

CET Syllabus of Record

Program: Chinese Studies and Internship in Beijing

Course Title: Philosophy in China

Course Code: CS290

Total Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Suggested Cross Listings: Chinese Studies, Philosophy

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites/Requirements: None

Description

Chinese philosophers have much to contribute in many areas of the broad quest for truth, and the Chinese philosophical tradition represents a radically different orientation from that found in the familiar Greek tradition in the West. This course is devoted to providing a basis for a basic understanding of Chinese thought and its importance in Chinese history. Such an understanding can be best achieved through studying the dominant ideas and motivating beliefs that have, down through the ages, shaped the "Chinese mind." The most reliable path to this research is the source readings, the actual words of the ancient philosophers who forged the Chinese intellectual tradition. Readings are organized to maintain a historical perspective and strike a balance between the modern, medieval and ancient periods, as well as between the schools of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The selection of the texts for this course has been chosen with this balance and perspective in view. The choice of philosophers and schools has been guided by their relative influence on the development of Chinese thought. The course also attempts to show the interconnections between the various periods and between the different schools of Chinese philosophy.

Objectives

Students leave the course with a basic understanding of the core features of traditional Chinese thought, and the influence of these intellectual currents in Chinese history and governance throughout the dynastic period. They also have an understanding of how Chinese philosophy differs from Western philosophy in content and philosophical method, and how these differences may reflect on long-standing aspects of Chinese culture and society.

Course Requirements

Participation: Student participation, including actively contributing to class discussion is an important part of the grade. Students should complete all reading assignments before coming to class. About 50 pages of reading are assigned for each class meeting.

Exams and Quizzes: There is a midterm and final, and also announced and unannounced quizzes on geography and the readings.

Final paper: Each student submits a 2,500 word paper on a central issue in Chinese philosophy. Topics are open to discussion and agreement on the part of the student and instructor.

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Methods of Evaluation

The final grade shall be determined as follows:

Class attendance	10%
Class participation	10%
Midterm exam	30%
Final paper	50%

Primary Texts

- Chan, Wing-tist, *The Way of Lao Tzu, a Translation and Study of the Tao-te Ching*, New York, St. John's University Press, 1962.
- Chan, Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973
- Ch'eng I, "The Philosophy of Ch'eng I, A Selection of Texts from the *Complete Works*," Typescript, New York, Columbia University, 1950.
- Chung-yung, "The Doctrine of the Mean," trans. by James Legge, in his *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1893, pp. 137-354.
- Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. by Arthur Waley, London, Allen and Unwin, 1938.
- Fung Yu-lan, *Chuang-Tzu, A new Selected Translation*, Shanghai, Commercial Press, 1933.
- Graham, A. C. (1989) *Disputers of the tao*. La Salle: Open Court Press.
- Han, Fei Tzu, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu*, tran. by W.K.Liao, 2 vols., London, Probsthain, 1939 and 1960.
- Hall, David, & Roger Ames (1987) *Thinking through Confucius*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Hansen, Chad (1975) Ancient Chinese theories of language. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 2, 245-283.
- Hansen, Chad (1983) *Language and logic in ancient China*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hu Shih (1963) *The development of the logical method in ancient China*. New York: Paragon Books.
- Huang-po, *The Zen Teaching of Hung-po on the Transmission of Mind*, trans. by John Blofeld, London, Rider, 1958, paperback, Evergreen.
- Hui-neng, *The Platform Scripture, The Basic Classic of Zen Buddhism*, trans. by Wing-tist Chan, New York, St. John's University Press, 1963.
- K'ang Yu-Wei, *Ta Tung Shu, The One World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-Wei*, trans. By Laurence G. Thompson, London, Allen and Unwin, 1958.
- Lotus Scripture, The Lotus of the Wonderful Law*, trans. by W.E.Soothill, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1930.
- Mencius, *The Sayings of Mencius*, trans. by James Ware, paperback, New York, New American Library, 1960.
- Rosemont, Henry (ed.) (1991) *Chinese texts and philosophical contexts: essays dedicated to Angus Graham*. La Salle: Open Court Press.
- Wang Yang-ming, *The Philosophy of Wang Yang-ming*, trans. by Frederic Goodrich Henke, Chicago, OpenCourt, 1916.

