

UGEA2160

Mainstream Chinese Philosophical Thought

中國哲學主流思想

2023-24 Term 1

Provisional Course Outline

Time : Tue, 9:30-12:15

Venue : LSK308

Medium of Instruction : English

Course Teacher : Dr. Frank Yun-chak Chong (Department of Philosophy)

Email : yunchak@gmail.com

Course Overview:

This course delves into Chinese philosophical thought, focusing on the contributions of Confucius, Mozi, Mencius, Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Xunzi. The course will also discuss perspectives from the School of Names, Legalism, and Zen Buddhism. The objective is to equip students with a solid understanding of the foundations of Chinese values and culture, providing them with the tools to understand and analyze cultural and ethical issues in the contemporary world.

Learning Outcomes:

- Identify and characterize the central ideas of traditional Chinese philosophical thought, understanding its influence on and interconnectedness with Chinese culture, and exploring how it informs and deepens our appreciation of Chinese culture.
- Understand the historical and cultural contexts that shaped the development of Chinese philosophy.
- Illustrate how traditional philosophical thought can provide insights into the analysis of contemporary cultural and ethical issues.
- Develop skills to read and interpret selected classical texts, and through careful analysis, articulate the philosophical issues presented in their content.

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Assessment
1	Sep 5	What is "Chinese Philosophy"?	
2	Sep 12	Confucius	
3	Sep 19	Mozi	
4	Sep 26	Mencius	
5	Oct 3	Xunzi	
6	Oct 10	Laozi	
7	Oct 17	Zhuangzi	Midterm Test (30%)
8	Oct 24	Zhuangzi	
9	Oct 31	Legalism & Buddhism	
10	Nov 7	Ethical Issues: Life and Death	
11	Nov 14	Film Analysis and Discussion	Take-home Movie Report (15%)
12	Nov 21	Ethical Issues: Family and Society	
13	Nov 28	Summary	Final Test (30%)
			In-class Discussion Report (15%)

Assessments:

In-class Discussion: 10%

Written Reports: Discussion Report 15%; Movie Report 15%

Midterm Test: 30%

Final Test: 30%

Grade Descriptor:

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

Course texts:

1. **(Original texts)** <https://ctext.org> (or Ctext)
2. **(Textbook)** Lai, Karyn L.. *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* (2nd ed.). UK: Cambridge. 2017. (or AITCP, available online via CUHK Library)

Reading List by Topic: (• = required; ◦ = optional)

1. What is “Chinese Philosophy”?

- Karyn Lai, “Chinese Philosophy”, *AITCP*, pp. 1-19.
- Defoort, Carine. “Is There Such a Thing as Chinese Philosophy? Arguments of an Implicit Debate.” *Philosophy East and West* 51, no. 3 (2001): 393–413.

2. Confucius

- Karyn Lai, “Confucius and the *Analects*”, *AITCP*, pp. 20-40.
- Selections from the *Analects*.
- P. J. Ivanhoe, “Whose Confucius? Which *Analects*?”, *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*, pp. 119-133.

3. Mozi

- Karyn Lai, “Early Mohist Philosophy”, *AITCP*, pp.73-91.
- Selections from the *Mozi*.
- A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, pp. 33-51.
- Chris Fraser, “Introduction”, *The Philosophy of the Mozi: The First Consequentialists*, pp. 1-24.

4. Mencius

- Karyn Lai, “Mencius: Nurturing Goodness”, *AITCP*, pp.41-54.
- Selections from the *Mencius*.
- Franklin Perkins, “Harmony with nature”, *Doing What You Really Want: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mengzi*, pp. 15-49.
- Ames, Roger T. 1991. “The Mencian Conception of Ren Xing: Does It Mean ‘Human Nature’?” In *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays Dedicated to Angus C. Graham*, edited by Henry Rosemont Jr., 143-175. USA: Open Court.

5. Xunzi

- Karyn Lai, “Xunzi: Shaping Humanity”, *AITCP*, pp.55-72.
- Selections from the *Xunzi*.
- Hutton, Eric. 2000. "Does Xunzi Have a Consistent Theory of Human Nature." In *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*, edited by T.C. Kline and Philip J. Ivanhoe, 220-236. USA: Hackett.

