

Atlantic Institute of Oriental Medicine

Course Syllabus

Title/ Number of Course: Yellow Emperor's Medical Classic (Huang Di Nei Jing)

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Course Description:

Huang Di Nei Jing is the most original and genuine source of the traditional Chinese medical theories. It involves knowledge from all different scientific fields such as: geography, life sciences, philosophy, cosmology, psychology, medicine, seasonology, Yun Qi, chronology, Yin-Yang theory, Wu Xing theory, and etc. It is impossible to practice Chinese medicine as a professional without a clear understanding of Huang Di Nei Jing.

References:

1. Nelson Liaosheng Wu, Andrew Qi Wu: **Yellow Emperor's Canon Internal Medicine**, Beijing, China Science & Technology Press, 1997
2. Zhu Ming: **The Medical Classic of the Yellow Emperor**, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 2001

Objectives:

1. To introduce historical background, contents, value, time of publication, author and style of Huang Di Nei Jing.
2. To familiarize students with major TCM principles laid down in Huang Di Nei Jing.
3. To make students recite some important original sayings of Huang Di Nei Jing.

Learning Outcomes/ Competencies:

A student successfully completing Yellow Emperor's Medical Classic (Huang Di Nei Jing) will acquire basic knowledge of Chinese cultural history, basic theory of TCM, acupuncture theory, herbs and formulas, as well as clinical medicine.

Topics and Content:

1. **Introduction & Health Preservation:** Background, contents, value, written time, author and style of Nei Jing; Yellow Emperor and his men.
2. **Principle of keeping health:** Keep daily activity in accordance with nature and principle of Yin and Yang. Principle of keeping health: Do health preserving

exercises, have healthy diet, go to bed and get up regularly, and never overstrain.

3. **Yin Yang and five elements:** Yin yang and five elements theory for diagnosis, syndrome differentiation, and treatment.
4. **Zhang Fu theory:** Physiological development of man and woman, Tian Gui (天癸), Zhang Fu, Qi & blood, body fluid, and shen, Zhang Fu, Qi & blood, body fluid, and shen original description in Nei Jing.
5. **Etiology & pathology:** 19 sentences about pathogenesis; Qi disorders, pathology of overwhelming wind, heat dampness, cold; pathology of Bi syndrome, cough, Wei syndrome.
6. **Diagnosis principles:** Pulse diagnosis, theory of palpating Qi Kou (Cun Kou), inquire the life condition change, cardiac Bi syndrome.
7. **Treatment principles:** Treating flaccidity, making a formula, treating course, treating pregnant woman, yin yang theory in treating diseases.
8. **Acupuncture:** Points, Channels, measurement, treating principles, cautions.
9. **TCM psychology:** Personality difference and treating difference, TCM psychiatry and its special treatment.

Learning Methods:

Lectures will be combined with the audio-visual aids such as movies, slides, video-tapes, as well as the appreciation and evaluation of the genuine scrolls and objects. Discussions, group studies, individual coaching would be greatly encouraged.

Course Requirements:

- A. Classroom attendance: students are required to attend all classes all of the time. The code of the Arts & Sciences with regard to absences will be strictly observed.
- B. Exam is the final.

Evaluation and Grading:

Grades are determined by taking the average of all exam scores, with instructors reserving the right to adjust the Final Grade based on other academic factors, such as class participation, attendance, overall comprehension, effort, and trimester improvement.

Numerical Grade Letter Grade

95-100% = A

90-94% = A-

85-89% = B

80-84% = B-

75-79% = C

70-74% = C-

Below 70% =F (Failure)

Other Grading Indications

- P Pass (70% to 100%)
- W Withdrawal
- T Transfer Credit
- I Incomplete (*See below)

Incompletes and Make-up Work*

Incomplete grades must be removed within one trimester after receiving an "I" by fulfilling the requirements of that course. All missed exams or other assignments must be made up within a two-week period. All make-up exams will be graded at one grade-level lower than the actual scored grade, except in the case of a C-level score, which will remain a C. Failure to totally complete the course work requirements or to take make-up exams will transform that temporary grade of "I" to a permanent grade of "F." For an "I" grade to be changed, the student must repeat the entire course when next scheduled.

