Course description:

What is Chinese medicine? Many of us today associate it with the exotic practices of acupuncture and herbal remedy, and the all-encompassing concepts of yin-yang and qi/chi. These impressionistic views of Chinese medicine, however, belies a more sophisticated understanding of the long-lasting system of healing. We may ask further: How does Chinese medicine actually work? What are the cultural milieus in which it develops and flourishes? And how do we evaluate it in juxtaposition with modern biomedicine?

To answer these questions, we must probe the roots of Chinese medicine and ponder how it has become what it is today. Surveying Chinese medical history from antiquity to the present, this course takes the following trajectory. We will start with a look at Chinese medicine in contemporary world, exploring its unique features, diverse practices, and debated efficacy. We then go back to history, studying the foundational ideas in Chinese medicine and their evolution over time. Particular attention will be directed to the perception of illnesses, the body, and medicinal substances. Furthermore, we will explore the highly diverse and miscellaneous practices of Chinese medicine in society through the lens of religious healing, state regulation, medical practitioners, gender and sexuality, and its interplay with the world. Finally, we will examine in the more recent past how Chinese medicine interacted with Western medicine and how it reinvented itself during this contested process. Overall, this course seeks to not only enrich our understanding of Chinese medicine in the past, but also utilize historical knowledge to illuminate our ways of living today. [No prior knowledge in Chinese language or history is required.]
Learning Outcomes:

1. To acquire the basic knowledge of the history of Chinese medicine
2. To learn various historical methods to study Chinese medicine
3. To learn the connection between historical knowledge and contemporary practice
4. To develop reading skills to critically engage in course materials (both primary and secondary sources)
5. To develop basic skills of doing historical research, including raising good questions, identifying relevant sources, and generating convincing arguments
6. To develop writing skills to present scholarly research
7. To learn innovative methods to present scholarly research (multimedia production)
8. To develop skills of oral communication through participating in class discussion

Assessments:

- **Short-paper assignment:** 10%
  Write a short response paper (3-4 double-spaced pages) that summarizes and synthesizes the reading(s) of a particular class in Unit 1. **Due Feb. 20 in class.**

- **Podcast assignment:** 10%
  Produce a podcast (maximal length 2 minutes) that summarizes and analyzes a primary source from the readings or lectures in Unit 2. **Due 9 PM Mar. 12 on UB Learns.**

- **Short-video assignment:** 10%
  Produce a short video (maximal length 2 minutes) that examines a historical image from the readings or lectures in Unit 3. **Due 9 PM Apr. 16 on UB Learns.**

- **Four pop-up quizzes in class (count the best three):** 30%
  Each quiz (10 minutes) includes several multiple-choice questions and a short essay question. The content of the quiz is based on the readings and the lecture in the preceding week. No make-up quizzes.

- **Final project prospectus:** 5%
  Write a short outline of the final project (2 double-spaced pages) that includes the research question, summary, sources, and tentative argument of the project. **Due May 1 in class.**

- **Final paper or podcast/video:** 20%
  The research project combines course readings/lectures and your own research to explore a specific topic in the history of Chinese medicine. It may take either of the following forms:
  (1) A paper of 8-10 double-spaced pages
  (2) A podcast or video of 6 minutes maximum (2 segments of up to 3 minutes each or, 3 segments of up to 2 minutes each)
  **Due 5 PM May 17 on UB Learns.**

- **Class participation:** 15%
  Although this is a lecture-based course, I will leave ample time in each lecture to interact with you, either asking you questions or let you ask questions. Active engagement in class is key to your learning.
On media assignments:

One unique feature of this course is the media assignments. Compared to the conventional paper-writing exercise, these alternative assignments offer you the opportunity to explore the creative use of podcasts and short videos for effective intellectual communication. If this is the first time for you to make a podcast or video, don’t worry. This is your chance to learn. I will provide you with sufficient guidance and technical support over the course so you can master the skills of multi-media production and create works that edify yourself and impress your friends. I hope this will be a valuable and fun learning experience.

Technical notes: For podcasts, you can simply use the voice-recording device on your computer to do the job. You can also use more advanced software such as Audacity (for both PC and Mac) and GarageBand (for Mac). For short videos, you can start with PowerPoint (for PC) or Keynote (for Mac). For editing images and videos, you can consider using Photoshop and iMovie (for Mac) respectively. More advanced video-editing software are Final Cut (for Mac) and After Effects. All of these software have tutorials on YouTube or www.lynda.com.

