PHIL2301: Guided Studies in Chinese Philosophical Classics: *Liezi* 列子
Term 2, 2026-27

Course Outline

Time: Mon 10:30am-1:15pm	Location: Y.C. Liang Hall G03

Course overview

This seminar course involves reading and discussing the Daoist text *Liezi* 列子. Although a canonical work of Daoism, the *Liezi* has been largely overlooked due to the similarity of its ideas to those in the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*. In this course, we will examine these similarities and show how the *Liezi* reformulates and expands them to create a unique philosophy of its own.

Learning outcomes

1. Understand the key concept and philosophical issues raised by the text.
2. Read and interpret the text.
3. Reflect on the modern relevance of the text.
4. Be able to engage in critical discussion on the text.

Topics

See the 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 others in discussion on the material presented.

Assessment Scheme

Task	***Description***	***Weight***
Weekly Reflection Paper	1 page each, 10 in total	20%
Essay Outline	2 pages, single spaced	20%
Essay	6 pages, single spaced	50%
Class Participation	n/a	10%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme

<u>Reflection Papers</u>

From Jan. 18 until April 19, you will submit in class a 1-page reflection paper on the previous week's lecture. This is not a research paper but an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on the previous lecture and whether you experienced anything similar in your own life. Your paper should be single spaced and use 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Late submissions may be penalized.

Essay Outline

The first page of your outline should include the following: one paragraph to describe what your paper is about (including its thesis), one paragraph for each sub-argument (including which key passage(s) from the text you will use and which scholarly works you will cite). The second page will contain your bibliography. For each entry in your bibliography, include a short statement (1 or 2 sentences) about why you chose it. The essay outline is due in class on Feb. 15 and should be single spaced and use 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Late submissions may be penalized.

Essay

You will be assessed according to the clarity of your writing, your ability to integrate the arguments of scholars into your discussion, and your level of philosophical thinking. You must provide citations for all quoted or summarized material. Your essay should be a minimum of 6 pages, not including the bibliography, and is due in class on April 19. The paper should be single spaced and use 12 pt. Times New Roman font. Late submissions may be penalized.

***Note:** You are not allowed to use any AI tools in the preparation and writing of your weekly reflection papers, the research paper outline, or the actual research paper.

Grade Descriptor

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

Course Resources

Angus C. Graham, tr. *The Book of Liezi*. Columbia University Press, 1990.
Ian Johnston and Wang Ping, tr. *The Liezi*. Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2026.

*Note: A bibliography will be posted on Blackboard to help you locate secondary sources for your essay.

Course schedule

Date	***Topic***	***Reading***	***Remarks***
Jan 11	Cosmology I	Ch. 1 (17-24)	
Jan 18	Cosmology II	Ch. 1 (24-31)	Reflection paper 1 due
Jan 25	Perfect Person I	Ch. 2 (33-45)	Rp 2
Feb 1	Perfect Person II	Ch. 2 (45-57)	Rp 3
Feb 5-11 Lunar New Year Holiday			
Feb 15	Reality vs Appearances	Ch. 3 (61-73)	Rp 4; Essay outline due
Feb 22	The Sage	Ch. 4 (75-91)	Rp 5
March 1	Limits of Knowledge I	Ch. 5 (94-106)	Rp 6
March 15	Limits of Knowledge II	Ch. 5 (106-117)	Rp 7
March 22	Effort vs Fate	Ch. 6 (121-134)	Rp 8
March 29 Easter Holiday *April 5 Qing Ming Festival*			
April 12	Yang Zhu	Ch. 7 (138-156)	Rp 9
April 19	The Subtlety of Signs	Ch. 8 (158-181)	Rp 10; Essay due

Contact details

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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 are 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.