Policies: The student is responsible for classroom behavior. Disruptive behavior (tardiness, leaving class room before dismissal, talking while the instructor is presenting the material or other students are asking questions, etc.) will not be tolerated and appropriate action will be taken by the instructor. Students are expected to attend all classes and to prepare for each class by reading the sections covered and doing any assigned exercises.

Syllabus: This syllabus is subject to revision at the instructor's discretion. Students are responsible for revisions announced in class.

Class Schedule:

Week	Topic	Reading/Handouts
1	Introduction & Health preservation	Background, Contents, Value, Written time, Author and Style of Nei Jing; Yellow emperor and his men. Principle of keeping health: Keep daily activity in accordance with nature and principle of Yin and Yang. Principle of keeping health: Do health preserving exercises, have healthy diet, go to bed and get up regularly, and never overstrain.
2	Yin Yang and five elements	Yin yang and five elements theory for diagnosis, syndrome differentiation, and treatment.
3	Zhang Fu theory	Physiological development of man and woman, Tain Gui (天 癸), Zhang Fu, Qi & blood, body fluid, and shen. Zhang Fu, Qi & blood, body fluid, and shen original description in Nei Jing.
4	Etiology &	19 sentences about pathogenesis; Qi disorders.

	pathology	Pathology of overwhelming wind, heat dampness, cold; pathology of Bi syndrome, cough, Wei syndrome.
5	Diagnostic principles	Pulse diagnosis, theory of palpating Qi Kou (Cun Kou), inquire the life condition change, cardiac Bi syndrome.
6	Treatment principles	Treating flaccidity, making a formula, treating course, treating pregnant woman, yin yang theory in treating diseases.
7	Acupuncture	Points, Channels, measurement, treating principles, cautions.
8	TCM psychology and psychiatry.	Personality difference and treating difference, TCM and its special treatment. Review and test.

Ethics:

Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes and exams and the paper.

School policy will be followed when students plagiarize or cheat. The student generally will receive an " F" in the course.

Absence Policy:

Students bear responsibility with varying degrees of seriousness and success. In view of this, this department has the obligation not only to recognize the developed sense of responsibility in mature students, but also to encourage by reasonable and objective means the development of this sense in those students who indicate deficiency in this area. Because of the close correlation between a student's response to duties and to academic achievement, the department believes that regular attendance is a most important means of assuring an optimum grasp of course content.

A total of two class hours of absence will result in automatic withdrawal with WF within designated withdrawal period, or an automatic F if not. Two late arrivals will equal one absence.

Selection from Yellow emperor's medical classic (Huang Di Nei Jing)

黃 帝 內 經

Introduction

1. **Written time:** Before 26 BC
2. **Author:** Unknown
3. **Style:** Q & A
4. **Value:** The earliest and most important medical classic of TCM
5. **Contents:** Two parts (Su wen and Ling Shu), 162 chapters, discussed about:
 1. Yin Yang and five elements
 2. Zhang Fu
 3. Channels and collaterals
 4. Etiology and pathology
 5. Syndromes
 6. Diagnostic methods
 7. Treatment based on syndromes differentiation
 8. Health preserving
 9. Acupuncture
 10. Yun Qi
6. **Speciality:**
 1. Regard human body as a whole
 2. Syndromes differentiation

The Huang Di Nei Jing is the earliest classical work of Chinese medicine. This mythical book has been the guideline for the development of Chinese medicine for thousands of years. In the TCM field this classic is nicknamed “the father of traditional Chinese medicine”. Great TCM scholars such as Zhang Zhong Jing, Sun Si Miao and others all based their classic medical texts and ideas on Huang Di Nei Jing.

The Huang Di Nei Jing is the most original and genuine source of the traditional Chinese medical theory. It involves knowledge in all different scientific fields like: geography, life sciences, philosophy, cosmology, psychology, medicine, seasonology, Yun Qi, chronology, Yin-Yang theory, Wu Xing theory, etc.

In this way it forms the basis of the Chinese scientific philosophy on which many aspects of Chinese culture are founded.

From the medical point of view, this text is based on the Yin-Yang and Wu Xing theory. And because of the clear, detailed and exact description of these theories and the explanation of the harmony of human health, it definitely has become the necessary study book for every TCM practitioner. It is impossible to practice Chinese medicine at a professional level without a thorough study of the Huang Di Nei Jing (Su Wen and Ling Shu).

