

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY MANDARIN PEDAGOGY SURVEY

Preface

- This document surveys Mandarin coursework in the BA program in Chinese Studies and the MA programs in Asian Studies at Leiden University. These courses have language acquisition as their primary objective, as distinct from content courses that draw on Chinese-language material (the relative nature of the language / content distinction lies outside the scope of the present discussion). Language acquisition is taken broadly to include romanization skills, dictionary use, and translation skills.
- About three quarters of Mandarin class hours are taught by native speakers of Mandarin, and one quarter by non-native speakers. Most courses are co-taught. Co-teachers regularly touch base, and courses with parallel groups have designated coordinators. There is regular peer observation, aka intervision. Several Mandarin teachers also teach other subjects: film, linguistics, literature, etc.
- Learning objectives do not take into account prior knowledge of Mandarin. Students with prior knowledge may receive course exemptions at the discretion of the examinations committee, following a recommendation by the Mandarin team. A so-called exemption test is annually offered for those wanting to skip BA1 courses.
- Annual BA1 Chinese Studies intake is at about 100 students. Most students un-enrol after BA2 to spend the next academic year studying in TCFL programs at universities in China and Taiwan, with language acquisition as their primary aim, through government- and university-level scholarship programs or paying their own way. Subsequently, they re-enrol at Leiden University for BA3. Hence, individual students' command of the language may differ considerably in BA3, and Mandarin III and IV are offered on two levels. This problem is outweighed by the fact that most students get to spend a full year studying in a Chinese-language environment. Making two terms = 10-12 months of in-country study a structural part of the actual BA curriculum is currently incompatible with other requirements, and a single term = 4-6 months will not take students to the level they reach in 10-12 months.
- In addition to Mandarin, students study [premodern Chinese](#): both *wényán* and early *báihuà*. This is mandatory in the BA program, and optional in the MA programs.
- Mandarin is also offered in the BA program in International Studies (BAIS), and in the Leiden University College (LUC). Learning objectives differ somewhat from those in Chinese Studies. BAIS and LUC Mandarin modules are designed and monitored by Chinese Studies staff, and taught by Chinese Studies staff and staff of the Confucius Institute at Leiden University. This document does not cover BAIS and LUC.
- The following pages offer much detail. Here is a nutshell summary:

BA1	BA2	BA3	MA
<i>full year</i> integrated: - grammar (2 class hrs/wk) - integrated seminars (6) - lg lab (fall: 2, spring: 1)	<i>full year</i> - aural+oral (2) - reading+writing (4)	<i>full year</i> - integrated (2) <i>fall or spring</i> - language elective (2)	<i>fall</i> - aural+oral (2) <i>fall</i> - language elective (2) <i>spring</i> - language elective (2)

BA1

h = 'contact hour per week' = 45 minutes of class time, at 13 class weeks per term.

EC = European Credit. A BA degree requires 180 EC. One EC is worth 28 hours of study, including contact hours.

The proportion of contact hours to EC varies, depending on course design.

Vocabulary counts are approximate.

objectives	course details	approach
<p>OVERALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ benchmarks: HSK 2-3, TOCFL 1, CEFR A1 (see comments) ▪ basic reflection on grammar ▪ command of most frequent full-form characters ▪ proficiency quantified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ grammar: level A (see comments) ○ vocab: 1200 lexical items ○ vocab: 800 full-form characters <p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>aural</u>: can understand short formulaic patterns and short sentences ▪ <u>oral</u>: has correct pronunciation, can carry on simple conversation such as greetings and practical inquiries ▪ <u>reading</u>: can read short, simple texts in full-form characters ▪ <u>writing</u>: can handwrite full-form characters, and short sentences using basic grammar 	<p>MANDARIN I</p> <p>fall: 10h for 15 EC spring: 9h for 10 EC</p> <p>components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grammar lecture: 2h (full cohort) - integrated seminar sessions: 3 x 2h - language lab: 2h in fall, 1h in spring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ted Yao et al, <i>Integrated Chinese</i> ▪ Ans van Broekhuizen-de Rooij & Wang Ying-ting, <i>Belangrijke woordenlijst bij Integrated Chinese</i> (Important Vocabulary to go with <i>Integrated Chinese</i>) ▪ Jeroen Wiedenhof, <i>Grammatica van het Mandarijn</i> (A Grammar of Mandarin) ▪ Jeroen Wiedenhof, <i>De uitspraak van het Mandarijn in 101 oefeningen</i> (Mandarin Pronunciation in 101 Exercises) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ balance grammar-and-translation and communicative approaches ▪ integrate the four skills ▪ emphasize correct pronunciation and romanization ▪ group size: maximally 18 students ▪ grammar lectures to full cohort: consistency, cohesion, direction
		<p style="text-align: center;">comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New HSK and TOCFL are proficiency tests developed in China and Taiwan, respectively. Leiden University is a host institution for both tests, but we do not specifically train students to take them. Here, they appear as indicative benchmarks only. On their relation and conversion to the CEFR, see the appendices. ▪ 'Level A' refers to the 《汉语水平等级标准与语法等级大纲》 (<i>Chinese Proficiency Standard and Grammar Outline</i>), formulated by the Chinese Ministry of Education as a guideline for the Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language (TCFL). ▪ The uneven division of credits across courses is compelled by local rules for curriculum design. In practice, students' efforts even out as part of the overall language-learning package. ▪ Students also take a mandatory course in Premodern Chinese, in the spring term only: 2h, for 5 EC. In this course, group size can be 25-30 students. ▪ Both Dutch and English are used as interface languages.