Outline of Course Content

Note: Fall/Spring students cover approximately one topic per week. During the summer, when class periods are longer,

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students cover approximately two topics per week.

Topic 1 - Introduction: The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy

The core humanistic concerns of Chinese philosophy; how geography, history and culture affected the nature and philosophic orientation of the major works; the major thinkers and their schools; introduction to core concepts of Chinese ontology and epistemology.

Topic 2 - Confucius, the First Teacher

The importance of Confucianism as the guiding principles of governance, family and social roles; the essential tenets of Confucius; the contemporary resurrection of Confucius and Confucian values; how Confucius set the humanistic, secular tone of subsequent Chinese philosophy.

Topic 3 - Mencius, the Idealistic Wing of Confucianism

How Mencius refined and continued the basic ideas of the Master; how Mencius contributed to the debate on human nature; how Mencius developed argumentation in the Chinese tradition; Mencius as an interpreter of the received tradition.

Topic 4 - The Doctrine of The Mean

The cultural significance of the classic text; its impact on education, scholarship and governance; relative importance among the Four Books and Five Classics.

Topic 5 - Laozi, Daoism

The importance of Daoism as an alternate cultural paradigm; comparison of the concept of the Dao as manifested in Laozi, the Confucian texts and other Chinese schools of thought; Daoism as principle of governance; Daoism as a method for longevity and health; Daoist ontology, the "five elements" etc.

Topic 6 - Zhuangzi, Daoism

Zhuangzi's extension of Daoist principles; Zhuangzi's critique of language and logic; the historical context of Daoism and the struggle for ideological primacy in the early dynastic period; Zhuangzi's argumentation methods; Zhuangzi's challenge to Confucianism

Topic 7 - Han Feizi, Legalist school

Legalism as a relatively minor branch of Chinese thought; why Legalism and legalistic frameworks failed to take hold in Chinese culture; the historical backdrop of Legalism; the key concepts of *fa* "law", *shu* "method" and *shi* "power, charisma".

Topic 8 - Mozi and Mohism

Innovations and developments of the Mohist school; the notion of *jian ai*, "universal love"; the divergence from Confucian orthodoxy, the conservative turn in Confucianism; the proto-scientific Mohist school as seen in the *Mo-pian* text.

Topic 9 - Xunzi

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The ongoing debate on the concept of human nature; the rationalist orientation; development of the notions of *li*, “ritual” and *tian*, “heaven”.

Topic 10 - Mahayana Buddhism

How Buddhism entered China; how Mahayana Buddhism adapted to the Chinese cultural environment; Mahayana Buddhism as an imported philosophical system; Buddhism as the only truly metaphysical tradition in Chinese thought; Buddhist influence on the Daoist schools

Topic 11 - Hui-neng, Buddhism

The Platform Scripture and its importance in Chinese culture; the importance of *satori* or “sudden enlightenment” school of Zen Buddhism; the spreading influence of Zen in China and Japan.

Topic 12 - Neo-Confucianism, Zhu Xi vs. Wang Yangming

The renaissance of Confucianism after the predominance of Buddhism and Daoism; differences between the orthodoxy of Zhu Xi and and more progressive Wang Yangming; the turn to rationalism and idealism.

Topic 13 - Modern Philosophy

Influence of West and a new philosophical synthesis; the influence of John Dewey via Hu Shi; survey of modern Chinese thinkers such as Liang Shuming, Zhang Dongsun, Jin Yuelin and Ding Wenjiang; Marxist thought in China via Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu and Mao Zedong; current esthetic philosophies of thinkers such as Li Zehou.