COURSE DESCRIPTION

Chinese medicine has always been built on the foundation of the ancient texts. Fortunately, more are translated into English each year. But even when English translations are available, it takes a different way of thinking to make use of them. In this class, we will discuss how to approach the classics. We will also read selections from books of various dynasties to get a taste for different authors, books, and styles of medicine.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn how to approach the classics of medicine.
2. Explore various essential passages from the medical classics.
3. Discuss how the ancients viewed the role of the physician.
4. Research the basis of the medicine we practice today.

COURSE PREREQUISITIES

Fundamentals of Oriental Medicine

REQUIRED TEXTS

Handouts will be provided.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Projects, papers, and homework constitute 100% of the grade.

GRADING SCALE: 100-90% A, 89-80% B, 79-70% C, 69% and below F

SPECIAL NOTES

Read all materials before each class. Handouts will be provided.

CLASS ONE (The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.)
Approaching the classics

CLASS TWO
The characteristics of a good physician

CLASS THREE
The mind of the doctor while needling, medicine as a dao
CHINESE MEDICAL CLASSICS

CLASS FOUR
Nourishing life

CLASS FIVE
Emotions and spirit

CLASS SIX
Various excerpts from famous physicians of the past

CLASS SEVEN
Time and medicine

CLASS EIGHT
Yi Jing and medicine

CLASS NINE
Descriptions of herbs and points from ancient books

CLASS TEN
Case studies from ancient doctors

CLASS ELEVEN
Final Exam

REFERENCE MATERIAL

FACULTY INFO

Wilcox, Lorraine
Please check with instructor during class to get updated contact info.

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Reading the Classics
Week 1: Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

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Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

• The term 經 jīng, which is rendered here as classic, originally meant ‘warp’, the threads that run the long way in a woven piece of cloth. They hold the cloth together and define its length and width. Metaphorically, this refers to a book whose contents are meant to last through the ages, and help define important elements of, in this case, medicine.

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Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

• Not every old book is considered a classic. Technically speaking, the classics of Chinese medicine are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>书名</th>
<th>作者</th>
<th>书名</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huáng Dì Nèi Jīng – Sū Wèn</td>
<td>王冰</td>
<td>The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine – Simple Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huáng Dì Nèi Jing – Lǐng Shì</td>
<td>王冰</td>
<td>The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine – Magic Pivot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nán Jīng</td>
<td>王冰</td>
<td>The Classic of Difficulties</td>
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| Shíng Hán Lǐn            | 吴鞠通 | On Cold Damage  
| Jūn Guì Yáo Liè           | 吴鞠通 | Outline from the Golden Cabinet  
| Shén Nóng Běi Cāo         | 吴鞠通 | Shen Nong’s Materia Medica |

But we will look at other ancient books as well.

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Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

• The medicine we can learn from the classics and other old books is by definition the medicine of the educated literate doctors.

Wáng Bīng

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Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

• Folk healers and illiterate doctors with a family tradition were not able to write down their ideas. This does not mean their medicine was ineffective, only that it was not preserved for us to study, hundreds or thousands of years later.
Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

Within the old books and classics, you can find two types of writings:

• Technical information about points, herbs, formulas, diseases, case studies, etc. Usually this is not too hard to understand and translate. One can read this type of information more casually and still comprehend the meaning.

• More philosophical and theoretical aspects of medicine: One needs a different mindset to read, study, or translate this material.

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

1. Slow down, be reverent and meditative. These writings were not meant to be skimmed. Of course you can skim a book to find a section you are interested in, but once you find it, slow down. This knowledge was considered precious and sometimes there are warnings not to leak it to unworthy people.

From Zhēn Jiǔ Dà Chéng, Volume 9

迺孫真人所製,今用亦驗。務要誠敬,毋令婦女雞犬見,此方全真多自秘,緣人不古,若心不合道,治不易療也。茲故表而出之。《针灸大成·卷九》

The thunder-fire needle was formulated by True Person Sūn, and it is still effective in modern times. Be sure to be sincere and respectful. Do not let women, chickens, or dogs see. This formula is completely authentic and has often been kept secret because people have not [followed] the ancients. If one’s heart is not joined with the dao, the treatment cannot easily cure. Now I have brought it out.

