



OMS Reading List for Chinese Studies

Checklist of Actions for Oxbridge preparation

- ❑ Complete the course and college research booklet which covers entry requirements for your course (e.g. admissions tests during interviews). Use it to help you make informed choices.
- ❑ Respond and maintain email contact with your OMS Mentor and do not hesitate to ask questions which may help your Oxbridge preparation.
- ❑ Practise critical thinking by reading broadsheets i.e. The Daily Telegraph, The Independent or The Guardian preferably every day (or else at weekends). Think critically about what you have read; what issues are raised?; What assumptions are being made? What information is being relied on to draw which conclusions? How would you frame a counter-argument?
- ❑ Make note of subject-related terminology to look up definitions with the aim of working them into future academic discussions on your chosen Oxbridge course.
- ❑ Keep a "Learning Log". Note down (i) book titles/ articles (ii) author (iii) your thoughts, feelings and observations (iv) context and relevance of the book/article (v) whether you agree with what you have read.
- ❑ You do not have to read suggested books from cover to cover, rather read chapters alongside and try to put into practice the critical tools and theories you are discovering.

Subject specific preparation

Suggested reading by Oxford course:

Rather than listing individual titles, we suggest looking for works of Chinese fiction, poetry, and philosophical works, many of which are available in paperback. For more general surveys on China's culture and language consult:

- *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, ed. Patricia Ebrey, 1996.
- *A Cultural Atlas of China*, Mark Elvin and Caroline Blunsden, Oxford, 1983.
- *The Search for Modern China*, Jonathan Spence, New York, 1991, 1999.
- *Chinese*, Jerry Norman, Cambridge, 1988.

The course handbook can be found at: https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/access/content/group/a55c44d3-9f21-4dec-b48c-2dc6fa4e4bee/Handbooks/Handbook_BA_Chinese.pdf

Reading suggested by the AMES Cambridge course for Chinese

- S. Adshead, *China in World History*
- K. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*
- V. Hansen, *The Open Empire: A History of China to 1600*
- R. Mitter, *China's Bitter Revolution*
- J. Spence, *The search for Modern China*
- M. Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*
- I. Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*.
- P. Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*
- E. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*. 2 vols.
- M. Hane, *Premodern Japan* (Westview Press)
- G. Totman, *Japan before Perry* (Univ. of California Press)
- J. Hunter, *The Emergence of Modern Japan* (Longman)
- M. Barnhart, *Japan and the World Since 1868* (Edward Arnold)

The course handbook can be found at:

<http://www.ames.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/Undergraduate%20student%20handbook%202013-2014.pdf>



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Language

Make a start of learning the language prior to coming to Cambridge, it is advised to read the following sections in the Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary (ISBN:0-19-929853):

- Basic rules of writing Chinese characters;
- Learning and lifestyle kit;
- Dictionary know-how;
- The Chinese words and phrases you must know;
- Numbers;
- Phrasefinder;
- Dates for your diary;
- Quick reference guide to life and culture;
- Social survival guide.

Other strongly recommended reading:

