

ARTS6002
Advanced Studies in the Humanities:
Daoist Text and Commentary: Zhuangzi and Guo Xiang

Course Outline

Time : Wed 14:30-17:15

Location : UCC 204

Instructor: Brook Ziporyn

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course overview

In this course we will read the first seven chapters of the classic Daoist text, *Zhuangzi*, along with the canonical Guo Xiang commentary, in the recent English translation of Richard Lynn, consulting also Ziporyn's 2022 translation of the *Zhuangzi* and the original Chinese text (for those with Chinese proficiency). Ziporyn's 2003 monograph on Guo Xiang, *The Penumbra Unbound*, will also be required course reading. Our orientation will be philosophical, with the aim of comprehending the range of interpretations of *Zhuangzi*'s text, the systematic philosophical position motivating Guo Xiang's exegesis, the divergences between the two, and the hermeneutic tactics used by Guo in his handling of the text. Time permitting we will also delve into other sections of the *Zhuangzi* and its commentary.

Learning outcomes

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the primary and secondary source texts on the tradition.
2. Gain competence in explaining and evaluating the key concepts and theories developed by *Zhuangzi* in the Inner Chapters, and its relation to the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters, and by Guo Xiang in his commentary.
3. Be able to articulate and defend a philosophical thesis of their own concerning the issues discussed in the course.
4. Demonstrate progress in their papers toward mastering the expository and critical skills for argumentative writing at the postgraduate level.
5. Be familiar with some central philosophical problems within the tradition of Daoist thought and the various solutions to those problems offered by the tradition.

Topics

Daoist Philosophy

Chinese Hermeneutics

Zhuangzi

Guo Xiang

Spontaneity

Self-so Versus Nature

Ethics

Temporality

Metaphysics

Learning activities

Students are expected to attend every seminar and participate in class discussions. Students are also expected to read before each meeting (40-50 pages maximum per week). Students will also be expected to give *one* course presentation on a selected passage of the reading material, and supply a handout of text analysis on the chosen Zhuangzi text and commentary. This can be used as the basis for a more expansive treatment in the final paper.

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Participation		20%
Class Presentation and Text Analysis		30%
Final Paper		50%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

Class Presentation and Text Analysis:

Each student will give one presentation in the course of the semester. Students will sign up to present during a course meeting of their choice, choosing one portion of the reading for that day in the *Zhuangzi* along with Guo Xiang's commentary, giving an exegesis of the philosophical point of the passage and the exegesis, and possible divergences between the two. A written handout should accompany this presentation, outlining the main points, of no more than three pages in length (New Times Roman, 12 point font, double-spaced).

2. Seminar Paper:

The seminar paper will build from the core of the class presentation and handout, integrating the discussion of the chosen passage with a reading of related passages in both text and commentary, and connecting this to larger philosophical and/or cultural issues drawn from wider sources and concerns. These can be classic problems of Chinese or Western philosophy, or both, or philosophical issues of the student's own emerging from their own life experience or existential concerns. This is a chance to do some creative philosophical exegesis and expansion upon the texts in class, which must be on the one handed well-grounded in the source materials and broader philosophical knowledge, but on the other hand also apply the motifs developed there to the thinking-through of issues not necessarily directly addressed there. The term paper should **not be more than 20 double spaced pages** (New Times Roman, 12 point font).

3. Participation:

Attendance is mandatory and *absence will damage your grades*. Two unexcused absences are permitted. For each unexcused absence beyond two, one-half a letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. In case of emergencies, either notify me of your absence ahead of time, or plan to bring some formal documentation of your absence. Without documentation, I will not accept absences as excused.

4. Late Work/Make-Ups:

Every day the paper is late, one half a letter grade will be deducted from the final grade for the assignment. If you would like a grade changed, you must provide me with a detailed written argument for why you think it should be changed, otherwise I will not consider it.

Grade Descriptor

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

Recommended learning resources**Course schedule**

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	Zhuangzi/GX Ch. 1			
2	Ch. 2			
3	Ch. 3			
4	Ch. 4			
5	Ch. 5			
6	Ch. 6			
7	Ch. 7			
8	Penumbra Unbound, TBA			
9	Penumbra Unbound, TBA			
10	Zhuangzi/GX Chs. 8-11.			
11	Zhuangzi/GX Ch. 17			
12	Zhuangzi/GX Ch. 22			
13	Zhuangzi/Gx Ch. 33			

Details of course website

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

Teacher	
Name:	Ziporyn, Brook
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

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.