From Zhēn Jiǔ Dà Chéng, Volume 9

[1] “Do not let chickens, women, and dogs see.” This must be a standard phrase for treatments that are considered special. It is also found with a formula for jaundice using peach in Běn Cǎo Gāng Mù, for example. Peach is also considered to have some magical qualities.

[2] True Person Sūn refers to Sūn Sīmiǎo. Yáng Jìzhōu believed this formula came from Sūn although none of Sūn’s extant writings contain it.

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

2. Medicine is a dao. Cultivate yourself to understand it. It is based on Chinese philosophy. It is probably not enough to just read the old books. You have to let them change you and flow through you.
Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

3. The older the book, generally the less it focuses on the material, and the more it focuses on qi or spirit, the insubstantial.

When qi arrives, it will have effect. The effect can be counted on. It is like the wind blowing away the clouds. It is bright like seeing the blue sky. This is the complete dao of needling.

*Magic Pivot*, Chapter 1

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Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

4. Man is intimately connected with nature and time; number is also meaningful.

- The human body is a small heaven and earth.
- Medicine is filled with images from nature:
  - the channels as flow of water, the six qi from the outside causing parallel conditions on the inside, and so forth.
- It is not just nature:
  - the old books use military analogies for the fight between right qi and evils.
  - They describe the organs as government officials.
  - They use images of mother and child or husband and wife.

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《靈樞·九鍼十二原第一》

Líng Shū, Chapter 41

The Yellow Emperor said: I have heard that heaven is yáng and earth is yīn, the sun (day) is yáng and the moon (month) is yīn. How do these join with man?

Note that 日 rì can mean sun or day and 月 yuè can mean moon or month.

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Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

5. Go back in time. Forget what you know now, remember what they knew then – pay attention to the time it was written. Create a virtual Hán (or Yuán or Míng) mind when reading the classics. Channel the old doctor like an actor channels a role.

- There is a list of dynasties below.
At the crucial moment when the thirteen points have all been inserted, the physician should ask the patient which ghost or which demon made this disaster. The patient himself will tell the cause. Record it bit by bit with your brush. When the patient has finished talking, the mania will stop. Then it is appropriate to withdraw the needles. [1]

[1] In Chinese exorcisms using incantations, seals, and talismans, it is a common practice to interrogate the ghost or demon before completing the exorcism. For more details on these matters, see Chinese Magical Medicine by Michel Strickmann (2002).

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

6. **Chinese medicine is rooted in Chinese language so even if you don’t study Chinese language, pay attention to the way things are said.**
   - For example, treatment principles are often four character phrases in Chinese.
   - Ideas are often explained by comparing something in the body to something in nature or society.

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

7. **Look for the patterns in the words and parallel sentences.** Look for rhyme and rhythm. Know that something said in a few words in Chinese may be many words in English.

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

8. **Pay attention to terminology and translation issues.**
   - Does the book provide a glossary?
   - Does the book describe their philosophy of translation in the introduction?
   - Does the book seem to use consistent terminology from beginning to end?
   - Does the book include the Chinese as well as the English?
   If not, it may be giving a very muddy translation.
Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

9. Read the non-medical classics and books on culture and history.
   • Some say we need to study these to understand the medicine.
   • But also, these were books that the authors studied and all their readers would be familiar with, so as they wrote, they assumed you would catch quotations and references.

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

9. Read the non-medical classics and books on culture and history.
   • Chinese philosophy is the basis of Chinese medicine. Chinese medicine is applied Chinese philosophy. Reading the philosophers helps you understand the medicine.
   • Knowing the history helps you understand the concerns of the doctors at the time.
   • Being familiar with the lifestyle can be a key to understanding the medicine.
   • Even reading novels that take place in ancient China can fill in some background.

Approaching the Classics of Chinese Medicine

• Handouts: Table of dynasties, but not included in the PowerPoint.

Some guidelines for reading the philosophical or theoretical writings of Chinese medicine

10. Take what you need and leave the rest.
   • Sometimes texts have become corrupted and no longer make sense.
   • Sometimes texts were made to go with oral instruction, but without the oral instruction, we have lost the key.
   • Sometimes the authors assumed you knew things that we have since forgotten.
   • Sometimes the theories and techniques can be understood but cannot be used in modern times.
   • And different ideas appeal to different people... so if a section of an old book isn’t appealing to you, skip it and jump to the next section.

