Literature and Modern China Style Guidelines

Guidelines for articles, review essays, and book reviews

Scope: These guidelines govern manuscripts accepted for publication in Literature and Modern China, including the forthcoming issues now in production. Authors should apply them consistently when preparing revisions.

Core principles

- Use Author–Date citations in the text and a list of works cited headed Works Cited.
- Give life dates at first substantive mention of deceased scholars and cultural figures.
- Give dates at first mention of dynasties, historical periods, and major historical events.
- Use en dashes—not hyphens—for every inclusive numerical range.
- Italicize pinyin titles and terms as specified below and supply English translations consistently.
- For books, always give the place of publication; place a period before the publication statement and use the form Place: Publisher, Year.

1. Editorial hierarchy and scope

These guidelines establish the journal's treatment of Chinese materials: translated titles accompanied by pinyin, English glosses for culturally specific terms, life dates for historical intellectuals, and dates for dynasties, periods, and major events. They also establish a consistent Author–Date citation system and the journal's required Works Cited forms.

- This guide is the first authority for Literature and Modern China house style.
- Use the current Chicago Manual of Style 17th Edition for Author–Date matters not addressed here, except where these journal guidelines prescribe a different form.
- Use Merriam-Webster for US spelling and hyphenation unless a specialist term requires another form.
- For politically or historically contested names and dates, explain the choice when necessary and remain consistent.

House rule: Do not imitate inconsistencies in previously published articles. Apply this guide and query the editor when a case remains genuinely ambiguous.

2. Order and elements of the manuscript

Unless the editor specifies otherwise, arrange the manuscript as follows:

1. Article title
2. Author name and institutional affiliation
3. Abstract (approximately 150–250 words)
4. Five to eight keywords
5. Main text with clear, unnumbered section headings
6. Acknowledgments and funding statement, if any
7. Footnotes, used sparingly
8. Works Cited

Titles, abstracts, and keywords

- Use headline-style capitalization for English article titles and section headings.
- Do not place a period after the article title, abstract, keywords, or headings.
- The abstract should state the object of study, central intervention, method or archive, and principal conclusion. Avoid citations unless indispensable.
- Keywords should be specific and searchable. Capitalize only proper nouns and established historical names.

3. Language, spelling, and prose

- Use US English: analyze, center, labor, toward.
- Use the serial comma: literature, cinema, and visual culture.

- Prefer active, precise prose, but retain first person where it clarifies the argument or method.
- Avoid unexplained abbreviations. Spell out a name or term at first mention and place the abbreviation in parentheses.
- Capitalize official names of institutions, political bodies, movements, and wars; lowercase generic terms.
- Preserve an author's chosen romanization of their own name and the established form used in a cited English-language publication.

4. Dates for people

At the first substantive mention in the main text, add life dates in parentheses for deceased scholars, writers, artists, filmmakers, political figures, and other cultural or historical figures. Do not repeat the dates later in the article.

- Deceased figures: Wang Yangming (1472–1529); Lu Xun (1881–1936); Gabriel García Márquez (1927–2014).
- BCE dates: Sima Qian (ca. 145–ca. 86 BCE).
- Uncertain dates: Qu Yuan (ca. 340–278 BCE). Use ca., not c.
- Living figures: normally omit the birth year. Add it only when chronology is analytically important and the editor approves.

House rule: A passing name in an abstract, epigraph, note, or bibliographic discussion does not necessarily count as the first substantive mention. Add the dates where the figure first enters the argument.

5. Dynasties, periods, and historical events

Give dates in parentheses at the first mention of every dynasty, named historical period, and major historical event. Repeat dates only when a long article would otherwise become unclear.

