

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

UG Course Syllabus

Chinese Communication in Interpersonal Relations

LANG1425

3 Credits

Pre-/co-requisites: N/A

Exclusions:

LANG 1101-1103, LANG 1120-1127 (prior to 2022-23), LANG 1411-1415, LANG 1511-1515

Note: Students who would like to enroll in Chinese courses should refer to the [Guidelines for Chinese Course Selection](#) in advance.

Name of Course Coordinator: Dr NUO Min

Email of Course Coordinator: lcnuomin@ust.hk

If you have any questions, your first point of contact should be the instructor of your section. Please find the email address on Canvas.

Office Hours of Course Coordinator: Available by appointment only.

Course Description

LANG1425 is designed to develop the interpersonal communication skills necessary to engage in Chinese cultural and digital contexts. Through exploring essential Chinese concepts such as *rénqíng* (human touch), harmony (*hé*) and hierarchy, students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the values that shape interpersonal relationships among family, friends and colleagues in Chinese society. The course emphasizes real-world applications, exploring how linguistic, cultural, and social variations influence communication among diverse Mandarin-speaking communities. Students will develop essential skills like active listening, interpreting non-verbal cues, and practicing culturally appropriate communication to foster empathy and strong connections. Students will also engage in practical activities such as analyzing interactions, discussing culturally sensitive conflicts, and applying strategies for navigating interpersonal dynamics. By integrating traditional principles with modern tools such as WhatsApp and WeChat, the course equips students to build meaningful relationships in personal and professional contexts.

Course Outline

Week	The topics covered
1	• Introduction: What Interpersonal Communication is, Why it Matters, and How Significant Cultural Differences are
2	• Interpersonal Communication in Chinese Cultural Contexts: Face, Harmony, Politeness and Hierarchy
3	• Self-Awareness and Building and Sustaining <i>Guanxi</i> (Network of Relations)
4	• Multifaceted Nature of Chinese Communication, I

5	• Multifaceted Nature of Chinese Communication, II
6	• Active Listening and Empathy
7	• Assertiveness and Emotions
8	• Consolidation & Consultations
9	• Assessment
10	• Interpersonal Communication in Conflict Management
11	• Interpersonal Relationships and Digital Communication
12	• Inter-regional Communication among Diverse Mandarin-Speaking Communities
13	• Consolidation & Assessment

Methods of instruction: Interactive teaching supports active learning through group discussions, collaborative activities, peer sharing, practice and feedback.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

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

1. Critically analyze and evaluate interpersonal communication, applying relevant principles and concepts to identify patterns, challenges and cultural nuances.
2. Demonstrate cultural understanding and sensitivity when applying Chinese communication values and practices in social and professional interactions.
3. Use culturally appropriate language and strategies to build and sustain meaningful relationships and manage conflicts in social and professional contexts.
4. Use and adapt language and communication strategies accurately and effectively in diverse spoken and written contexts.
5. Demonstrate active listening, empathy and emotional awareness when interpreting and responding to verbal and non-verbal cues.
6. Express needs, opinions and emotions clearly and appropriately in spoken and written communication using culturally appropriate language, tone and style.
7. Demonstrate intercultural awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in communication across regional Mandarin-speaking communities.
8. Reflect on personal language and communication goals and strategies used in interpersonal interactions.

Assessment and Grading

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

Assessment	Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date
Assessment 1	Written Assignment: Personal Reflection on Interpersonal Communication in Chinese Contexts	15%	Approx. Week 4
Assessment 2	Part 1: Group Presentation on Interviews about Real-Life Communication Challenges	25%	In class, approx. Week 8
	Part 2: Peer Evaluation	5%	
Assessment 3	Part 1: Multi-Party Discussion on a Conflict or Disagreement	25%	In class, approx. Week 13
	Part 2: Peer Evaluation	5%	

Others	Course Reflection	10%	In class. Week 13
	Online Quizzes	5%	Whole semester
	Course Participation	10%	Whole semester

