

PHIL 6312: Chinese Philosophy

Spring 2024 Syllabus
Time: Monday, 10:00am-12:45pm
Location: CB 1.202

Instructor: Songyao Ren
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Office: JO 4.634
Office Hours: Monday, 2pm-3pm

Course Description

This course will be an exploration of major philosophical traditions in early China: Confucianism, Mohism, and Daoism. These thinkers developed a complex and rich debate about ethics, human nature, moral psychology, and self-cultivation. We shall see how advocates of these different philosophies debated and borrowed ideas from each other. We will also view these philosophies from a comparative perspective, addressing the questions such as: “To what extent does Chinese philosophy touch on problems and issues that appear in different cultural and philosophical traditions?” and “To what extent can its insights be appreciated and incorporated into our own lives?” Texts will be read in English translations, with some reference to Chinese terms and phrases that does not presuppose familiarity with the language.

Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All readings will be provided electronically through *eLearning*. You can also find translations of classical Chinese texts here: <https://ctext.org>

Course Requirements and Grading

Discussion Leading (25%)

You will be asked to lead discussion in one class session. This should include a presentation of the key points from the reading and posing of questions for discussion.

Final Presentation (25%)

You will be asked to do a 20-minute presentation on your final paper during the last week of class. Your presentation will be judged on 1) clarity, and 2) quality of your argument.

Term Paper (50%)

Please submit a term paper of approximately 15 double-spaced typescript pages by **May 1st**. I will give you suggested topics for the paper. If you choose to write about something else, please confer

with me about the topic.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings
01/22	Course Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Reading
01/29	Confucius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eno's translation of <i>Analects</i>, Books 1-5
02/05	Confucius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Analects</i>, Books 6-12
02/12	Confucius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Olberding, "Dreaming of the Duke of Zhou: Exemplarism in the Analects" Wong, "Early Confucian Philosophy and the Development of Compassion", sections 1 & 2.1
02/19	Mozi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Essentials of Mozi</i> (Fraser trans.), selections
02/26	Mozi and Inclusive Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Essentials of Mozi</i> (Fraser trans.), "Inclusive Care" Fraser, "Inclusive Care"
03/04	Mencius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloom's translation of <i>Mencius</i>, Books 1A (entire), 1B1-2, 1B5, 1B8, 2A2-3, 2A6, 2A8-9, 2B3, 3A3, 3A5, 3B1, 3B3, 3B9, 4A7, 4A17, 4A18-19, 4A26-28, 4B13-14, 4B26, 4B28, 5A1-2, 5A5, 6A (entire)
03/11	Spring Break, No Class	
03/18	Mencius on Human Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wong, "Early Confucian Philosophy and the Development of Compassion," sections 2.2 & 2.3 Tomasello, <i>Why We Cooperate</i>, selections
03/25	Confucianism and Feminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gilligan, "Images of Relationship" Li, "The Concept of Jen and the Feminist Ethics of Care"
04/01	Xunzi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Xunzi" in <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i> (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5, 9, 17, 19, 23)
04/08	Xunzi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wong, "Early Confucian Philosophy and the Development of Compassion," section 3 Berkson, "Xunzi as a Theorist and Defender of Ritual"
04/15	Zhuangzi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Zhuangzi" in <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i>

04/22	Zhuangzi on Emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olberding, “Sorrow and the Sage: Grief in the Zhuangzi” • Wong, “The Meaning of Detachment in Daoism, Buddhism, and Stoicism”
04/29	Final Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Reading

Course Policies

Late Paper/Extension/Make-Up Policy

Written assignments are due at the time and date specified in the assignment instructions. Papers will be penalized by a full letter grade for each day they are late after the date specified. Extensions for extenuating circumstances must be requested at least one week before an assignment is due.

Academic Integrity

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for our fair evaluation of your work. All work submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the University’s academic regulations. The use of ChatGPT or similar AI programs in lieu of genuine student work will be considered plagiarism and a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Please familiarize yourself with UTD’s policy:

<https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>

Be Prepared for Class

In order to be successful, please read the assigned readings, ideally two or three times, and come to class prepared to discuss questions and comments pertaining to the readings.

Accommodation Policy

This course is designed with all students in mind, but we are not all the same. The instructor would like to work with each student so that the course and its requirements fit with their abilities. If you would like to discuss such matters, please contact the instructor during the first week of class. Under UTD policy, for an accommodation to be officially considered, a student must register with Student AccessAbility. Please contact their office here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess/>