

Traditional Chinese Philosophy

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Course Description

Traditional Chinese philosophy differs tremendously from its western companion. In this course, we investigate Chinese ancient philosophy in a way to let its own tendencies be sensed and appreciated. First, Confucius' *Analects* is extensively examined to show the original features of Confucianism, which contribute a lot to shaping Chinese civilization. Then, we turn to Mencius, Sunzi, Taoism, Legalism, Yin-Yang School, Tung Chung-shu, Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Besides the topics indicated, the relations among different schools or different thinkers in same school are concerned as well. Comparisons between Chinese philosophies and western ones are encouraged.

Course Outcomes

Lectures, student presentations, discussions in classes, and paper assignments are designed to enable students to catch the unique features of Chinese ancient philosophical thinking, especially to comprehend its specific ways of dealing with the ultimate issues concerned by other traditions as well. Furthermore, the relations and historical developments of the various schools in ancient Chinese philosophy ---- Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, etc.---- should be known and expressed in papers at the end of this course. With these achievements, students will attain a much more advanced position in understanding Chinese culture as a whole.

Course Requirements and Form of Assessment

- **Presentation (20%):** You will choose a topic from the class schedule below and present your understanding of it in class and be prepared to answer questions.
- **Participation (20%):** 12% for attendance (coming late and leaving earlier will affect the attendance records), 8% for discussion participation.
- **First Paper (20%):** It must be on some topic related to your presentation (due middle of Oct.). Its length: 5-6 pages, 1.5-double space.
- **Final Paper (40%):** Topic options will be approved by the instructor and the paper length is 8-10 pages, 1.5-double space.

Attendance Policy

An excused absence requires a written medical excuse or written approval from the school's administration office. All other absences are considered to be unexcused. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (see below).

Penalties for unexcused absences:

- 1 absence – class participation grade drops one full letter grade (example: A- to B-)
- 2 absences – class participation grade drops two full letter grades
- 3 absences – class participation grade drops three full letter grades
- 4 or more absences – class participation grade is a failing grade

Academic Honesty

Please refer to the following web link for policies on academic honesty:

[http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS Academic Integrity Statement December 07.pdf](http://www.luc.edu/cas/pdfs/CAS_Academic_Integrity_Statement_December_07.pdf)

Required Texts

1. *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism (ICP)*, by Jeeloo Liu, Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
2. *Confucian Pragmatism as the Art of Contextualizing Personal Experience and World (CP)*, by Haiming Wen, Lexington Books, 2009.

References:

1. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (SB)*, tr. & compiled by Wing-tsit Chan, Princeton University Press, 1963.
2. *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation (Analects)*, tr. with intro. by Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, Jr., New York: Bollantine Books, 1998.
3. *Chinese Philosophy: Chinese Political Philosophy, Metaphysics, Epistemology and Comparative Philosophy (WCP)*, by Haiming Wen, China International Press, 2010.
4. *Sources of Chinese Tradition, vol. I (SCT)*, compiled by Wm. Theodore De Bary, and Irene Bloom, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
5. *Sun-Tzu: The Art of Warfare (The Art of Warfare)*, tr. Roger Ames, New York: Ballantine Books, 1993. Or other translation.

6. *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, by Fung, Yu-lan, Tianjin Social Science Publisher, 2007.
7. *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity*. by Joseph R. Levenson, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958.
8. *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*. Tu Wei-ming, ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.

(Copies of **WCP** will be provided by the instructor. Almost all books listed above are available in the library of TBC)

Class Schedule

WK 1: Early Chinese World Views and Classics

Specific topics:

1. The distinctive features of Chinese ancient world views.
2. Compare the features with Western or Indian ones.
3. Precise meanings of “heaven (*tian*)”, “ancestor worship” and “virtues” in the ancient context.

Readings:

1. *ICP* pp.1-26, Introduction: What is Chinese Philosophy?
2. (*WCP*) Introduction: What is Chinese Philosophy?

