**Programme Title:**  Reading Classical Chinese: A Cultural Journey into Chinese Language

**Faculty of:**  Arts, School of Chinese

**Level-of-study:**  S4-S6

**Area of Interest:**  Arts

**Programme Period:**  July 12, 2021 to July 16, 2021

**Class Time & Date:**  9:30 - 12:30; Monday - Friday

**Instructor:**  Dr Tang Pui Ling (Associate Professor, School of Chinese)

**Course Description:**

Classical Chinese, which is a written form of Chinese that evolved from the pre-Qin period, has always been considered the most difficult part by Chinese language learners. This is mainly because students generally rely on the methods of rote memorization and recitation in learning classical expressions and structures. Actually, such approaches not only fail to efficiently enhance students’ competence in classical Chinese reading, but also gradually diminish their interests in learning the subject.

Having a profound grasp of classical Chinese is undoubtedly the key to achieve a precise comprehension and understanding of the classical works, which is significant in analyzing and evaluating the texts in an objective and comprehensive manner. We will also be able to gain abundant knowledge in relation to the history and culture of ancient China through studying the cultural perceptions embedded in the language. Linking up the languages between the present and the past, we will be able to identify their interrelations, which is conducive to consolidating our language knowledge.

The course will be conducted in Cantonese and is designed for high school students with basic reading ability of classical Chinese. It consists of two major parts: First, it will foster students’ perceptual knowledge towards classical Chinese through selected readings of representative ancient works. Second, highlighting the language differences between modern and classical Chinese, it will present an overview of the linguistic features of classical Chinese, including changes in word meanings, word-class flexibility, and word orders. With emphasis on both the theoretical and practical aspects, the course will familiarize students with the use of basic linguistic skills in analyzing ancient texts, with an aim to help them attain a higher level of competence in classical text reading.
**Programme Learning Outcomes:**

By completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate a command of the basic linguistic features of classical Chinese;
2. explain the linguistic differences between classical Chinese and modern Chinese;
3. apply the basic principles of classical Chinese to translate classical Chinese texts into standard modern Chinese;
4. understand classical Chinese language in a cultural context.

**Course content and topics:**

1. Introduction
2. Lexicon: changes in word meaning, synonymy and antonymy, and phonetic loans
3. Grammar: word classes, word-class flexibility, basic rules of word order
4. Selected readings of representative classical works

**Assessment**

30% Class participation  
40% Short assignments  
30% Open book test