Mapping of Course ILOs to Main Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Personal Reflection on Interpersonal Communication in Chinese Contexts	CILO-1, CILO-2, CILO-4, CILO-7	This task assesses the students' ability to evaluate their interpersonal communication by using relevant principles to identify patterns, challenges, and cultural differences (CILO-1). They are required to share their personal insights on intercultural awareness (CILO-7) to demonstrate cultural understanding and sensitivity (CILO-2) in their individual reflection (CILO-4) of 1000 characters.
Group Presentation: Real-Life Communication Challenges	CILO-1, CILO-2, CILO-4, CILO-7	This task assesses the students' ability to analyze and evaluate specific interpersonal communication challenges within a Chinese cultural context (CILO-1), drawing on their understanding of Chinese communication principles (CILO-2), their presentation skills in articulating their opinions (CILO-4), and their awareness of cultural differences (CILO-7).
Multi-Party Discussion	CILO-2, CILO-3, CILO-4, CILO-5, CILO-6, CILO-7	This task assesses the students' ability to deal with an issue in the discussion (CILO-2) by collaboratively addressing (CILO-4) the problem (CILO-3) using cultural communication principles such as active listening, empathy, assertiveness, and cultural awareness (CILO-5) to express opinions and emotions clearly (CILO-6) and reach a solution (CILO-7).
Reflection on the Multi-Party Discussion and the whole course	CILO-1, CILO-2, CILO-4, CILO-7	This task assesses the students' ability to evaluate their own performance (CILO-1) in the discussion by relating it to relevant interpersonal communication and pragmatic principles and concepts taught in the course (CILO-2). Students will reflect on their strengths, areas for improvement, and how their communication shaped the outcome. They are required to write at least an 800-character essay (CILO-4) to demonstrate intercultural awareness of linguistic, regional, and cultural differences in communication (CILO-7).

Grading Rubrics

Detailed 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:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates abilities to use sophisticated Putonghua; non-verbal communication skills; and rich, coherent and expressive written Chinese, and apply an engaging multimodal approach to create discourses for various language tasks, which are based on a high level of creative thinking, critical thinking, audience awareness, information analysis and synthesis. Displays significant achievement in self-reflection, cooperative learning, and problem-solving initiative.
B	Good Performance	Demonstrates abilities to use fluent Putonghua; appropriate non-verbal communication; and accurate, clear, concise and coherent written Chinese, and apply some multimodal elements to produce discourses for various language tasks, which are based on critical thinking, audience awareness, information analysis and synthesis. Shows a strong sense of self-reflection, cooperative learning and problem-solving initiative.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Demonstrates abilities to use Putonghua, some non-verbal communication, and adequate written Chinese to complete discourses, which are based on some capacity for critical thinking, information analysis and synthesis. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Shows a certain level of ability to use Putonghua and written Chinese to do simple communication. Has the potential to further enhance Chinese language proficiency, awareness of communication, and/or learning motivation and attitude.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the course contents and requirements. Shows very limited abilities in the Chinese language and/or lack of effort towards achieving learning goals.

Course AI Policy

At HKUST, we embrace innovation and technology including Generative AI. Our approach is to rely firmly on pedagogical principles, with an ethical commitment to ensure fairness.

If students use AI tools in the course assessments, they must adhere to the principles of academic integrity and make a declaration at the end of each oral or written assessment. The declaration should include: (1) Was any AI tool used in this assessment? (2) What tool was used and how was it used?

Any misdeclaration will be regarded as a violation of academic integrity and result in serious consequences. See the section “Academic Integrity” below for details.

To know more about how to use GenAI tools appropriately in language courses, students are required to complete a Canvas learning module developed by the Center for Language Education. The module can be found on the course Canvas site. Students should ensure that they have completed it before they come to class.

Communication and Feedback

Marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks after the due day. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

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.

Plagiarism

In CLE assignments, students should not copy from others nor submit the same work for multiple courses. Source materials must be explicitly acknowledged.

Assignments with evidence of plagiarism may score a zero and be followed up with your department's Dean. To demonstrate academic integrity and avoid plagiarism, you are expected to:

- paraphrase, summarize, reference and synthesize ideas from sources
- refrain from copying expressions and ideas directly from any source (e.g. from another student, a video, an article, etc.) without proper acknowledgement