

## History of Chinese Medicine



HIS 338  
Spring 2017  
M & W 2:00-3:20  
Clemens 108

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**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 UBLearn.**
- 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 UBLearn.**
- 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 UBLearn.**
- 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](http://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):**

- *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, ed. TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, 1996.

**Useful Online Resources:**

- A Visual Sourcebook of Chinese Civilization:  
<http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/index.htm>
- Conversion Tables for Two Romanization Systems (Wade-Giles & Pinyin):  
<https://libraries.indiana.edu/chinese-studies-pinyin-wade-giles-conversion-table>
- Nathan Sivin: Guides to Research, Chinese Science and Medicine  
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~nsivin/refe.html>
- Nathan Sivin: Annotated Bibliography of the History of Chinese Science and Medicine  
<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~nsivin/nakbib.html>

**Schedule:**

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

**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**

In class: Watch “The Health Culture: Traditional Chinese Medicine in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” part of the *China: Dragon’s Ascent* series, 2001.

- Ted J. Kaptchuk, *The Web That Has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine*, 1983, Ch. 1, “Medicine East and West: Two Ways of Seeing, Two Ways of Thinking,” 1-39.

## **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**

- Tu Youyou’s Nobel Lecture on December 7, 2015:  
[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/medicine/laureates/2015/tu-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/2015/tu-lecture.html)
- Marta Hanson, “Is the 2015 Nobel Prize a turning point for traditional Chinese medicine?” *The Conversation*, Oct. 5, 2015
- Jia-Chen Fu, “The secret Maoist Chinese operation that conquered malaria – and won a Nobel” *The Conversation*, Oct. 6, 2015
- Paul Unschuld, “Q. and A.: Paul U. Unschuld on Reconciling Chinese and Western Medicine” in *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 2015

### **Feb. 8: Efficacy and danger**

- Ted J. Kaptchuk, “Placebo Studies and Ritual Theory: A Comparative Analysis of Navajo, Acupuncture, and Biomedical Healing,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 366 (2011):1849-1858.
- David Kessler, “Cancer and Herbs,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2000, 342: 1742-3.
- Alex Knapp, “Catherine Kerr on the Science of Meditation,” *Forbes* (Sept 9, 2011),  
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexknapp/2011/09/09/catherine-kerr-on-the-science-of-meditation/#308c8b146613>

## **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**

- Volker Scheid, *Chinese Medicine in Contemporary China*, Ch. 2, “Plurality and Synthesis: Toward a Multisited Ethnography of Chinese Medicine,” 2002, 27-61.

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

- Nathan Sivin, “The History of Chinese Medicine: Now and Anon” *Positions*, 6.3 (1998): 731-762.

## **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**

- [P] Mawangdui medical manuscripts, excerpts from *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*, Donald Harper, 1997, TBA.
- Vivienne Lo, "The Han Period" in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, ed. TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, 2013, 31-64.

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

- [P] Chapter 42 "Discourse on Wind," *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic – Basic Questions* Volume 1, Paul U. Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow. trans., 2011, 625-637. [Focus on the main text.]
- Shigehisa Kuriyama, "The Imagination of Winds and the Development of the Chinese Conception of the Body," in *Body, Subject, and Power in China*, ed. Angela Zito and Tani Barlow, 1994, 23-41.

### **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**

- Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine*, 1999, Preface & Ch. 1, "Grasping the Language of Life," 7-60.

#### **Mar. 1: The body politic**

- Nathan Sivin, "State, Cosmos, and Body in the Last Three Centuries B.C.," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* (June 1995), 55.1: 5-37.

### **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.
- Yan Liu, "Poisonous Medicine in Ancient China," in Philp Wexler ed., *History of Toxicology and Environmental Health* (2015), 89-97.

**Mar. 8: Food remedy**

- Vivienne Lo, "Pleasure, Prohibition and Pain: Food and Medicine in China," in *Of Tripod and Palate*, ed. Roel Sterckx, 2005, 163-185.