Course policies:

- Finish all assigned readings before the class. As you read, use the questions in the syllabus as guidelines, take notes on key ideas, write down your questions, and particularly pay attention to the author's positions, agenda, and audiences.
- Come to class on time and plan on staying to the end. If you cannot attend class because of illness or for other pressing reasons, let me know in advance. More than one unexcused absence may impact your grade.
- The use of cell phones is not allowed for anything during class. Please turn them off or to silent, and put them away.
- Laptops are allowed in class only for consultation of readings and for note-taking. All other uses—from checking emails, to instant messaging, to random Internet surfing—undermine your learning, impede class discussion, distract classmates and the instructor, and are rude.
- Submit all your assignments on time. Late submission will incur a penalty of one-third a letter grade per day of lateness (for example, from A- to B+).
- Plagiarism/Academic integrity
  Please familiarize yourself with UB’s policy on plagiarism: http://undergrad-catalog.buffalo.edu/policies/course/integrity.html
  Plagiarism is defined as “copying or receiving material from any source and submitting that material as one’s own, without acknowledging and citing the particular debts to the source (quotations, paraphrases, basic ideas), or in any other manner representing the work of another as one’s own.” This includes cutting and pasting from websites or other online sources. If you are not sure what plagiarism is, please ASK me.
- Accessibility Resources
  Those of you with documented disabilities will be given the accommodation to which you are entitled based on UB policy. If you need such an accommodation, please let me know and contact the Office of Accessibility Resources, 60 Capen Hall, 645-2608. For more information, see: http://www.buffalo.edu/accessibility
Books on course reserve (Lockwood Library):


Useful Online Resources:


- Nathan Sivin: Guides to Research, Chinese Science and Medicine [http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~nsivin/refe.html](http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~nsivin/refe.html)


Schedule:

Note: All readings are in English. [P] refers to primary sources. All readings are available on UBLearns.

**Unit 1: Chinese medicine today**

In this introductory unit, we will explore many facets of Chinese medicine in contemporary world. By investigating its characteristic features and multifarious practices, we will contemplate the intimate relationship between medical practice, scientific assessment, and historical knowledge.

**Week 1 General introduction**

**Jan. 30: Orientation**

**Feb. 1: A curious glimpse of Chinese medicine**


**Week 2 Scientific evaluation of Chinese medicine**

We are often curious about the efficacy of Chinese medicine—does it actually work? This week’s readings focus on employing modern scientific methods to understand and transform Chinese medicine. What are the pros and cons of this approach? How do we evaluate efficacy? And what are the potential dangers involved in Chinese medicine?

**Feb. 6: Chinese medicine transformed—the case of Tu Youyou**
- Marta Hanson, “Is the 2015 Nobel Prize a turning point for traditional Chinese medicine?” *The Conversation*, Oct. 5, 2015

**Feb. 8: Efficacy and danger**

**Week 3 Contemporary practice and historical knowledge**

This week’s readings focus on the ethnographical and historical approaches to examine Chinese medicine, manifesting its diverse practices on the ground. Compared to scientific evaluation, what do we gain from these humanistic methods? What are the roles of doctors and patients in the practice of Chinese medicine? And importantly, why does historical knowledge matter?

**Feb. 13: Chinese medicine in practice**

**Feb. 15: Historical studies of Chinese medicine**

**Unit 2: The roots of Chinese medical ideas**

In this unit, we will trace the origins of Chinese medicine in antiquity (the Han period and before, i.e. until the 3rd century CE) and study the central concepts of sickness, the body, and drugs that laid the foundation for Chinese healing. We will examine both the canonical works
The Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic and The Divine Farmer’s Classic of Materia Medica) as well as their political and philosophical implications. Moreover, we will also explore alternative medical thoughts that developed outside these canons.

**Week 4: Health and illness**

What is health? What is illness? What are the prominent ways of imagining sickness in ancient China? How do they differ from our understanding of disease today? How does the perception of illness change over time? What is the connection between illness and the perception of the body?

**Feb. 20: Medicine in the Han**

**Feb. 22: The problem of wind**

**Week 5: The body and the world**

What is the “body” in Chinese medicine? Why is there a history to the body? How do physicians in the Chinese and Greek traditions perceive and experience the body differently? What is the relation between the body and the cosmos in China? What is the political implication of a Chinese body?