WK 2: *Yijing (I Ching): The Classic of Changes*

1. Basic structure: eight trigrams
2. A constant changing universe
3. A universe with moral attributes: the foundation for human morality
4. Moral philosophy: contextual prescriptivism
5. Philosophy of action: causal efficacy or fatalism?

Readings:

1. *ICP* pp.26-46, *Yijing: The Cosmological Foundation of Chinese Philosophy*;
2. *SB* 13.
3. (*WCP*) Chapter I The Source of Chinese Philosophy-*Zhouyi*

WK 3: Confucius and his *Analects*

1. The outline of Confucius’ biography.
2. Basic characters of Confucius as a person and a thinker.
3. *Ren* (co-humanity), *li* (ritual propriety), *zhong* (loyalty), *shu* (empathy), *junzi* (exemplary persons).

4. Compare Confucius with Jesus and Socrates.

Readings:

1. *ICP* pp.47-64, Confucius in the *Analects*;
2. *Analects* Book 7, 9, 10; chapter 2.4, 3.12, 5.13, 5.26(25), 5.28, 6.3, 6.22, 6.28(26), 11.12, 14.35, 14.32, 14.38(41), 15.13, 17.5, 17.7, 18.5, 18.6, 19.24, 19.25. *SB* 2 (Confucius).
3. (*WCP*) Chapter II Confucius and Mencius

WK 4: Mencius: “Idealistic” Confucianism

1. What is Mencius’ view of human nature? How does it differ from Yang Zhu and Mozi’s?
2. Relation between Mencius’ ideas of humanity (*ren*), righteousness and Confucius’.
3. Mencius’ political views (government and revolution).
4. Is Mencius democratic or not? Why?

Readings:

1. *ICP*, pp.65-85, Mencius;
2. *SB* 3;
3. *SCT* 6 (Mencius);
4. (*WCP*) Chapter II Confucius and Mencius

WK 5: Mozi and Xunzi

1. Universal love vs. love with distinctions
2. Deontological rightness vs. utilitarian benefits
3. Mozi’s political philosophy: pragmatic authoritarianism
4. Philosophy of religion: heaven, ghosts and spirits, fate
5. A naturalistic view of heaven
6. On human nature and social control
7. The significance of rituals and rules of propriety (*li*)

Readings:

1. *ICP*, pp.86-130;
2. *SB* 6, 9.
3. (*WCP*) Chapter II Xunzi, Mozi

WK 6: Be successful in changes: Laozi and *The Art of Warfare* (Sunzi)

1. The meanings of Dao and its manifestations (including the political one).
2. With the perspective of *Sunzi*, evaluate American military experiences; with that of *Laozi*, reflect our contemporary life.
3. How can a general, according to Sunzi, become undefeatable in wars? [Pay

- attention to the role of *shi* (positional and strategic power)]
4. Find out the essential connections between *The Art of War* and *Laozi*.

Readings:

1. *CP* pp.131-151;
2. *SCT* 5 (Laozi). *SCT* 7 (The Military Texts: The *Sunzi*); *The Art of Warfare*;
3. *SB* 7;
4. (*WCP*) Chapter II Laozi, Sunzi

WK 7: Chuangzi and Hanfeizi (Legalism): The Ways that follow the Way (*dao*)

1. Identify the distinctive features of Chuangzi's Daoism.
2. The relations of Hanfeizi's Legalism to Daoism and Confucianism.
3. Find out the role of *qi* 气 with its various manifestations in *Chuangzi* and that of potential power (*shi* 勢) in *Hanfeizi*.
4. Is there some kind of ecological ethics in *Chuangzi* and Machiavellism in *Hanfeizi*?

Readings:

1. *ICP* pp.152-205;
2. *SB* 8, 12
3. *SCT* 5 (Zhuangzi), *Chuangzi*; *SCT* 7 (Han Feizi), *Basic Writings: Third Part* (Han Fei Tzu);
4. (*WCP*) Chapter II Zhuangzi, Hanfeizi

WK 8: The Yin-yang School and Yin-yang Confucianism

1. The structure of yin-yang and five-agents theory and its philosophical significance.
2. Dong Zhongshu's view on the ways of relating man to heaven (nature).
3. Find out the implications of timeliness in Dong's discourses.
4. What are the consequences of having philosophical gender difference? Can you find such difference in western philosophy?