Huang Di Nei Jing consists of Su Wen (plain questions) and Ling Shu (spiritual pivot) as described in the Bing Wang notes from the Tang Dynasty.

The Huang Di Nei Jing is more than 2300 years old. This means that the text brings certain difficulties in understanding and translating (even for Chinese students and scholars), not only because of the language, but also because of the historical and social context of that specific period of time.

One can imagine that even the most accurate translations from the classic Chinese language into foreign languages can still lead to a great deal of misunderstandings amongst readers.

Why should we study this classic?

- This classic medical text is “the father of traditional Chinese medicine”. All other medical classic are based on the Huang Di Nei Jing.
- The Huang Di Nei Jing is the most original and genuine source available.
- It is impossible to practice Chinese medicine at a professional level without a thorough study of the Huang Di Nei Jing.

Huangdi nei Jing suwen (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Basic Questions; abbr. Suwen) is the most well-known and influential classic of Chinese medicine.

The Suwen is part of a group of classical Chinese medical works entitled *Huangdi nei Jing* (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classics), which also include the *Huangdi nei Jing ling shu* (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Numinous Pivot) and *Huangdi nei Jing tai su* (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Great Foundations). The *Huangdi nei Jing* texts are the earliest medical classics employing and advocating “correlative” and “naturalistic” medicine (yin-yang and Five Phase correspondences and climatic influences [wind, cold, heat, etc.] as the cause of disease); this therapeutic approach became standardized during the Han dynasty (Early: 202 B.C.-9 AD; Later: 25-221 AD) and elevated to the status of “medical orthodoxy” from that historical period to the present-day (see Unschuld's *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas* [University of California Press, 1985]). In *Nature, Knowledge, Imagery in an Ancient Chinese Medical Text*, Unschuld traces the history of early editions and commentaries through the eventual establishment of the “textus receptus” of the extant Suwen, for which Wang Bing (fl. 760) bears primary responsibility. In terms of the various historical and textual layers, the Suwen is a compilation of fragmentary texts written, collected, and edited by an unknown number of

individuals in a period lasting from about the second century B.C. to the second century AD. The received text also contains philosophical strata, such as the yin-yang and Five Phase doctrine of systematic correspondence, whose beginnings are at least as early as the fourth and third centuries B.C. In addition, as the text has been edited throughout Chinese history, it also contains material from probably as late as the eighth century AD. With regard to the latter, it seems that Wang Bing is responsible for the addition of the seven “comprehensive discourses” (dalun), namely, chapters 66 through 74 (excluding the two apocryphal chapters 72 and 73).

For those interested in the connection between Daoism and Chinese medical traditions, the present work provides few specific comments. On the most general level, Unschuld identifies the *Suwen* as expressing a type of “Confucianized medicine” (emphasizing regulation, harmony, and so forth) that has little connection with the Daoist tradition. “[The] authors who contributed to the corpus leaned more to Confucian or late Zhou, early Han Huang-Lao notions than to anything else.... Daoist concepts are absent almost entirely from the *Su wen*” (339-40; also 329, 345). By “Daoist concepts,” it appears that Unschuld at least partially means “demonological” conceptions of and “exorcistic” responses to illness (see, for example, 41). This type of categorization deserves further research and debate in two respects. First, is it an accurate depiction of “classical Daoism” and of the *Suwen*? Second, is Unschuld’s repeated emphasis on “new modes of thought” and “new styles of thinking” the most accurate and applicable interpretative framework? It seems, instead, that the *Suwen* in particular and Chinese medical traditions in general are more focused on existential and pragmatic concerns (practice and embodied understanding) than epistemological ones (much to the chagrin of Western researchers). On a different note, one wonders about the appearance of “Tianshi” (Celestial Master) in the first chapter of the received *Suwen*. We also know that Wang Bing’s commentary exhibits a certain degree of Daoistic orientation (41, 46, 48-51). Although a distinction must also be made concerning the “original context of composition” and subsequent influence of the *Suwen*, from the perspective of Daoist Studies the view of classical Chinese medicine as expressed in the *Suwen* eventually came to occupy an important place in the Daoist tradition. As scholars of Daoism such as Livia Kohn (Boston University), Fabrizio Pregadio (Stanford University), and the late Isabelle Robinet (1932-2000) have shown, views of the body-self and the understanding of disease and wellness expressed in texts such as the *Suwen* played a prominent role in later Daoism, especially in self-cultivation and internal alchemy (*neidan*) lineages. This connection deserves further research. As a final minor point, one would have preferred a different title, as the present book is not the Huangdi neijing *suwen*; the *Suwen* is, in fact, the title of a classical Chinese medical text.