BA2

objectives	course details	approach
<p>OVERALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ benchmarks: HSK 3-4, TOCFL 1-2, CEFR A1-A2 (see BA1 comments) ▪ low-intermediate command of conversational Chinese ▪ comprehension of written Chinese at intermediate level ▪ active command of full-form characters, and passive command of simplified characters ▪ command of Chinese keyboard input for IT ▪ proficiency quantified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ grammar: level A-B (see BA1 comments) ○ vocab: 1700 new lexical items (BA1+BA2 = 2900) ○ vocab: 900 new full-form characters (BA1+BA2 = 1700) ○ vocab: 1300 simplified characters <p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>aural</u>: can follow clearly articulated discussion of common topics ▪ <u>oral</u>: can talk about common topics involving limited vocabulary, in stretches of several sentences ▪ <u>reading</u>: can read more complex sentences, and longer texts in both full-form and simplified characters ▪ <u>writing</u>: has consolidated generic character-handwriting skills, can perform guided translation into Chinese, can write essays of 300-400 words using more complex sentences 	<p>MANDARIN II: aural+oral</p> <p>fall: 2h for 3 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hong Gang Jin et al, <i>Crossing Paths: Living and Learning in China</i> <p>spring: 2h for 5 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lin Chin-hui et al, <i>Intermediate Spoken Mandarin</i> (in-house) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ balance grammar-and-translation and communicative approaches ▪ integrate the four skills ▪ foster correct pronunciation and facilitate basic knowledge of differences between spoken and written Chinese ▪ group size: max 18 for aural+oral, up to 25 for reading+writing
	<p>MANDARIN II: reading+writing</p> <p>fall: 4h for 4 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lin Chin-hui and Maghiel van Crevel, <i>Language through Culture</i> (in-house, to be renamed <i>Paint Feet on a Snake: An Intermediate Mandarin Reader</i> and published in 2015) <p>spring: 4h for 7 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lin Chin-hui, <i>An Intermediate Reader of Mandarin</i> (in-house) 	<p style="text-align: center;">comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integration of the four skills is attained by careful coordination of the two course plans. The reading+writing course also fosters translation skills: Chinese → Dutch / English, and Dutch / English → Chinese. ▪ The proportion of class hours for aural+oral and reading+writing is motivated by the fact that most students will pursue substantial in-country study after BA2. ▪ Students also take mandatory courses in Premodern Chinese: 2h, for 3 EC each, in both fall and spring. In these courses, group size can be 25-30 students.

BA3

objectives	course details	approach
<p>OVERALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ benchmarks: HSK 4-5, TOCFL 2-3, CEFR A2-B1 (see BA1 comments) ▪ good command of spoken Chinese on a range of topics in public and private domains ▪ ability to read brief authentic ('unpredigested') texts ▪ start developing (extensive) reading strategies ▪ command of some specialized vocabulary ▪ develop intermediate-low to intermediate-mid composition skills ▪ continued expansion of full-form and simplified character knowledge, partly individualized (e.g. use of Chinese-language material for BA thesis); see next point ▪ proficiency is difficult to quantify at this stage, as senior students develop individual trajectories, their 'in-country'-experience being a case in point (see comments) <p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>aural</u>: can generally follow informal discourse in a variety of settings, minimally identifying topics and thrust of discussion; can follow, with some preparation, brief stretches of formal spoken Mandarin, such as news bulletins ▪ <u>oral</u>: can talk about various concrete topics drawing on larger vocabulary, and hold brief presentations in semi-formal register ▪ <u>reading</u>: can read texts in various registers, in full-form and simplified characters: e.g. media, social media, short fiction ▪ <u>writing</u>: can write longer pieces involving event description and the expression of opinion, with clear structure and few grammatical mistakes 	<p>MANDARIN III</p> <p>fall: 2h for 5 EC spring: 2h for 5 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kunshan Carolyn Lee et al, <i>The Routledge Advanced Chinese Multimedia Course: Crossing Cultural Boundaries</i> <hr/> <p>fall or spring: ONE ELECTIVE 2h for 5 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Newspaper reading ▪ Political language and discourse in modern China ▪ Literary translation ▪ *Premodern Chinese ▪ other... <p>Elective topics vary, but premodern Chinese is always on offer. Materials vary accordingly, and are drawn from a range of authentic sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ balance grammar-and-translation and communicative approaches ▪ integrate the four skills ▪ foster correct pronunciation ▪ foster awareness of differences between formal and informal varieties of spoken Chinese ▪ foster written composition ▪ group size: max 18 for aural+oral, up to 25 for reading+writing <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">comments</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandarin III is offered at two levels, in light of the intra-cohort band width of proficiency, with some having spent substantial time studying in a Chinese-language environment, and others not. See preface. ▪ If students write their BA thesis in the fall term, they take their language elective in spring, and vice versa. ▪ Premodern Chinese is available as an elective in fall and spring.

