Outline of Chinese Culture (UGEA2100F)
2012/13 second term

Lecture Hours: Friday 1:30 pm - 3:15 pm
Classroom: MMW 710
Lecturer: Dr. Wan Shun Chuen (Philosophy Department)
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A Few Preliminary Remarks
First, students must read this outline carefully before registering to take this course so as to consider if it suits you, as well as during the course as as to get a clear direction of study. Second, registered students must visit Blackboard regularly for updated information and announcements of the course. And most importantly, the medium of instruction for this course is English, that is, lectures and examinations are conducted in English whilst the reading material are all in English.

Course Overview
Traditional Chinese Culture is one of the few ancient yet surviving culture in the world. Not just China, but also other East Asian countries like Japan, Korea, etc. have been or may still be influenced by it one way or another. This course aims to provide a general understanding of traditional Chinese culture. Whilst an outline of culture includes its essential elements like concepts, principles and their relations. This course covers the following topics: characteristics of Chinese culture; Chinese philosophical and religious thought; and also fundamental features in Chinese political, social, and economic life.

Learning Outcomes
By attending this course, students are expected

1. to identify the main characteristics of traditional Chinese Culture; in other words, to identify the basic elements of different traditional schools of thought, chiefly in the fields of philosophy, religion, politics and economics, as well as to explain the relations between these basic elements;

2. to appraise traditional Chinese culture; that is, to compare and contrast the background of various schools of thought and their theoretical characteristics;

3. to reflect on the role of Chinese culture in the contemporary world.
LEARNING ACTIVITIES include mainly lectures, and also film shows, in-class group discussions and exams.

GENERAL REFERENCES

NOTE: Books marked by an asterisk (*) are key references throughout the course.


COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPIC-BY-TOPIC REFERENCE LIST

A. Introduction (week 1)

course syllabus and course requirement——what traditional Chinese culture is——why studying traditional Chinese culture

China, second edition, Ch. 1, pp. 1-8.


B. Background of ancient Chinese thought (week 2)
the socio-political background——methodology of Chinese thought——the five classics


C. Ancient Confucianism and Religion (week 3)
the religious elements and functions of ancient Confucianism——the non-religious view, and replies


D. Confucius and the rise of ancient Confucianism (week 4–5)
the notion of ren (benevolence, humanity)——the relation of ren and li (rites)——the utilitarian considerations——Confucius’s idea of good government


Thought in Ancient China, Ch. 3, pp. 56-134.


E. The development of ancient Confucianism: Mencius and Xunzi  (week 5~6)
human nature good (Mencius) and bad (Xunzi)——for the people vs. by the people——a few key foundational concepts of ancient Confucianism


F. Daoism  (week 7~9)
Daoism’s dao (way)—body-valuing, nature, non-action——“The way never acts yet nothing is left undone.” (37) (sophistry or dialectics?)——later development: the school of Huang and Lao


G. Chinese Buddhism  (week 10~11)
Buddha the awakened one——the three “studies” (or vehicles of learning), the four truths of the noble ones, the three seals——arising from conditional causation——karma


**H. Legalism (week 11~12)**

Legalism is not just about laws (or rules)——comparison between “rules” and *li* (rites) in Confucianism—“explicitly Confucian and implicitly Legalist” (the hybrid structure of ancient Chinese politics)


*NOTE:* The above reading list consists of part of the reference material. More specific readings will be assigned during the lectures. Moreover, you are most welcome to have a word with me anytime if you want to explore further than what I have suggested. And you could contact me via email (see above) or in person (preferably with an appointment first).

**Assessment Methods and Explanation:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assessment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term Quiz</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(to be held in class, date to be confirmed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>(centralized examination)</td>
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There will be no make-up exam for students who miss any of these exams.

Some explanation on the assessment methods:

- The questions in both mid-term and final exams are essay-type questions only. In mid-term exam, there is one compulsory question. In final exam, there are one compulsory question and one elective question.

- Exam syllabus includes what is taught in the class as well as specific readings designated for examination (not the whole reading list). Usually the number of readings designated
for examination will be around five. Final exam syllabus includes what is taught in the whole term as well as those designated readings.

- Questions in both mid-term and final exams are designed to assess a) students’ grasp of the content of key concepts as well as b) students’ capability to apply the concepts and other facts (text, history, etc.) to argue for their chosen stance on a specific question. Requirements in part a) refer roughly to Learning Outcome 1 and those in part b) refer roughly to Outcomes 2 and 3.

- Hence, the exam grading takes the following two critical factors into consideration: a) whether relevant concepts are explained fully and correctly, and b) whether concepts, text, historical information, etc. are chosen correctly and then related logically to support a certain stance.

- Both mid-term and final exams are closed-books. For the final exam only, students are allowed to bring an A4 sized cheat-sheet.

- Roll call may be carried out and absence in lectures may get marks deducted: two marks each time and a maximum of 10 marks may be accumulated.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Although assessments of the course are limited to mid-term exam and final exam, I would still like to draw your attention to the University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/)