- Dynasties: Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE); Tang dynasty (618–907); Ming dynasty (1368–1644); Qing dynasty (1644–1911).
- Periods: Republican period (1912–1949); High Qing period (roughly 1683–1799); Mao era (1949–1976).
- Movements and campaigns: May Fourth Movement (1919); Great Leap Forward (1958–1962); Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).
- Wars and events: Opium War (1839–1842); Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945); Xinhai Revolution (1911).
- Use BCE and CE without periods. Repeat the era marker when omission could cause ambiguity: 221 BCE–220 CE.
- For contested chronologies, select the dates appropriate to the argument, briefly explain the choice in the text or a footnote, and remain consistent.
- Do not force false precision on fluid labels such as post-Mao, postsocialist, early modern, wartime, or reform era. Define the intended span when it matters.

6. Numbers, ranges, and dashes

House rule: All inclusive numerical ranges take an en dash (–), never a hyphen (-). This applies in prose, notes, tables, captions, citations, and Works Cited.

- Correct: 1893–1976; 1958–1962; 118–125; vols. 2–4.
- Incorrect: 1893-1976; 1958-1962; 118-125; vols. 2-4.
- Spell out zero through nine in ordinary prose; use numerals for 10 and above, measurements, percentages, dates, chapters, and precise quantities.
- Use commas in numbers of four or more digits: 1,500; 25,000.
- Use 5 percent in prose; use 5% in tables or data-heavy discussion.
- Use an em dash—without spaces—for an interruption or amplifying phrase.

7. Chinese romanization, characters, and names

Romanization

Use Hanyu Pinyin without tone marks for Mandarin Chinese. Preserve established non-pinyin forms when they are standard in English or are the person's own published form—for example, Chiang Kai-shek, Hong Kong, Taipei, and Pema Tseden. Do not silently convert an author's preferred name form.

Chinese characters

This journal does not include Chinese characters.

Personal names

- In running text, retain the culturally appropriate or professionally established order: Lu Xun, Wang Yangming, Mao Zedong, Rey Chow, Pei-yin Lin.
- Do not insert a comma between a Chinese family name and given name in prose.
- In Works Cited, Chinese names remain family-name-first without a comma: Li Zehou; Wang Ban. Western names are inverted with a comma: Anderson, Marston.
- Alphabetize Chinese authors under the family name. Preserve hyphens and capitalization in names as the author publishes them.

8. Pinyin, Translations, and Typography

Running text

- At first mention, give both the Chinese title in pinyin and its English translation. Place the English translation in parentheses and apply the same formatting as the pinyin title. Use sentence-style capitalization for pinyin titles: capitalize only the first word and any proper

names or other proper nouns. Follow standard pinyin word division, joining syllables that form a single Chinese word while keeping distinct words separate.

- Correct: *Zhongguo yishu jingshen* (*The Chinese Artistic Spirit*), not *Zhong Guo Yi Shu Jing Shen* or *Zhongguoyishujingshen*.
- Correct: "Kuangren riji" ("Diary of a Madman"), not "Kuang ren ri ji" or "Kuangrenriji."
- Proper names remain capitalized: *Lu Xun yu Zhongguo xiandai wenxue* (*Lu Xun and Modern Chinese Literature*).

•Titles of books, films, journals, plays, and other stand-alone works

•Italicize both the pinyin title and the English translation. Place the English translation in parentheses:

•*He tu* (*All Sounds Are Still*)

•*Jingzhong* (*In the Mirror*)

•*Zhongguo yishu jingshen* (*The Chinese Artistic Spirit*)

•Titles of poems, short stories, articles, chapters, and other works published as part of a larger work

•Place both the pinyin title and the English translation in quotation marks. Place the English translation in parentheses:

•"Hongloumeng de zhexue yaodian" ("The Philosophical Points of Dream of the Red Chamber")

•"Kuangren riji" ("Diary of a Madman")