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《莊子·知北游》
Zhuāngzǐ - Zhī Travels North (Zhōu dynasty)

人之生，氣之聚也。聚則為生，散則為死。若死生為徒，吾又何患。故萬物一也……故曰通天下一氣耳。聖人貴一。

Human life is the gathering of qi. When it gathers, there is life. When it disperses, there is death. If life and death belong to the same category, then why should I worry? That is why the ten thousand things are really one... That is why it is said that there is only one qi under all of heaven. The sages value oneness.

《格致餘論·飲食色欲箴序》
Extra Treatises Based on Investigation and Inquiry
Preface to Advice on Food, Drink, and Sexual Desire

元·朱震亨著

This is the first chapter of Extra Treatises Based on Investigation and Inquiry (Gé Zhì Yú Lùn).
Preface to Advice on Food, Drink, and Sexual Desire

傳曰: 飲食男女, 人之大欲存焉。
The Commentary says:
The great desires of humans are for food and drink, males and females [sex]. [1]

[1] This is from 《禮記·禮運第九》 Chapter 9 of Lǐ Jì (The Book of Rites).

予每思之, 男女之欲, 所關甚大;
飲食之欲, 於身尤切;
世之淪胥陷溺於其中者, 蓋不少矣。
I often think about this.
The desire of males and females [sex]: concern with it is extremely great;
The desire for food and drink: the body is particularly eager.
There must be quite a few in the world who have sunk into addiction.

苟志於道, 必先於此究心焉。因作飲食、色欲二箴, 以示弟侄, 并告諸同志云。
If your mind is on the dào, you must first investigate this in your heart.
Because of this I give advice on both food, drink and sexual desire, in order to instruct the next generation [of males] and inform all my acquaintances.

飲食箴
Advice on Food and Drink

人身之貴, 父母遺體, 為口傷身, 滔滔皆是。
The preciousness of the human body comes from the losses of the father and mother’s body. [1]
Yet damage to the body by the mouth - we are inundated by all this.

Once humans have this body, hunger and thirst repeatedly rise up.
Therefore we eat and drink in order to continue this life.
Looking at those who are ignorant: because of indulgence in tasty food,
And overdoing the five flavors, disease arises in swarms.
飲食箴
Advice on Food and Drink

山野貧賤, 淡薄是諳, 動作不衰, 此身亦安。
均氣同體, 我獨多病, 悔悟一萌, 塵開鏡淨。

In the mountains and wild lands, the poor and humble only know the bland and tasteless. So their ability to move does not decline and their bodies are also secure. But with equal qi and the same body, I alone am often ill. As soon as repentance sprouts, the dust is removed and the mirror is cleansed.

Note: This section and the next consist of four syllable phrases but they do not have a strict rhyming pattern.

To loosely paraphrase the section:

Even though we should honor the body our parents gave us, there is an epidemic of disease caused by diet. Of course, because we have bodies, we must eat to live. But some live to eat, so they get many kinds of illness because they overindulge. In the beginning of these illnesses, they overeat compulsively, but as the disease develops they lose their appetite. Eventually they may refuse to eat. This greatly worries their parents, and doctors do not know the cure.

The unsophisticated people out in the countryside eat a plain diet, but their bodies are healthy and they don’t deteriorate like we do. Even though my body is the same as theirs, I get sick while they remain healthy because of dietary differences. But if I realize my error, I can change my ways. The old books tell us we should regulate our diet. They tell us our priorities are wrong when we indulge the body and neglect the mind. Indulging the mouth causes so much trouble. We should always keep our mouths shut!

色欲箴
Advice on Sexual Desire

惟人之生, 與天地參, 坤道成女, 乾道成男。

Only human life is joined with heaven and earth. “The dao of Kūn becomes female; the dao of Qián becomes male.”

