SYLLABUS

ACUPUNCTURE AND THE CULTURE OF PAIN

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Da’an Pan’s research interests include Chinese aesthetics and poetics, comparative poetics and aesthetics, and the philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine. He is the convener of a poster session at the 1999 ASIANetwork Conference, “Shifting the Sand: The Tibetan Buddhist Sand Mandala and the Cross-Cultural Reconstruction of its Meaning,” 5:00-6:00 P.M., Friday, April 23, in the area of the conference registration tables.

Goals of the course

The course explores the cross-cultural significance of Chinese acupuncture in relation to the culture of pain in the West and particularly the United States. As one of the key components of traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture rises in response to people’s needs to understand pain and cope with it. Throughout its history, acupuncture has always been associated with the concept of pain in theory as well as practice. The concept of pain figures importantly in the West, giving rise to a unique and yet popular subculture. Such a subculture generates a profound sociocultural discourse and turns acupuncture from a foreign custom into a familiar cure.

Using the needle and pain as two antithetical metaphors, the course investigates the symbolism of acupuncture as both a body booster and pain buster and as a means to patient empowerment. The course progresses through three mutually related topics:

1. It first examines the history and theory of Chinese acupuncture in the larger context of traditional Chinese medicine.
2. It then investigates the culture of pain in terms of its psychosocial impact and the triangular relationship between pain, the patient, and the doctor.
3. It finally explores the cross-cultural implications of acupuncture as an alternative means of pain management in the particular context of contemporary American society, in which this ancient Chinese practice gains increasing acceptance among individual patients, the medical community, and the health insurance industries.

The course serves as a complement to the existing course, “The Tao of the Body and the Mind: An Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine,” by focusing on one of the key components of traditional Chinese medicine and by relating Chinese acupuncture to Western culture. It deepens students’ understanding of pain and the culture of pain by examining this concept across cultures and disciplines. This comparative approach contributes toward a genuine appreciation of the uniqueness of traditional Chinese medicine and facilitates a cross-cultural understanding and dialogue between the East and the West.

Instructor’s philosophy and pedagogy

The course aims at empowering students in a congenial and stimulating learning environment. Integrating team work with individual contribution, the class as a whole forms a think tank. The instructor encourages independent and original research as against parrot-thinking and xerox mentality learning. Students are expected to develop critical perspectives and analytical abilities through a mutually challenging and inspiring interaction with the instructor and among themselves. Through focused reading, viewing, and discussions, students will learn to think creatively and critically. Through instructor guided writing of research papers, students will learn to synthesize knowledge, analyze textual-contextual data, and articulate their thinking.
Format of the class

The class format is lecture-discussion with an emphasis on students' engagement and contribution so as to realize the concept of student empowerment in the learning process. Instructor's lectures on weekly topics are augmented by students' questions and comments and complemented by class discussions. The midterm and final brainstorming help students refresh and reinforce their comprehension of course subjects and materials.

Requirements

All texts are read in English translation; there is no foreign language prerequisite. The instructor's support is available to those interested in reading original Chinese texts to enhance their understanding.

Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor their term projects (conceptual as well as technical) and the criteria for grading. They are free to propose their own theses on chosen topics and also have the opportunity to work with the instructor to develop appropriate theses.

Grading

Total grade consists of the following components:

1. Writing assignment (80% in total) includes three research papers on three topics, respectively:
   a. Understanding acupuncture, 4 pages, 20%
   b. Understanding the culture of pain, 4 pages, 20%
   c. Understanding the relationship between acupuncture and the culture of pain, 6 pages, 40%

   All three papers should be word-processed in double space. Students are advised to refer to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (ISBN 0-873562-379-2) and the Muhlenberg Academic Behavior Code governing writing assignments. The basic criteria for grading are creative thinking, critical thinking, and clear thinking.

2. Class engagement (20% in total) includes regular attendance, timely fulfillment of reading and writing assignments, and particularly active participation in class. Passive presence in class is not participation. A total of five absences without legitimate, non-frivolous excuses reduces the total grade by 10%.

Required reading

Chaitow. Acupuncture Treatment of Pain.
Eckman. In the Footsteps of the Yellow Emperor.
Morris. The Culture of Pain.
MacPherson and Kapchuk. Acupuncture in Practice: Case History Insights from the West.

In addition to the above listed books, supplementary readings will be on reserve at the campus library or handed out in class.

Weekly progress

Week 1

Get acquainted with your instructor, classmates, and syllabus.
Topic: The Tao of the Body: From Philosophy to Medicine
Reading: The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine (tr. Ni): Ch. 1, "The Universal Truth;" Between Heaven and Earth (Beinfield and Korngold): Ch. 1, "Our Journey East: Exploring Foreign Territory;" Eckman: Ch. 4, "From Mythology to Medicine: A History of TCM"
Viewing: The Mystery of Chi

Week 2

Topic: The Body as Yin-Yang and the Qi: Physiology, Etiology, and Pathology
Reading: The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine: Ch. 5, "The Manifestation of Yin and Yang from the Macrocosm to the Microcosm;" Ch. 6, "The Interplay of Yin and Yang;" Between Heaven and Earth: Ch. 4, "Cycles of Circles: A Theory of Relativity Yin-Yang"
Viewing: Taoism

