one’s own practice of learning

Course requirements and assessment
1. Participation (25%):
2. Short reflection papers (10%)
3. On-line journal entries (25%)
4. Presentation (10%)
5. Final project (30%)
1. **Participation:** Attendance, preparation, and active participation in class discussions. Students may miss one class without penalty. Further (unavoidable) absences are to be cleared with instructor and made up with written work.

2. **Short reflection papers:** Two reflection papers (500-600 words), due on weeks of your choice, on the corresponding readings for your chosen weeks. Papers should be based on a close reading and analysis of the texts, should articulate a clear argument, and be posted on the course website by 8 pm Wednesday evening before the texts are discussed in class. A list will be circulated in the 2nd week of class (Sep 26) for indicating your topics/deadlines.

3. **On-line journal entry:** 500-600-word write-up of topics, readings and issues covered in class, your reflections on them, and questions inspired by them (possibly leading to a future research topic for your final project). Postings are due by 8 pm Friday evening after class.

4. **Presentation:** 15-20 minute in-class presentation of final project.

5. **Final project:** please choose one of the following options:
   
   Research paper: 3000-3500 paper on primary sources of your choice
   
   Practical project: Memorize a significant piece of text (of your choice) and design your own original mnemonic model, based on those we have studied, that helps you to remember the text. This should be accompanied by a short paper of 1000 words explaining your choice of influences and rationale for your method.

**Grading criteria**

Successful papers will contain the following elements:
1. Clear presentation
2. Thoughtful use and analysis of relevant source material
3. Persuasive argumentation
4. Strong supporting evidence
5. Compelling, interesting argument
6. Coherent and methodical organization
7. Correct grammar and syntax

The evaluation of oral presentations will also consider effective use of visual media and engagement of audience.

**Schedule of topics and readings**

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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### EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

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<th>Date</th>
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**Background:**  
2. Selections from Xunzi in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*: 170-183.  

### MEMORY, WRITING AND LEARNING IN MEDIEVAL CULTURE

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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2. Liu Xie, *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin Diaolong/Wen-hsin Tiao-lung*), trans. V. Shih:  
   XXVI. Spiritual Thought or Imagination  
   XXVII. Style and Nature”  
   XXX. On Choice of Style”  
   XXXI. Emotion and Literary Expression  
   XLVI. The Physical World |

**Background:**
Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, Ch. 4

**8 Nov 7** Emotion, sensation and the remembering self

**9 Nov 14** Meditation and visualization in Buddhism

**10 Nov 21** Empire of text: Memorization in the age of cultural reproduction
1. [http://www.camcc.org/reading-group/qianziwen#text](http://www.camcc.org/reading-group/qianziwen#text) - download 2 pdfs of the *Qianziwen*: Chinese and English

**11 Nov 28** The new learning of the Song dynasty: the ethics of memory and forgetting

**12 Dec 5** Presentations on final projects