

PHIL 3131
Pre-Qin Daoist Philosophy
Term 1, 2022
Course Outline

Time : Tues 10:30am-1:15 pm

Location : LDS 214

Course overview

This course offers an introduction to classical Daoist philosophy, focusing on the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*. Rather than take a historical approach to reading these texts, we will do so thematically. Some of the topics we will examine include: the sage, governance, language, and dreams (see below for a complete list). In addition to learning the fundamental concepts and topics of classical Daoism, you will also become aware of how many of them can impact your life, helping you see the world in a different and more fulfilling light. Knowledge of Chinese is not required for this course, nor is having a background in Chinese philosophy.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand the key concepts of and the philosophical issues raised by Pre-Qin Daoist philosophy.
2. Read and interpret the texts covered in the course.
3. Reflect the modern relevance of Pre-Qin Daoist philosophy.
4. Be able to engage in critical discussion, to put forward and defend their own ideas concerning Daoist philosophy.

Topics

See lecture schedule below.

Learning activities

The course consists of lectures and discussion. We will use the lecture portion to examine the primary texts (in English translation) while the remaining time will be for oral presentations and discussion.

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Due Date</i>
Research Paper Outline	1 page, double spaced	10%	week 6
Research Paper	5 pages, double spaced	45%	week 13
Oral Presentation	Critique one article from given list	20%	tbd
Attendance/Participation	Class attendance and discussion after presentations	25%	n/a

If face-to-face teaching is no longer possible due to the covid19 pandemic, we will continue with the above assessment scheme but do so online.

Remarks on Assessment Scheme

Research Paper Outline:

The outline should clearly define the topic of your paper, its central thesis, and offer a short description of how you plan to divide your argument into smaller sections. A bibliography is not needed, however, I would like to see evidence that you have done some research on your topic by referring to scholars who have publications on your topic.

Research Paper:

You can write on any aspect of Daoist philosophy but comparative studies are not permitted. Furthermore, the topic of your paper must be the same as your outline. Do not over-quote the primary text or repeat the arguments of other scholars. Developing an original argument of your own makes for a successful paper! The format of your footnotes and bibliography should follow the Chicago style. Be sure to state the course code and name, as well as your own name and student id number, on the first page of your paper.

Oral Presentation:

After each lecture, there will be one or more oral presentations on a scholarly paper related to the lecture topic (see schedule below). Depending on the class enrollment, these will either be group or individual presentations (20 mins). You should first summarize the thesis of the paper, list its major arguments, and then discuss its strengths/weaknesses. If group presentations are needed, they will consist of two people who will share the time equally between you.

Participation:

Your involvement in the general discussion after the oral presentations is an important component of this course. You will be expected to ask questions or make comments about each week's assigned reading.

Grade Descriptor

Please refer to: http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Required Readings

Lau, D.C., trans. *Daodejing*. Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2001.

Watson, Burton, trans. *Zhuangzi*. Columbia University Press, 2013.

Readings for Oral Presentations

Bai, Tongdong. "An Ontological Interpretation of *You* and *Wu* in the *Laozi*." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 35:2 (2008): 339-351.

Chai, David. "On Pillowing One's Skull: Zhuangzi and Heidegger on Death." *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 11.3 (2016): 483-500.

Coutinho, Steve. *An Introduction to Daoist Philosophies*. Columbia University Press, 2014.

Graziani, Romain. "Elusive Masters, Powerless Teachers, and Dumb Sages: Exploring Pedagogic Skills in the *Zhuangzi*." In *Skill and Mastery: Philosophical Stories from the Zhuangzi*, 61-84. Edited by Karyn Lai and Waiwai Chu. Rowman & Littlefield,

Lai, Karyn. "Freedom and Agency in the *Zhuangzi*: Navigating Life's Constraints." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 30.1 (2022): 3-23.

Ming, Thomas. "Who Does the Sounding? The Metaphysics of the First-Person Pronoun in the *Zhuangzi*." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*, 15.1 (2016): 57-79.

Olberding, Amy. "Sorrow and the Sage: Grief in the *Zhuangzi*." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*, 6.4 (2007): 339-359.

Slingerland, Edward. *Wu-wei as Conceptual Metaphor and Spiritual Ideal in Early China*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Stamatov, Aleksandar. "The *Laozi*'s Criticism of Government and Society and a Daoist Criticism of the Modern State." *Asian Philosophy*, 22.2 (2017): 127-149.

Wong, David. "Identifying with Nature in Early Daoism." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 36:4 (2009): 568-584.

Yao, Zhihua. "'I have Lost Me': Zhuangzi's Butterfly Dream." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 40.3-4 (2013): 511-526.

Yearley, Lee. "Daoist Presentation and Persuasion: Wandering among Zhuangzi's Kinds of Language." *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 33.3 (2005): 503-535.

Yong, Huang. "Different Ways of Life: A Daoist Ethics of Virtue in the *Zhuangzi*." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 69.4 (2010): 1049-1069.

Course Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings for Presentations</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Sept 6	Course Intro	Coutinho	
Sept 13	Heaven and Earth	Wong	
Sept 20	Being and Non-Being	Bai	Presentations Begin
Sept 27	The Sage	Graziani	
Oct 4	Government	Stamatov	
Oct 11	Non-Action	Slingerland	Paper outline due
Oct 18	Emotions	Olberding	
Oct 25	Death	Chai	
Nov 1	Ethics	Yong	
Nov 8	Selfhood	Ming	
Nov 15	Language	Yearley	
Nov 22	Dreams	Yao	
Nov 29	Freedom	Lai	Research paper due

Details of course website

Reading materials and other necessary information will be posted on Blackboard.

Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)

Teacher	
Name:	Prof. Chai
Office location:	Room 422, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	3943 7066
Email:	davidchai@cuhk.edu.hk

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/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.