Week 3

Topic: The Body as the Five Elements: Metanatomy, Diagnostics, and Therapeutics
Reading: The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine: Ch. 4, "The Truth from the Golden Chamber;" Ch. 23, "The Paradigm of the Five Elemental Phases;" Ch. 67, "The Five Phase Circuits;" Between Heaven and Earth: Ch. 6, "Five Phase Theory: Evolutionary Stages of Transformation"
Viewing: Wu-xing

Week 4

Topic: The Body as the Meridians: The Basics of Acupuncture, I
Reading: The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine: Ch. 59, "Pathways of the Channels;" Ch. 62, "Regulation of the Channels;" Chaitow: Ch. 2, "How Does Acupuncture Work?;" Ch. 3, "How to Use Acupuncture;" Ch. 4, "When to Use Acupuncture"
Viewing: China Zhenjiuology: Introduction

Week 5

Topic: The Body as a Plumbing System: The Basics of Acupuncture, II
Reading: The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine: Ch. 21, "Meridian Pathology and Corresponding Pulse Signs;" Ch. 49, "Channel Pathology in Accordance with the Energy Almanac;" Between Heaven and Earth: Ch. 13, "Acupuncture: A Unified Field of Invisible Channels" (continued)
Viewing: China Zhenjiuology: Jingluo
Week 6
Topic: Acupuncture as Body-"Plumbing": The Basics of Acupuncture, III
Reading: *Between Heaven and Earth*: Ch. 13, "Acupuncture: A Unified Field of Invisible Channels" (continued)
Viewing: *China Zhenjiuology: Points; Needling Methods*

Week 7
Midterm brainstorm
Paper #1 due before fall recess.

Week 8
Topic: The Body of Pain
Reading: *Pain in America* (Sheridan): Ch. 1, "Feeling Pain;" Morris: Ch. 7, "Pain is Always in Your Head;" *Migraine* (Sacks): Ch. 1, "Common Migraine"
Viewing: *Cries and Whispers*

Week 9
Topic: The Culture of Pain
Reading: *Pain in America*: Ch. 2, "Psychosocial Aspects of Pain;" Morris, Ch. 3, "An Invisible Epidemic"

Week 10
Topic: The Triangle of Pain: Patient, the Doctor, and Pain
Viewing: *Healing from Within*

Week 11
Topic: The Tao of Pain: Tong (Pain) vs. Tong (Unclogged)
Reading: *Pain in America*: Ch. 10, "Meanings," Ch. 11, "In Search of Solutions;" Morris: Ch. 2, "The Meanings of Pain," Ch. 12, "The Future of Pain"
Paper #2 due.

Week 12
Topic: The Needle vs. Pain, I
Reading: Eckman: Ch. 5, "History as Mystery: Traditional Acupuncture's Journey to the West;" Chaitow: Ch. 1, "Acupuncture for Pain Relief," Ch. 7, "Acupuncture Anaesthesia," MacPherson and Kaptchuk: Ch. 7, "Treating the Untreatable," (Haines), Ch. 40, "Headaches Angels, and Guiding Spirits," (Young)
Viewing: *China Zhenjiuology: Diagnosis and Treatment of Internal Medicine*

Week 13
Topic: The Needle vs. Pain, II
Reading: Chaitow: Ch. 6, "Formulary for the Treatment of Pain;" MacPherson and Kaptchuk: Ch. 12, "Elonor in the Dance," (Connelly), Ch. 22, "Challenges That Take Their Toll," (Cote)
Viewing: *China Zhenjiuology: Diagnosis and Treatment of Gynecology and Pediatrics*

Week 14
Topic: The Needle or the Pill, This is a Question
Reading: *Pain in America*: Ch. 9, "Relieving Pain;" *Time* Special issue: "The Frontiers of Medicine: Challenging the Main Stream," (Langone); MacPherson and Kaptchuk: Ch. 1, "The Cruel Virus: A Case of HIV and AIDS," (Thong), Ch. 31, "Coffee, Marijuana, and Back Pain," (Nielsen)
Viewing: *China Zhenjiuology: Diagnosis and Treatment of E.N.T.*

Week 15
Final brainstorm
Paper #3 due.

Contact: Da'an Pan, Philosophy, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA 18104; Tel.: 610/821-3642; <pan@hal.muhlenberg.edu>

**CORRESPONDENCE**

From Madeline Chu, Kalamazoo College
What is the URL for the ASIANNetwork website? Thanks.
*Editor's note:* The ASIANetwork website is found at <www.asianetwork.org>

From Martha G. Butt, Payap University, Thailand
John [Butt] and I thought the 1998 ASIANetwork Conference meetings were very good. I hope I will have the opportunity to attend this year.
Contact: Martha Butt, Payap University, Muang District, Chiang Mai 50000, Thailand; Tel.: 66 53 241 255; Fax: 66 53 241 983

From C. Joseph Barnabas, Maryville College
I am a United Board Visiting Scholar from India at Maryville College. My research is on Indian immigration to the United States. I have published papers on the socio-economic life of Indian immigrants in Trinidad, on early 19th century laws in India relating to emigration from India, and on the 19th c. experience of women emigrants. I would like to hear from [ASIANetwork historians] interested in immigration.
Contact: C. Joseph Barnabas, P.O. Box 2887, Maryville College, 502 East L.A. Parkway, Maryville, TN 37804