Appendix Dynasties in ancient China:

Dynasties	Period
Prehistoric Times	1.7 million years - the 21st century BC
Xia Dynasty	21st - 16th century BC

Shang Dynasty	16th - 11th century BC
Zhou Dynasty	Western Zhou (11th century BC - 771 BC)
	Eastern Zhou
	---- Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC - 476 BC) ---- Warring States Period (476 BC - 221 BC)
Qin Dynasty	221 BC - 206 BC
Han Dynasty	Western Han (206 BC - 24 AD)
	Eastern Han (25 - 220)
Three Kingdoms Period	220 - 280
Jin Dynasty	Western Jin (265 - 316)
	Eastern Jin (317 - 420)
Northern and Southern Dynasties	Northern Dynasties (386 - 581)
	Southern Dynasties (420 - 589)
Sui Dynasty	581 - 618
Tang Dynasty	618 - 907
Five Dynasties and Ten States	Five Dynasties---- Later Liang (907 - 923) ---- Later Tang (923 - 936) ---- Later Jin (936 - 946) ---- Later Han (947 - 951) ---- Later Zhou (951 - 960)
	Ten States (902 - 979)
Song Dynasty	Northern Song (960 - 1127)
	Southern Song (1127 - 1279)
Liao Dynasty	916 --- 1125
Jin Dynasty	1115 --- 1234
Yuan Dynasty	1271 --- 1368
Ming Dynasty	1368 --- 1644
Qing Dynasty	1644 --- 1911

About Yellow Emperor

The Yellow Emperor or Huang Di (Simplified Chinese: 黄帝; pinyin: huángdì) is a legendary Chinese sovereign and cultural hero who is said to be the ancestor of all Han Chinese. One of the Five Emperors, the Yellow Emperor is said by tradition to have reigned from 2698 BC to 2599 BC.

The legend of his westwards retreat in the war against the eastern Emperor Chi You at the Battle of Zhuolu is seen as the establishment of the Han Chinese nationality.

Among his other accomplishments, the Yellow Emperor has been credited with the invention of the principles of Traditional Chinese medicine. *Nèijīng* (內經, *The Medical Canon of the Yellow Emperor*), was supposedly composed in collaboration with his physician Qi Bó. However, modern historiographers generally consider it to have been compiled from ancient sources by a scholar living between the Zhou and Han dynasties, more than 2,000 years later. His interest in natural health and preventing and treating diseases meant he is said to have lived to the age of 111, and to have attained immortality after his physical death.

In the legend, his wife Lúo Zǔ taught the Chinese how to weave the silk from silkworms, and his historian Cāng Jié created the first Chinese characters.

Legend says that the Yellow Emperor invented the compass during a battle against Chi You who used a sandstorm as camouflage to hide his army. Thanks to the compass, the Yellow Emperor found out where Chi You was and defeated him. The swirling chair in his chariot was also a compass so that he would always face south, which the Chinese people consider to be good Feng Shui. He is also said to have played a part in the creation of the Guqin, together with Fuxi and Shennong, and to have invented the earliest form of the Chinese calendar, and its current sexagenary cycles are counted based on his reign.

The actual existence of the Yellow Emperor is questionable, at best. The period of his reign precedes written history in China by more than a thousand years. Thus, the tales of his exploits might easily be embellished or even altogether apocryphal.

Yellow Emperor in Popular Culture

Huang Di appears as a God in the strategy game *Emperor: Rise of the Middle Kingdom* made by Sierra Entertainment, now a division of Vivendi. In the game he is a patron of hunting and has the skills needed for leading men into battle.

There have been TV dramas made in mainland China depicting the life of Huang Di. However, their historical accuracy is questionable. They are semi-fictional because their focus is mainly on martial arts, Wuxia and drama.

The Yellow Emperor serves as the hero in Jorge Luis Borges' story "The Fauna of the Mirror." British fantasy writer China Mieville then wrote a sort of post-apocalyptic sequel novella called "The Tain" for his volume of short stories - "Looking for Jake."