Notes and Works Cited

- In notes and Works Cited entries, place all English translations of Chinese titles in square brackets. The translation is always set in roman type, without italics or quotation marks, regardless of the type of work. The Chinese title retains the formatting appropriate to its form.
- Apply the same pinyinization rules used in the main text. Use sentence-style capitalization, capitalizing only the first word and any proper names or other proper nouns. Join syllables that form a single Chinese word, while keeping distinct words and grammatical particles separate. These rules apply to books, articles, journals, and other Chinese-language sources.
    - Book:
        - Li Zehou. *Mei de licheng* [The Path of Beauty]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989.
    - Article:
        - He Xilai and Tian Zhongmu. "Xianshi he lixiang de bianzheng tongyi: Shi tan geming xianshi zhuyi he geming langman zhuyi xiang jiehe de chuangzuo fangfa" [The Dialectical Unity of Reality and Ideal: On the Creative Method Combining Revolutionary Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism]. *Renmin wenxue* [People's Literature], no. 3 (1978): 108–112.
- Do not italicize a translation within square brackets, enclose it in quotation marks, or reproduce the formatting of the original title.

Terms and concepts in running text

- Introduce a Chinese term in either of the following forms, according to the emphasis of the discussion:
- English translation followed by pinyin in parentheses:
    - the principle of loyalty and consideration (*zhongshu zhi dao*)
    - dependent origination and emptiness of nature (*yuanqi xing kong*)
- Pinyin followed by the English translation in quotation marks within parentheses:
    - *zhongshu zhi dao* ("the principle of loyalty and consideration")
    - *yuanqi xing kong* ("dependent origination and emptiness of nature")

- Use the first form when the English concept is primary and the pinyin is supplied as a gloss. Use the second when the Chinese term itself is the object of discussion. Italicize an unfamiliar pinyin term on first use. A familiar term established in English, such as qigong, yin, yang, or Daoism, is normally set in roman type.

9. Quotations and punctuation

- Use double quotation marks for quotations and single quotation marks for a quotation within a quotation.
- Set quotations greater than 3 lines in length as block quotations and omit quotation marks around the block.
- In running text, place periods and commas inside closing quotation marks; place colons and semicolons outside.
- Use ellipsis points with spaces between them (. . .). Use square brackets for editorial additions or clarifications.
- Give the Author–Date citation after a prose quotation and before the sentence-ending period. After a block quotation, place the citation after final punctuation.

10. Author–Date citations

Citations belong in the main text, not in numbered notes. Give author, year, and—when citing a particular passage—page number. Do not place a comma between author and year; place a comma before the page number.

- Whole work: (Wang 2017).
- Specific page or range: (Wang 2017, 42); (Wang 2017, 42–45).
- Author named in prose: Wang (2017, 42) argues that . . .
- Two authors: (He and Tian 1978, 108–112).
- Three or more authors: (Zhang et al. 2024, 31).
- Several sources: (Anderson 1990, 18; Clark 1981, 53–55; Wang 2017, 42).
- Same author and year: (Li 2023a, 17; Li 2023b, 204).
- Films: include a timestamp for a specific moment: (Gu 2013, 00:42:18–00:43:05).

- Classical and premodern works: cite the stable division customary to the field—book, chapter, juan, section, or line—when it serves readers better than a modern edition's pagination.
- Secondary quotation: consult the original whenever possible. If unavoidable, use (Wang 1985, quoted in Li 2022, 47) and list only the source actually consulted unless both were consulted.

11. Footnotes

Use footnotes, not endnotes, and use them sparingly for substantive qualifications, archival detail, translation statements, or context that would interrupt the argument. Do not use notes merely to hold citations. Any citation in a note must be given in Author–Date form, exactly as in the text; do not use notes-and-bibliography citation forms anywhere in the article. Author–Date applies across the board — in the text, in notes, and in captions.

- Number notes consecutively with superscript Arabic numerals.
- Place a note number after punctuation, except where it must attach to a specific term.
- Do not place a note number in an article title, heading, or abstract.
- Any citation in a note must be in Author–Date form and must match the Works Cited list.