6. Laozi

- Karyn Lai, “Daoism and the *Daodejing*”, *AITCP*, pp.92-129.
- Selections from the *Daodejing*.
- Hans-Georg Moeller, “Yin & Yang, Qi, Dao & De”, *The Philosophy of the Daodejing*, pp 33-53.

7. Zhuangzi

- Karyn Lai, “The *Zhuangzi*”, *AITCP*, pp.188-223.
- Selections from the *Zhuangzi*.
- Huang, Yong. 2015. "Respect for Differences: The Daoist Virtue." In *The Routledge companion to virtue ethics*, edited by Lorraine Besser-Jones and Michael Slote, 99-112. NY: Routledge.
- Wong, David B. “Zhuangzi and the Obsession with Being Right.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, vol. 22, no. 2, 91–107, 2005.

8. Legalism & Buddhism

- Karyn Lai, “Legalist Philosophy”, *AITCP*, pp.163-187.
- Karyn Lai, “Chinese Buddhism”, *AITCP*, pp.265-304.

9. Ethical Issues: Life and Death

- Roger Ames, *Human Becomings*. pp.35-58.
- Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd”, *Mortal questions*, pp. 11-23.
- Samuel Scheffler, *Death and the Afterlife*, pp. 15-32.

10. Ethical Issues: Family and Society

- Ivanhoe, Philip J.. 2004. “Filial piety as a virtue.” In *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History*, edited by Alan K. L. Chan and Sor-hoon Tan, 189-202. NY: Routledge.
- Archard, David., “What’s blood got to do with it? The significance of natural parenthood”, *Res Publica* 1: 91-106, 1995.
- David Benatar, “The quality of life argument”, *Debating Procreation: Is It Wrong to Reproduce?*, pp.40-77. And David Wasserman. “Against Anti-Natalism”, pp. 155-166.

Reference:

1. Ames, Roger T. 2020. *Human Becomings: Theorizing Persons for Confucian Role Ethics*. NY: State University of New York Press.
2. Benatar, David, and David Wasserman. 2015. *Debating Procreation: Is It Wrong to Reproduce?*. NY: Oxford.
3. Fingarette, Herbert. 1972. *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
4. Perkins, Franklin. 2022. *Doing What You Really Want: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mengzi*. NY: Oxford.
5. Fraser, Chris. 2016. *The Philosophy of the Mozi: The First Consequentialists*. NY: Columbia University Press.
6. Fraser, Chris. 2023. *Late Classical Chinese Thought*. UK: Oxford University Press.
7. Fung, Yu-Lan. 1952. *A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 1: The Period of the Philosophers (from the Beginnings to Circa 100 B. C.)*. Translated by Derk Bodde. USA: Princeton University Press.
8. Fung, Yu-lan. 1952. *A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 2: The Period of Classical Learning (From the Second Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.)*. Translated by Derk Bodde. USA: Princeton University Press.
9. Graham, A. C. 1989. *Disputers of the Tao*. La Salle: Open Court.
10. Hansen, Chad. 1992. *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.
11. Harari, Yuval Noah. 2014. *Sapiens: a Brief History of Humankind*. NY: Harper.
12. Hsu, Cho-yun. 2012. *China: A New Cultural History*. Translated by Timothy D. Baker, Jr. and Michael S. Duke. NY: Columbia University Press.
13. Lai, Karyn L.. 2017. *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy* (2nd ed.). UK: Cambridge.
14. Lau, D. C. trans. 1992. *Confucius: The Analects*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
15. Liu, JeeLoo. 2006. *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: From Ancient Philosophy to Chinese Buddhism*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell).
16. Moeller, Hans-Georg. 2006. *The Philosophy of the Daodejing*. USA: Columbia.
17. Munro, Donald J. 1969. *The Concept of Man In Early China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
18. Nivison, David S. 1996. *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*. Chicago: Open Court.
19. Nagel, Thomas. 1979. *Mortal questions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
20. Schwartz, Benjamin I.. 1985. *The World of Thought in Ancient China*. Cambridge: Harvard.
21. Scheffler, Samuel. 2013. *Death and the Afterlife*. NY: Oxford.
22. Tu Wei-ming. 1985. *Confucian Thought, Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
23. Van Norden, Bryan W. ed. 2002. *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press.
24. Wong, David, "Chinese Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/ethics-chinese/>>.