**Feb. 27: Comparing the body between Chinese and Greek medicine**

**Mar. 1: The body politic**

**Week 6: Medicines, poisons, and foods**

What is a medicine? What distinguishes a medicine from a foodstuff in China? What makes a drug efficacious? How are medicines classified in pharmacological canons? How are they prepared? What is the relation between medical theories and drug therapy? Who consumed these drugs in society?
Mar. 6: The paradox of du
- [P] Excerpts from *The Divine Farmer's Classic of Materia Medica (Shen Nong Bencao Jing)* trans. Sabine Wilms, 2016, TBA.

Mar. 8: Food remedy

Unit 3: Chinese medicine in society
In this unit, we will go beyond medical theories and examine how Chinese medicine was practiced and transformed in society. Inspecting the medieval through the late imperial era (3rd–19th century), we will explore the intimate connection between medicine and religion, the state’s effort to standardize and promulgate medicine, the various types of medical practitioners and their interaction with patients, the role of women in Chinese medicine, and Chinese medicine in the world.

Week 7: Medicine and religion
During the Six Dynasties (220-589) and the Tang (618-907), religious therapies flourished. What are the Daoist and Buddhist approaches to healing? How did religious practitioners visualize the body and conceive the sickness? How did their views differ from (or resemble) those of canonical medicine? How did one religious group differentiate their healing practices from others?

Mar. 13: Daoist medicine

Mar. 15: Buddhist medicine

Week 8: Spring Break

Week 9: Medicine, doctors, and the state
Chinese medicine underwent marked transformation during the Tang and Song (7th to 13th century). How did the image of doctors change during this time? What made them famous? What was the role of the state in standardizing and transmitting medical knowledge? How were medical texts selected, and produced with the rise of printing?
Mar. 27: Sun Simiao, the “King of Medicine”


Mar. 29: Transformation of Chinese medicine in the Song


Week 10: Medicine and social practice

From the Song period on, China’s ruling class became increasingly involved in medical learning and practice. Why and how did these elite scholars practice medicine? How did their approach differ from non-elite healers? How did different types of practitioners learn medicine, and how did they gain credibility? In what way did patients’ experience inform these healers’ practice?

Apr. 3: Medical cases


Apr. 5: Medicine in literature


Week 11: Medicine, gender, and sexuality

Where are women in Chinese medicine? Who were female medical practitioners? What did they practice? In what ways does Chinese medicine conceive women’s bodies and illnesses differently? What are the disorders specific to women? What is the relation between sexual practice and health in traditional China?

Apr. 10: Gender and women

Apr. 12: Sexual practice in traditional China

**Week 12: Chinese medicine in the global context**

Chinese medicine has been, throughout history, interacting with outside knowledge. How did foreign medical ideas and practices influence Chinese medicine? Conversely, how did Chinese medicine travel to other parts of the world and engage with local knowledge? How was Chinese medicine transformed during this process?

Apr. 17: Foreign medicine in China

Apr. 19: The global spread of Chinese medicine

**Unit 4: Chinese medicine in the modern age**

In this final unit, we study the history of Chinese medicine in the past century when it has been facing the serious challenge posed by modern science. We will explore how Chinese medicine negotiated with Western medicine and reinvented itself to gain legitimacy, a contested process that is still going on today.

**Week 13: Challenges and reactions**

How was Western medicine introduced into China? What were different attitudes towards Chinese medicine in the coming of Western medicine? What were the stakes for these various groups? What kind of new features did Chinese medicine acquire during its transformation? How did Chinese medicine engage in China’s modernization agenda?

Apr. 24: Western medicine introduced

Apr. 26: Modernizing Chinese medicine
**Week 14: The birth of TCM and its global impact**

How did Chinese medicine become what we know today? What does Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM, notice all capitalized words here) mean? What is the relation between TCM and various historical practices we have learned in this course? What role did politics play in the making of TCM? How did Chinese medicine spread to the rest of the world? How is it practiced differently from China? What is the future of Chinese medicine?

**May 1: The creation of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)**

**May 3: The globalization of Chinese medicine**

**Week 15: Review**

**May 8: Review**

**May 10: Workshop final projects**