Readings:

1. *SB* 11, 14;
2. *SCT*, pp.347-352; *SCT*, pp.292-310; *Book of Changes*.
3. (*WCP*) Chapter III Chinese Metaphysics: Chinese Cosmology in Han Dynasty; The Ontology of Being and Nothingness in Wei-Jin Dynasties
4. (*CP*), Chapter 6, Chinese Metaphysical Creativity

WK 9: Chinese Buddhism (I): Hua-yen & Tian-tai

1. How does Tian-tai inherit and develop the Buddhist doctrine of Middle Path?
2. The features of Hua-yen School.
3. What philosophical reasons can be found in the two schools that account for the Buddhist success in China?

4. Are nowadays sciences going toward a Hua-yen dimension?

Readings:

1. *ICP* pp.209-219, pp.248-303;
2. *SB* 24, 21, 22, 25,
3. *SCT*, pp.444-471; *SCT*, pp.471-474.
4. (*WCP*) Chapter III Chinese Metaphysics: Buddhism in Sui and Tang Dynasties

WK 10: Chinese Buddhism (II): The Consciousness-Only (*Weishi*) School and the Chan School (Zen Buddhism)

1. How did Chan understand “meditation” (*dhyana, chan, zen*) in its own terms?
2. The role of language in Chan.
3. Identify the explicit and implicit indebtedness of Chan to ancient Chinese thoughts.
4. Do you feel that Chan is useful in dealing with the dilemmas in human life?

Readings:

1. *ICP* pp.220-247; pp.304-331;
2. *SB* 26,
3. *SCT*, pp.491-522; *The Platform Sutra*.
4. (*WCP*) Chapter III Chinese Metaphysics: Buddhism in Sui and Tang Dynasties

WK 11: Neo-Confucianism (I): Zhou Dun-yi and Zhu Xi

1. Identify the pre-Qin Confucian, Han Confucian and certain new elements in Zhou Dun-yi’s works.
2. What are Zhu Xi’s views on principle (*li*) and material force (*qi*)?
3. Is Zhu Xi’s philosophical thinking dualistic or not?
4. Can you find Daoist or Buddhist impacts on these two thinkers?

Readings:

1. *SB* 28, 34
2. *SCT*, pp.667-678; *SCT*, pp.697-714.
3. (*WCP*) Chapter IV Chinese Epistemology: Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi
4. (*CP*), Chapter 4, Feelings (*Qing* 情) and the Importance of History, Particularity, and Emergence in Context

WK 12: Neo-Confucianism (II): Lu Xiang-shan & Wang Yang-ming

1. Lu Xiang-shan’s views on mind and principle.
2. What is “the extension of the innate knowledge of the good (*zhi liang-zhi*)” for Wang Yang-ming?
3. Compare Chu Xi with Lu and Wang.
4. How far is the Neo-Confucianism from the original Confucianism in the *Analects*?

Readings:

1. *SB* 33; *SB* 35.
2. (*WCP*) Chapter IV Chinese Epistemology: Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming
3. (*CP*), Chapter 7, Chinese Epistemological Creativity

WK 13: Modern Chinese Philosophy and Chinese Philosophical Sensibility in A Comparative Context: Its History and Direction

1. The *dao* of Chinese philosophy
2. Modern Chinese philosophy as a discipline
3. The challenge of Western philosophy
4. Confucian Pragmatism and Sino-US Cultural Exchange

Readings:

1. *SB* 36, 39, 42, 43, 44.
2. Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity*;
3. Tu Wei-ming, ed. *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*.
4. (*WCP*) Chapter V The *Dao* of Chinese Philosophy; Chapter VI Modern Chinese Philosophy
5. (*CP*), Chapter 8, Confucian Pragmatism as a Post-modern Comparative Philosophy

WK 14 Finishing Final Papers and Presentations