12. Works Cited: general rules

- Head the list Works Cited, not References or Bibliography.
- Include every source cited in the text or notes and omit uncited works unless the editor requests a separate bibliography.
- Alphabetize by family name. Arrange multiple works by one author chronologically, earliest first.
- Repeat the author's name in every entry; do not use a 3-em dash.
- Use full given names when supplied. Preserve the published spelling and order of names.
- Use headline-style capitalization for English-language titles and retain the capitalization conventions of other languages.
- Use full journal titles and publisher names. Give DOI links as https://doi.org/... when available.
- Apply a hanging indent of 0.25 inches to every entry.

House rule: For books, always include the place of publication. Place a period before the publication statement; then join place and publisher with a colon and give the year after a comma. Required journal pattern: Author. *Title*. Place: Publisher, Year.

13. Works Cited models

Book

Anderson, Marston. *The Limits of Realism: Chinese Fiction in the Revolutionary Period*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

Chinese-language book

Li Zehou. *Meide licheng* [The Path of Beauty]. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1989.

Translated book

Zhuangzi. *Zhuangzi*. Translated by Wang Rongpei. Changsha: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999.

Chapter in an edited book

Chung, Hilary. "Introduction: Socialist Realism." In *In the Party Spirit: Socialist Realism and Literary Practice in the Soviet Union, East Germany and China*, edited by Hilary Chung and Michael Falchikov, x–xviii. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996.

Journal article

Lefebvre, Henri, and Gavin Grindon. "Revolutionary Romanticism." *Art in Translation* 4, no. 3 (2012): 287–299.

Chinese-language journal article

He Xilai and Tian Zhongmu. "Xianshi he lixiang de bianzheng tongyi: Shi tan geming xianshi zhuyi he geming langman zhuyi xiang jiehe de chuangzuo fangfa" [The Dialectical Unity of Reality and Ideal: On the Creative Method Combining Revolutionary Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism]. *Renmin wenxue*, no. 3 (1978): 108–112.

Online article

Ding Fan. "Dageming shidai li de langmanzhuyi wenxue de shuxie (shang)" [Writing Romanticist Literature in an Era of Great Revolution (Part 1)]. *Zhongguo dangdai wenxue yanjiu*, September 23, 2022. https://www.chinawriter.com.cn/n1/2022/0923/c441819-32532932.html.

Film

Gu Tao, dir. *Yuguo and His Mother*. China, 2013. Documentary film.

Book review

Qiao Min. Review of *Scents of China: A Modern History of Smell*, by Xuelei Huang. *Literature and Modern China* 4 (2025): 151–156.

14. Figures, tables, captions, and permissions

- Number figures and tables separately in order of citation: Figure 1, Figure 2; Table 1, Table 2.
- Refer to every figure or table in the text before it appears.

- Give each item a concise caption. Include creator, title, date, medium, source, and credit or permission language when applicable.
- Use an en dash for all ranges inside tables and captions.
- Authors are responsible for written permission for copyrighted images and for supplying publication-quality files and complete credits.

15. Final author checklist

- ☐ The abstract, headings, body, and conclusion agree about the article's central claim.
- ☐ All citations use Author–Date and match entries under Works Cited.
- ☐ Every quotation has a page number, stable textual division, or timestamp where available.
- ☐ Life dates appear at first substantive mention of every deceased scholar or cultural figure.
- ☐ Dates appear at first mention of every dynasty, historical period, and major historical event.
- ☐ Every numerical range uses an en dash, including life dates and page ranges.
- ☐ Pinyin and translations follow the correct order, italics, quotation marks, and brackets.
- ☐ Chinese characters do not appear.
- ☐ Every book entry in Works Cited uses the form *Title*. Place: Publisher, Year.
- ☐ Footnotes are substantive and do not duplicate in-text citations.
- ☐ Permissions and complete captions are supplied for illustrations.
- ☐ The manuscript has been proofread for US spelling, punctuation, spacing, and consistency.

Editorial note

These are the official style guidelines of Literature and Modern China. They are intended for authors preparing or revising manuscripts for publication by the journal.