MA

objectives	course details	approach
<p>OVERALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ benchmarks: HSK 5-6, TOCFL 3-4, CEFR B1-C1 (see BA1 comments) ▪ good command of formal and informal spoken and written Chinese, including advanced vocabulary and grammar ▪ ability to give multi-media presentations in Chinese ▪ ability to understand a range of authentic Chinese-language materials without too much effort ▪ proficiency is difficult to quantify at this stage (cf BA3) <p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>aural</u>: can understand, without too much effort, formal and informal language spoken by native and non-native speakers of Mandarin, extending to topics that relate to academic and professional interests; can infer meanings of new words from context ▪ <u>oral</u>: can talk about various concrete and abstract topics drawing on large vocabulary and advanced grammar, and hold research presentations in appropriate register, with fair degree of fluency ▪ <u>reading</u>: can read a range of longer texts in various registers, in full-form and/or simplified characters (see comments), such as media, social media, longer works of fiction and other literary genres, and scholarly texts; can digest large amounts of material, using extensive reading skills and IT aids (e.g. dictionaries) ▪ <u>writing</u>: is familiar with styles and composition structures expected in various settings such as filling out forms, job applications, professional correspondence; can compose abstracts and summaries of own project 	<p>MANDARIN IV: aural+oral fall (term 1 of 4): 2h for 5 EC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ various authentic audio-visual and written materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ balance grammar-and-translation and communicative approaches ▪ communicative multi-media approach in mandatory aural+oral course ▪ stimulate development of language-learning strategies ▪ group size: max 18 for aural+oral (elective groups tend to be smaller)
	<p>ONE OF TWO COURSES fall (term 1 of 4): 2h for 5 EC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reading+writing modern Chinese 2. advanced readings in premodern Chinese 	
	<p>ONE OF THREE COURSES spring (term 4 of 4): 2h for 5 EC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. oral+aural 2. reading modern Chinese 3. writing modern Chinese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The coursework MA program in Asian Studies / China track has a two-year = four-term curriculum. The entry level is at HSK 4 / TOCFL 3. In terms 2-3, students receive intensive language training at Shandong University. ▪ The coursework MA program in Asian Studies / East Asia track has a one-year = two-term curriculum, with the same entry level. ▪ Language-learning strategies: e.g. listening and reading for gist, and summarizing and paraphrasing skills. At BA level, generally larger cohort and group sizes make this difficult to implement. ▪ MA entry requirements do not include a command of full-form characters. ▪ Premodern Chinese is available as an elective in the fall term.

Appendix 1

CEFR at a glance: the [global scale](#)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics, which are familiar, or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Appendix 2

New HSK, TOCFL, CEFR

New HSK Xin Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (New Chinese Proficiency Test), developed in China

TOCFL Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language, developed in Taiwan, and available in full-form as well as simplified characters

CEFR Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

For identifying the listening and reading proficiency levels cited in this survey, we have gratefully relied on the [insights](#) offered by the Fachverband Chinesisch (Association for Chinese-Language Teaching in German-Speaking Countries).

CEFR	Old HSK	New HSK (since 2010)	TOCFL
Below A1	-	1-2 初级	-
A1	1 基础 Basic	3 中级	Level 1 入門級
A2	2 基础 Basic	4 中级	Level 2 基礎級
B1	3-5 初级 Elementary	5 高级	Level 3 進階級
B2	6-8 中级 Intermediate	6 高级	Level 4 高階級
C1	9-11 高级 Advanced	-	Level 5 流利級
C2	-	-	-

Correspondence between the CEFR and the new HSK as assessed by the Fachverband is different from information on the new HSK website. The latter cites lower numbers of romanized vocabulary items and contact hours, for various levels.