

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
UG Course Syllabus

Cantonese for Chinese Language Background Students I

LANG1133

3 Credits (free elective)

Pre-/co-requisites: LANG 1133 is open to UST undergraduates of Chinese language background (including exchange students) and for complete beginners only.

Name of Course Coordinator: Polung LI

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Office Hours: Available by appointment. Students should contact their section instructor directly.

Course Description

LANG 1133 is a credit-bearing Cantonese elective designed for undergraduate students at UST who have a Chinese language background. The course aims to equip students with the communicative competence in Cantonese necessary for daily life and networking in Hong Kong, thereby facilitating their smooth integration into the local community. Learning activities focus on developing listening and speaking skills to build learners' confidence and fluency in using Cantonese for everyday communication. Students are expected to attend three hours of class and complete up to six hours of out-of-class work per week. The course is offered in the Fall, Spring and Summer terms.

Course Schedule and Topics

Weeks	Topics
1	Course introduction and self-introduction
1-12	Recognizing frequently used Chinese characters and phrases Knowing the differences between Cantonese and Putonghua in lexical and syntactic choice
2	Making friends
2-12	Basic knowledge of Cantonese Phonology Introduction to common Cantonese slang
3	Campus life
4	Time and date
5	Festivals
6	University life
7	Making telephone calls
8	Listening comprehension test and in-class speech
9	Ordering food and drinks
10	Exploring Hong Kong
11	Dress and appearance
12	Consultation
13	Group project presentation, in-class speech and dialogue with instructor

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the fundamental features of the Cantonese phonological and tonal systems.
2. Demonstrate basic knowledge of Cantonese cultural norms relevant to daily communication.
3. Perform basic listening and speaking tasks related to personal and school life for daily social interaction.
4. Apply basic Cantonese grammatical structures for effective oral communication.
5. Distinguish key lexical and syntactic differences between Cantonese and Putonghua.
6. Express personal ideas clearly in simple Cantonese conversations.
7. Organize short spoken narratives coherently with logical sequencing.

Assessment and Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve.

Assessments

Assessment Task	Contribution to overall Course grade (%)	Due date
A1a: In-class listening comprehension	15%	Week 8
A1b: In-class speech (2 minutes, individual)	20%	
A2: Group research project presentation	10%	Week 13
A3a: In-class speech (1 minute; individual)	15%	Week 13
A3b: Dialogue with instructor (2 minutes; individual)	15%	
Peer evaluation	5%	Week 13
4 x Microlearning tasks	10%	Throughout the course
3 x Canvas discussions	10%	Throughout the course

*Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within ten working days after the due date.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Main Assessment Tasks

A1a: In-class listening comprehension

A1b: In-class speech (2 minutes, individual)

- ILO3, ILO4, ILO5
- These tasks are designed to assess students' abilities in three key areas: performing basic communicative tasks in listening and speaking relating to personal and school life (ILO3), applying basic Cantonese grammar for effective oral communication (ILO4), and distinguishing lexical and syntactic differences between Cantonese and Putonghua (ILO5).

A2: Group research project presentation (10 minutes)

- ILO2, ILO7
- This task assesses students' ability to (1) demonstrate basic knowledge of Cantonese cultural norms relevant to daily communication (ILO2) and (2) Express personal ideas clearly in simple Cantonese conversations (ILO7).

A3a: In-class speech (1 minute, individual)

A3b: Dialogue with instructor (2 minutes, individual)

- ILO3, ILO4, ILO5
- These tasks assess students' abilities to (1) perform basic listening and speaking tasks relating to personal and school contexts for daily communication (ILO3); (2) apply basic Cantonese grammar for effective oral communication (ILO4); and (3) recognize lexical and syntactic differences between Cantonese and Putonghua (ILO5).

Grading Rubrics

Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be provided on the course Canvas site. These rubrics clearly outline the criteria used for evaluation. Students can refer to these rubrics to understand how their work will be assessed.

Final Grade Descriptors

Grade	Level	Descriptor
A	Excellent	Demonstrates exceptional Cantonese listening and speaking skills, communicating naturally and confidently with precise vocal and non-verbal techniques. Skillfully uses multimodal approaches to create cohesive and sophisticated discourse for diverse tasks such as presenting, narrating, arguing, and explaining. Communication is underpinned by high-level creative and critical thinking, advanced digital literacy, and the ability to skillfully synthesize information from multiple sources. Also critically reflects on personal learning progress with specific evidence, collaborates effectively in complex group tasks, and proactively solves communication problems with minimal support.
B	Good	Demonstrates the ability to use relatively fluent Cantonese with effective non-verbal communication. Applies some basic multimodal elements to create generally clear discourse for diverse language tasks such as describing, comparing, and giving opinions. Communication is supported by foundational critical thinking, solid digital literacy, and the ability to analyze straightforward mark information. Also exhibits clear evidence of self-reflection, cooperative learning, and proactive problem-solving.
C	Satisfactory	Uses adequate spoken Cantonese to complete basic communication tasks. Applies emerging analytical skills to identify simple patterns in Cantonese pronunciation, tones, or sentence structure.
D	Marginal Pass	Demonstrates minimal functional ability in Cantonese for a very limited range of simple, highly predictable communication tasks. Shows inconsistent but occasional evidence of basic communicative awareness.
F	Fail	Does not demonstrate a sufficient grasp of course content—unable to perform even basic Cantonese listening or speaking tasks. Shows a significant proficiency gap such that [routine communication is largely impossible.

Course AI Policy

Students are encouraged to leverage all available tools to enhance their Cantonese communication. Concurrently, they are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. While the use of generative AI (GenAI) or other tools is permitted and carries no penalty, it must not substitute for a student's original work. All assessed assignments and presentations must represent the student's own preparation and effort.

Communication and Feedback

Individual assessment marks will be posted on Canvas within ten working days the submission deadline. Feedback will highlight both strengths and areas for improvement. Students are encouraged to review this feedback and may consult the instructor with any questions within five working days of receiving it.

Resubmission Policy

Resubmissions are not accepted, except in exceptional circumstances.

Required Texts and Materials

Course materials and additional resources are provided via Canvas.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.