

# PHIL 3141 - Neo-Daoist Philosophy

Term 1, 2017  
Course Outline

**Time: Thursday 10:30-13:15**

**Location: LSK 306**

## Course Overview

This course examines the third developmental phase of Daoist philosophy, that of Neo-Daoism (the first two being pre-Qin 先秦 and Huang-Lao 黃老). Known also as Wei-Jin *Xuanxue* 魏晉玄學—or simply *Xuanxue* (Profound or Dark Learning)—Neo-Daoism symbolizes a renewed interest in Daoist philosophy (as opposed to the religious Daoism of the Han) and as such, its followers turned to three core texts known as the Three Mysteries or *sanxuan* 三玄: the *Yijing*, *Daodejing*, and *Zhuangzi*. Early Neo-Daoists such as He Yan 何晏 and Wang Bi 王弼 sought to illuminate Dao through doctrines on nothingness while Pei Wei later argued for the priority of Being in cosmic creation. Although these men wrote on cosmology, ontology, and self-cultivation, Neo-Daoism also includes an eclectic group of intellectuals who wrote on topics such as music, aesthetics, and physical refinement. Through a close reading of their texts, we will explore the concepts and arguments of Neo-Daoists, paying special attention to their differences from pre-Qin thinkers, while also uncovering the lasting effects of their philosophy.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Become familiar with key philosophical concepts, arguments, and movements.
2. Develop your skill in reading philosophical texts.
3. Develop your critical thinking skills by discussing lecture materials in tutorials.
4. Learn how to research and write philosophical papers.
5. Come to realize that there is more to Daoism than Dao and *wuwei* (non-action).

## Topics

See lecture schedule below

## Learning Activities

1. Read and give thought to the assigned readings.
2. Develop the skills mentioned above in the Learning Outcomes.
3. Improve your research skills through various writing assignments.
4. Attend lectures and engage your fellow classmates in discussion on the material presented.

## Assessment Scheme

Task	Description	Weight
Class Participation	-	10%
Reflection Papers	5 papers @ 1 page each	10%

Term Paper #1	5 pages	40%
Term Paper #2	5 pages	40%

### Reflection Papers

You are to write **5** reflection papers on **5 separate** lectures over the semester. **Late papers will not be accepted after 24 hours.** The reflection papers cover lectures 2 through 12 (lecture 1 and 13 are excluded). These are not research papers; they are your own reflections on the text and class discussion. Try to relate the material to your own life experience. Do not summarize the lecture or text, and do not include quotations longer than a few lines. The format should be: 1-inch margin, 1.15 line spacing, 12 pt. Times New Roman font. The length of each paper is 1 page and each paper is worth 2 points.

### Research Papers

You will write **two** term papers, in English, on one of the topics covered in this course. **Comparative papers are not allowed.** The first paper is due in class on Oct 19, the second on Nov 30. **Late papers will not be accepted after 24 hours.** The format should be: 1-inch margins, 1.5 line spacing, 12pt. Times New Roman font. Include a separate cover page containing the title of your paper, your name and student number, the course code, and date of submission. You **must cite any and all material** that is not of your own creation. The citation format should be in-text brackets where you will only give the author's family name and page number of the text being quoted or summarized, i.e. (Chai, 100). If you have two authors with the same family name, or you are using multiple texts from the same author, add the year of publication, i.e. (Chai 2017, 100). All remaining information is given in the bibliography (use a separate page at the end of your paper), i.e. (Chai, D. *The title of the book in italic font.* Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2017). The minimum length of each paper is **5 pages**, not including the title page and bibliography. If you do not follow these instructions, I will reduce your mark by 5%. Each term paper is worth 40 points and I will assign these based on how well you organize your argument, how clearly it is written (having a well-defined thesis is vital), and your ability to use the work of scholars.

### **Course Materials**

1. Chan, Alan K.L. and Lo, Yuet-Keung, Eds. *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010.
2. Chai, David. "Musical Naturalism in the Thought of Ji Kang" *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*, 8.2 (June 2009): 151-171.
3. Chai, David. "Meontology in Early *Xuanxue* Thought" *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 37.1 (March 2010): 90-101.
4. Chai, David. "Ji Kang on Nourishing Life" *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 12.1 (April 2017): 38-53.
5. Criddle, Reed. "Rectifying Lasciviousness through Mystical Learning: An Exposition and Translation of Ruan Ji's 'Essay in Music'" *Asian Music*, 38.2 (Summer-Autumn 2007): 44-70.
6. Henricks, Robert, Trans. *Philosophy and Argumentation in Third-Century China: The Essays of Hsi K'ang.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
7. Hon, Tze-Ki. "Human Agency and Change: A Reading of Wang Bi's *Yijing* Commentary" *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 30.2 (June 2003): 223-242.
8. Wagner, Rudolf. *Language, Ontology, and Political Philosophy in China: Wang Bi's Scholarly Exploration of the Dark (Xuanxue).* Albany: SUNY Press, 2003.
9. Zhang, Ji. *One and Many: A Comparative Study of Plato's Philosophy and Daoism Represented*

by Ge Hong. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012.

10. Ziporyn, Brook. *The Penumbra Unbound: The Neo-Daoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2003.
11. Graham, A.C., *The Book of Liezi*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
12. Swartz, Wendy. "There's No Place Like Home: Xie Lingyun's Representation of His Estate in 'Rhapsody on Dwelling in the Mountains'" *Early Medieval China*, 21 (2015): 21-37.

### Course Schedule

Lecture	Topic & Guiding Questions	Readings	Remarks
1 (Sept 7)	Course Introduction; What is Xuanxue?	Chan, 1-22; Chai, 2010	
2 (Sept 14)	He Yan	Chan, 23-52; He Yan (Chinese text)	
3 (Sept 21)	Wang Bi: <i>Daodejing</i>	Chan, 53-70; Wagner, ch. 2	
4 (Sept 28)	Wang Bi: <i>Yijing</i>	Chan, 71-96; Hon	
<b>Public Holiday (Oct 5)</b>			
5 (Oct 5)	Pei Wei	Chai, 2010; Chinese text	
6 (Oct 12)	Ji Kang: Music	Henricks, 71-106; Chai, 2009	
7 (Oct 19)	Ji Kang: Self-Cultivation	Henricks, 21-70; Chai, 2017	<b>Term Paper #1 due</b>
8 (Oct 26)	Ruan Ji: Music	Chan, 291-318; Criddle	
9 (Nov 2)	Guo Xiang: Nature and Trace	Chan, 97-134; Ziporyn, 3-64	
10 (Nov 9)	Guo Xiang: Lone Transformation	Ziporyn, 99-124	
11 (Nov 16)	Liezi	Graham, 14-31; 58-73; 92-117	
12 (Nov 23)	Ge Hong: Dao	Zhang, 1-32	
13 (Nov 30)	Xie Lingyun	Swartz	<b>Term Paper #2 due</b>

\* This schedule is tentative and subject to change.

### Details of Course Website

Relevant announcements and course documents will be posted on Blackboard.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to 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/>

### **Contact Information**

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