

PHIL 336: Chinese Philosophy

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Spring 2009

Classroom: HUM 518

Or by appointment

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1 Course description

In much the same way that nearly all of European philosophy can be seen as the working out of issues raised by several key Greek thinkers, nearly all of East Asian philosophy can be seen as the working out of issues raised by a few teachers and writers who were active during a period of two or three centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

In this course we shall examine the thought of several of those key thinkers and will carefully read the key writings of seven of them: Kongfuzi (Confucius), Mozi (Mo Tzŭ), Laozi (Lao Tzŭ), Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzŭ), Mengzi (Mencius), Xunzi (Hsün Tzŭ) and Hanfeizi (Han Fei Tzŭ). These early Chinese thinkers concerned themselves with discussions of human nature, virtue, good government and the natural world. Their styles range from anecdotes to essays to satirical sketches.

Using a combination of lectures and discussion groups, we will focus on several of the issues most hotly debated: are human beings by nature good or evil; what is the role of education; how can human society best be ruled? Although the society of pre-Han China was different from contemporary American society in a number of important ways, human nature has probably not changed much in the past few centuries. Consequently, much of what we read will be material that all people at all times could profitably reflect upon. In our discussions, attention will be paid first to understanding the thinkers in their own cultural setting, then to asking ourselves what insights these thinkers have for our own place and time.

2 Basis for grading

Grades will be based on two essays, one midterm examination, and class participation (which includes attendance). The distribution of the marks will be as follows.

Assignment	Date Due	Percentage
First essay	February 27	30%
Midterm exam	April 6	30%
Second essay	May 8	30%
Class participation		10%
Total		100%

3 Texts

All the following texts have been ordered and should be available at the UNM bookstore. It may be less expensive to order them through Amazon.com or some other Internet book provider.

- *Basic Writings of Mo Tzŭ, Hsün Tzŭ and Han Fei Tzŭ*. Translated by Burton Watson. Columbia University Press. ISBN: 0-231-02515-7
- Chuang Tzŭ, *The Inner Chapters*. Translated by A. C. Graham. Hackett Publications, 2001. ISBN: 0-87220-581-9
- Confucius, *Analects*. Translated by Edward Slingerland. Hackett Publications, 2003. ISBN: 0-87220-635-1
- Laozi, *Daodejing*. Translated by Philip J. Ivahoe. Hackett Publications, 2003. ISBN: 0-87220-701-3
- Mengzi, *Mengzi*. Translated by Bryan W. Van Norden. Hackett Publications, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-87220-913-8

4 Schedule of topics and readings

Date	Topic and reading
Jan 21	Preliminaries. Introductions. Discussion: what do you expect ancient Chinese philosophy might have to say to the modern West?
23	Pre-Confucian Chinese thought
26	The Confucian classics. Introduction to the Analects. Read <i>Analects</i> , pp. xi–xxvi.
28	Read <i>Analects</i> Books 1–5.
30	Read <i>Analects</i> Books 6–10.
Feb 2	Read <i>Analects</i> Books 11–15.
4	Read <i>Analects</i> Books 16–20.
6	The century following Kongfuzi; <i>Daxue</i> and <i>Zhongyong</i> .
9	Read Mo Tzŭ, pp. 18–49.
11	Read Mo Tzŭ, pp. 50–93.
13	Read Mo Tzŭ, pp. 94–136.
16	Zhuangzi. Read <i>Chuang Tzŭ: The Inner Chapters</i> , Part One (pp. 3–40).
18	Read Chuang Tzŭ, Part Two, chapters 1–4 (pp. 43–75).
20	Read Chuang Tzŭ, Part Two, chapters 5–8 (pp. 76–111).
23	Read Chuang Tzŭ, Part Three, chapters 1–3 (pp. 116–142).
25	Read Chuang Tzŭ, Part Three, chapters 4–6 (pp. 143–175).
27	Read Chuang Tzŭ, Part Three, chapters 7–10 (pp. 176–193). First essay due.
Mar 2	Read Chuang Tzŭ, Part Four (pp. 200–217).
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Date	Topic and reading
4	Read Chuang Tzū, Part Five (pp. 224–253).
6	Read Chuang Tzū, Part Six (pp. 259–285).
9	<i>The Daodejing of Laozi</i> . Read Preface and Introduction (pp. ix–xxxii)
11	Read <i>Daodejing</i> , Book One.
13	Read <i>Daodejing</i> , Book Two.
Mar 23	Mengzi. Read Book 1.
25	Read <i>Mengzi</i> Book 2.
27	Read <i>Mengzi</i> Book 3.
30	Read <i>Mengzi</i> Book 4.
Apr 1	Read <i>Mengzi</i> Book 5 and 6A.
3	Read <i>Mengzi</i> Book 6B and 7.
6	Midterm examination.
8	Xunzi. Read <i>Basic writings of Hsün Tzū</i> : “Encouraging Learning,” and “Improving Yourself.”
10	Read <i>Hsün Tzū</i> : “Regulations of a king,” and “Debating military affairs.”
13	Read <i>Hsün Tzū</i> : “Discussion of Heaven,” and “Discussion of Rites.”
15	Read <i>Hsün Tzū</i> : “Discussion of Music,” and “Dispelling Obsession.”
17	Read <i>Hsün Tzū</i> : “Rectifying names,” and “Man’s Nature is Evil.”
20	Hanfeizi. Read <i>Basic Writings of Han Fei Tzū</i> : “The Way of the Ruler,” and “On Having Standards.”
22	Read <i>Basic Writings of Han Fei Tzū</i> : “The Two Handles,” and “Wielding Power.”
24	Read <i>Basic Writings of Han Fei Tzū</i> : “The Eight Villanies,” and “The Ten Faults.”
27	Read <i>Basic Writings of Han Fei Tzū</i> : “The Difficulties of Persuasion,” and “Mr Ho.”
29	Read <i>Basic Writings of Han Fei Tzū</i> : “Precautions Within the Palace,” and “Facing South.”
May 1	Read <i>Basic Writings of Han Fei Tzū</i> : “The Five Vermin,” and “Eminence in Learning.”
4	Confucians during the Han dynasty.
6	Daoists during the Han dynasty.
8	Reflections on relevance of ancient Chinese thought for our times. Second essay due.