- **Adler, Joseph. *Chinese Religions***. (London: Routledge, 2002)
A concise introduction to the history of religion in China and its ramifications in China today.
- **Cahill, James. *Chinese Painting*** (Lausanne: Skira, 1960)
An excellent introduction to the major stylistic developments of Chinese painting from ca. 800 to 1800. Written thirty years ago in fluent prose, it remains unrivalled in its ability to stimulate interest in and understanding of this grand tradition.
- **Chang, Jung. *Wild Swans: three daughters of China*** (London: Flamingo, 1991).
The compelling account of three generations of women in a family in twentieth century China, this is a highly readable introduction to the turbulent changes that form the background to the China of today.
- **Gernet, Jacques. *Daily life in China: on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276*** (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962).
A richly evocative account of Chinese urban culture in the thirteenth century, it serves as a highly informative and enjoyable introduction to many features of Chinese society and thought.
- **Graham, A. C., *Poems of the Late T'ang*** (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977, reprinted). A masterly translation of complex poems from the mid-eighth to the early tenth century, plus a sensitive introduction to the place of these famous poems in the overall development of Chinese poetic traditions.
- **Han, Lifeng; Wu, Emma Lejun; Cai, Hua, *Insider China*** (Lexus Ltd., 2009; ISBN 1-904737-17-X) A truly fascinating portrayal of Chinese life and culture. Here you have the real insider's knowledge of China and things Chinese, a vast range both ancient and modern. This book offers a window on the knowledge of Chinese culture, history, personalities, events, beliefs and customs that Chinese people have simply because they are Chinese.
- **Huang, Ray. *1587, a year of no significance; the Ming dynasty in decline*** (London: Yale University Press, 1981). Through a series of perceptive biographies the author unravels for the Western reader many of the more perplexing features of the Chinese scene. No other account of traditional Chinese government captures the feel of political life in early modern China with such poignant authenticity.
- **Loewe, Michael, *Bing: From Farmer's Son to Magistrate in Han China*** (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2011). In this engaging volume, Michael Loewe (Lecturer in Chinese Studies at Cambridge from 1963 to 1990) mines the written and material records to depict the imagined life of an ordinary person, Bing Wu, from the hardships of his earliest years on a rural farm to his retirement from a respected position in government service.
- **Marks, Robert B. *China: Its Environment and History*** (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012) A comprehensive history of how Chinese history has shaped and been shaped by its relationship to nature and the environment, from Peking man to the present.
- **Needham, Joseph. *The grand titration; science and society in East and West*** (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1969). Dr Needham is the pioneer of the study of the history of science and technology in China and the founder of the Needham Research Institute at



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Cambridge. This volume of his essays contains many of the ideas that inspire his world-famous multi-volume *Science and Civilization in China*, published by Cambridge University Press.

- **Norman, Jerry.** *Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
A thorough and concise account of the Chinese language, its history and modern dialects and of the script and its history.
- **Hawkes, David, translator.** *The Story of the Stone; a Chinese novel by Cao Xueqin* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin Books, 1973). Also known as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, this eighteenth century masterpiece of Chinese fiction tells of the rise and fall of a large upper-class family. Its rich detail and psychological realism combine to fascinate the reader with the complexity of late imperial life. It is essential, and enjoyable, reading for any student of China.
- **Ko, Dorothy.** *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China* (California: Stanford University Press, 1994).
- **Kuhn, Philip.** *Soulstealers; the Chinese sorcery scare of 1768* (London: Harvard University Press, 1990). A highly insightful portrayal of Chinese social and political life in the eighteenth century. Novel in its focus on popular religious obsessions, it makes a significant watershed in Western writing about Chinese social history.
- **Lopez, Donald S.** *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History and Teachings.* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001). Introduction to Buddhism that pays adequate attention to its developments across East Asia.
- **Chan, A., Madsen, R. and Unger, J.** *Chen Village under Mao and Deng* (London: University of California Press, 1992). A village level account of the dramatic political changes in China during the first three decades of Communist rule, it neatly captures the impact of revolution on individuals and their families.
- **Schipper, Kristofer.** *The Taoist Body.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Introduction to Daoism from one of the doyens of the field.
- **Schram, Stuart.** *Mao Tse-tung* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970). A compelling biography of the most influential figure of twentieth century China as well as an informative account of its turbulent history.
- **Shapiro, Judith.** *Mao's War against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China.* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- **Spence, Jonathan.** *The Death of Woman Wang* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1980). A re-creation, part historical and part fictional of the living conditions in a poor part of China in the late seventeenth century, this short work presents a compelling account of the problems of being poor and female in traditional China.
- **Wolf, Margery.** *The house of Lim; a study of a Chinese farm family* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968). A good introduction to the dynamics of Chinese family relations. As enjoyable as it is instructive.
- **Yu, Anthony.** *State and Religion in China: Historical and Textual Perspectives.* (Chicago: Open Court, 2005). Discusses the complex relations between state and religion throughout Chinese history from a Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist angle.
- **Yuan, B. and Church, S.K.** *Oxford Beginner's Chinese Dictionary.* (Oxford University Press 2006).