**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 (3<sup>rd</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> 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**

- Akira Akahori, "Drug Taking and Immortality," in *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, ed. Livia Kohn and Yoshinobu Sakade, 1989, 73-98.
- Kristofer Schipper, "The Inner Landscape," in *The Taoist Body*, 1993, 100-112.

**Mar. 15: Buddhist medicine**

- Paul Unschuld, "Buddhism and Indian Medicine," in *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas*, 1985, 132-153.

**Week 8: Spring Break****Week 9: Medicine, doctors, and the state**

Chinese medicine underwent marked transformation during the Tang and Song (7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 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”**

- [P] Sun Simiao’s Biography in the *Old Book of Tang (Jiu Tang Shu)*, Sabine Wilms, trans., <http://www.happygoatproductions.com/sun-simiao-biography>.
- [P] Sun Simiao, “On the Sublime Sincerity of the Eminent Physician,” *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, Sabine Wilms, trans., <http://www.happygoatproductions.com/qianjinfang-ethics>.
- Sabine Wilms, “Nurturing Life in Classical Chinese Medicine: Sun Simiao on Healing without Drugs, Transforming Bodies and Cultivating Life,” *Journal of Chinese Medicine*, 93, 2010, 5-13.

**Mar. 29: Transformation of Chinese medicine in the Song**

- TJ Hinrichs, “The Song and Jin Period,” in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, ed. TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, 2013, 97-119.

**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**

- [P] “Yuan-period Medical Cases,” trans. Charlotte Furth, in *Hawai’i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture*, ed. Victor H. Mair, et. al., 2005, 440-443.
- Charlotte Furth, “A Doctor’s Practice: Narratives of the Clinical Encounter in Late Ming Yangzhou,” in *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China’s Medical History, 960-1665*, 1999, 224-265.

**Apr. 5: Medicine in literature**

- Christopher Cullen, “Patients and Healers in Late Imperial China: Evidence from the Jinpingmei,” *History of Science*, 1993, 31: 99-150.

**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**

- Charlotte Furth, “Rethinking Van Gulik: Sexuality and Reproduction in Traditional Chinese Medicine,” in Christina K. Gilmartin et al. eds., *Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State*, 1994, 125-46.
- Shigehisa Kuriyama, “Angry Women and the Evolution of Chinese Medicine,” in Michael Worton and Nana Wilson-Tagoe eds., *National Healths: Gender, Sexuality and Health in a Cross-Cultural Context*, 2004, 179-189.



**Apr. 12: Sexual practice in traditional China**

- Douglas Wile, *Art of the Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics*, 1992, 1-23.

**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**

- Paul D. Buell, “Arabic Medicine in China,” in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, ed. TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, 2013, 132-134.
- Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*, 1963, 176-194.

**Apr. 19: The global spread of Chinese medicine**

- Shigehisa Kuriyama, “The Geography of Ginseng and the Strange Alchemy of Needs,” in Yota Batsaki ed. *The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century*, in press, 61-72.

**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**

- Yi-Li Wu, “The Qing Period,” in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, ed. TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, 2013, 189-207.

**Apr. 26: Modernizing Chinese medicine**

- Lu Xun, “Medicine” (*Yao 藥*), in *The New-Year Sacrifice and Other Stories*, trans. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, 2002, 50-73.
- Sean Hsiang-lin Lei, *Neither Donkey nor Horse: Medicine in the Struggle over China's Modernity*, 2014, Ch. 9, “Research Design as Political Strategy: The Birth of the New Antimalaria Drug *Changshan*,” 193-222.

**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)**

- Kim Taylor, *Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China*, Ch. 3, “Modernizing the old: the creation of a ‘Traditional’ Chinese Medicine, 1953-6” 2011, 63-108.

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

- Linda Barnes, “A World of Chinese Medicine and Healing: Part Two,” in *Chinese Medicine and Healing: An Illustrated History*, ed. TJ Hinrichs and Linda L. Barnes, 2013, 334-378.

**Week 15: Review****May 8: Review****May 10: Workshop final projects**