This is from 《易經.系辭上傳.第一章》 Xi Cí Zhuàn, Part 1, an ancient commentary on the Yì Jīng (Book of Changes). The trigram Kūn has three yīn lines and is associated with earth and the mother. The trigram Qián has three yáng lines and is associated with heaven and the father.
色欲箴
Advice on Sexual Desire

配為夫婦,生育攸寄,血氣方剛,惟其時矣。成之以禮,接之以時,父子之親,其要在茲。

Mated as husband and wife, procreation is entrusted to them. At the time when blood and qi are strong, [1] this alone is the [proper] season. Complete it according to propriety; take your turn according to the timing.[2] The good relations of father and son: this is the important thing.

[1] This is an idiom that means ‘young and vigorous.’
[2] This is obliquely referring to procreative sex.

远彼帷薄,放心乃收,
Drink and eat become sweet and satisfying, the body secure, and disease recovers.

色欲箴
Advice on Sexual Desire

气陽血陰,人身之神,陰平陽秘,我體長春。

Qi is yáng, blood is yīn; they are the spirit of the human body, “When yīn is level and yáng is kept secret,” [1] my body has a long springtime. How much blood and qi [do I have]? How can I not cherish myself? [2]

[1] This is a phrase from 《素問·生氣通天論》 Sù Wèn, Chapter 3.
[2] Since it takes essence to procreate, too many children use up my essence, as well as qi and blood.

To loosely paraphrase the section:
Because humans live between heaven and earth, we must harmonize ourselves with proper behavior for males and females in regards to sex. Procreation is a duty of husband and wife. They should procreate when young and strong. Sex should follow proper etiquette and timing so that there are good relationships within the family, especially between father and son.
To loosely paraphrase the section:

The ignorant indulge in lots of sex, only trying to satisfy their endless desire, but this ends up damaging them (causing 'dry toxins').

Qi and blood are essential to the body. Yin should be kept calm and yang should not be allowed to rise up. When you do this, you can live a long healthy life.

Since we only have so much qi and blood, we should cherish it. Having too many children (or too much sex) steals my qi, blood, [and essence].

Women can have strong sexual desire (and so tempt men into the bedroom). Therefore, don’t hang around the women’s living quarters.

If a man becomes a sex addict, he can ruin his family, his virtue, and his health, even leading to a premature death.

So avoid too much bedroom activity. Calm your heart and withdraw from it.

When you do, even simple food will taste good. You will be healthy, and any illness will recover.

The Yellow Emperor asked: When a doctor treats disease, how is it that one disease receives different treatments, yet all are cured?

Qi bo replied: The earth’s terrain makes it so.
The west is the region of gold and jade, the place of sand and stone. It is where heaven and earth withdraw and are lead away. The people dwell in mounds and there is a lot of wind. The water and earth are firm and forceful. The people do not dress well but wear coarse wool and straw. The people eat splendidly so are greasy and fat. That is why evil is unable to damage their bodies. Their diseases are engendered on the inside. Toxic herbs are appropriate to treat them. Thus, toxic herbs also came from the west.

The north is the region where heaven and earth close up and store. The land is high and the people dwell in mounds. There is wind, cold, and crystal-clear ice. The people enjoy the wilderness and drink milk. Their viscera are cold, which engenders the disease of fullness. The appropriate treatment is to burn moxibustion. Thus, burning moxibustion also came from the north.

The south is where heaven and earth grow and are nourished. The place is invigorated by yáng. The land is low. Water and earth are soft. Fog and dew gather. The people like sour foods and eat smelly food. That is why the people all have dense flesh and red complexions. Their disease is spasms and painful obstruction (bì). The appropriate treatment is the fine needle. Thus, the nine needles also came from the south.

In the center, the earth is level and damp. Heaven and earth use it to engender the ten-thousand things in abundance. The people eat various things and do not work to exhaustion. That is why their disease is often wilting (wěi) and reversal (jué), cold and heat. The appropriate treatment is leading and guiding (diào yǐn or qǐ gōng) and massage (ān qiāo). Thus, leading and guiding and massage also came out from the center.

Thus the sages combine the various treatments. Each has something for which it is appropriate. That is why a doctor treats using different methods and all patients are cured. He understands the nature of the disease and knows the cardinal principles.

That is all for today.

Try to read next week’s material before class.