

PHIL 3541
Topics in Ancient Chinese Philosophy 古代中國哲學專題
(Mind and Language in Ancient Chinese Thought)

Course Outline

Time: H 11:30am-1:15pm	Location: YIA201
Tut: H 1:30-2:15pm	Location: YIA201

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

The course examines selected topics in ancient Chinese philosophy. The specific content varies from semester to semester. Offerings with different subtitles can be taken up for credit, up to a maximum of two times.

Course summary for 2023: Issues in the philosophy of mind and language played a crucial role in the philosophical discourse of classical China. This course will guide students in reconstructing this role and exploring its philosophical significance by interpreting and critically evaluating selected early Chinese philosophical texts that treat mind, language, and interrelated aspects of psychology. Topics to be discussed include the nature and functions of names and speech; the role of “correcting names”; semantic theory and argumentation; perception and knowledge; the role of language in knowledge and action; and the ontological grounds of linguistic distinctions. Texts to be discussed include the *Analects*, *Guānzǐ*, *Mòzǐ*, *Mencius*, *Dàodéjīng*, *Xúnzǐ*, *Zhuāngzǐ*, and *Lǚ’s Annals*. Class time will be divided between lecture and discussion. Students will be asked to read primary source texts and participate in class discussion. All primary source readings will be provided in both the original Chinese and English translation.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Understand the key concepts, major issues, and prominent positions in the selected topics of the course.
2. Critically discuss and evaluate the major issues and positions in the topics.
3. Demonstrate familiarity with the primary/secondary source texts.
4. Demonstrate skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about issues in ancient Chinese philosophy.
5. Demonstrate ability to articulate and defend one’s own philosophical theses with clarity.

Topics

The nature and functions of names and speech; “correcting names” (正名); semantic theory and argumentation; perception and knowledge; the role of language in knowledge and action; and the ontological grounds of linguistic distinctions.

Learning activities

Lectures; class discussions of primary source readings; online discussion forum; class presentation; essays.

Assessment scheme as prescribed on CUSIS (revise if necessary)

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Essays	One midterm essay, one final essay	60%
Discussion forum	Regular contributions to online discussion forum	20%
Class participation	Regular contributions over the semester	10%
Presentation	One brief activity to be specified	10%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

Grade Descriptor

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

Recommended learning resources

All course readings will be available online

Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Teaching Mode</i> <i>Online / in-campus</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	Introduction: Language, Mind, and the Way		Introductory notes and primary source readings, distributed through course web page		
2	“Correcting Names” and Core Features of Early Discourse		Introductory notes and primary source readings		

	on Language				
3	Distinctions, Models, and Statements in Early Mohism		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
4	Language and Meaning: Some Comparative Remarks		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
5	Semantic Theory in the Mohist Dialectics		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
6	Distinction-Drawing, Models, and Argumentation in Mohism		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
7	Language and Logic in <i>Xúnzǐ</i>		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
8	Truth in Mohism and <i>Xúnzǐ</i>		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
9	Knowledge and Error in Mohism and <i>Xúnzǐ</i>		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
10	The <i>Dàodéjīng</i> and Skepticism about Language		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
11	Language and the Way in <i>Zhuāngzǐ</i>		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
12	<i>Zhuāngzǐ</i> : Mind and Action Beyond Language		Introductory notes and primary source readings		
13	Review and Conclusions				

Details of course website

(TBA)

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

Teacher	
Name:	Fraser, Chris
Office location:	Room 436, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	
Email:	cjfraser@gmail.com

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.