

Chinese Philosophy

Course Number	PHIL 3756-L01/CRN: 37314
Day Time Location	Tuesday/Friday 10:00-11:15AM TBA

Instructor Information

Dr. Philip J. Walsh

Office hours: Tuesday/Friday 2:15-4:15PM, Lowenstein Room TBA

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Course Description

The philosophical traditions of China are vast and complex and could never be covered in a single semester, therefore the primary focus of this course will be classical Chinese philosophy (roughly, 600 BCE to 200 BCE), when the main figures of Confucianism, Moism, and Daoism developed their philosophies. Our focus will be the ethical and political views of the classical period, but this will necessarily involve discussion of underlying metaphysical and epistemological issues. We will also devote one unit to Buddhism, focusing on the Tian-tai and Ch'an schools (roughly, 400 CE to 600 CE). We will examine how the Buddhist tradition was uniquely adapted by Chinese thinkers, with particular attention to the notions of Truth and Buddha-nature. Furthermore, since Buddhism is a religious tradition, we will focus on the relationship between theory and practice.

Course Schedule (subject to change at discretion of instructor)

Note: *RCCP* = our course textbook, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*

Day	Topic	Assigned Readings
8/31	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course syllabus - Van Norden, "Hermeneutics, or How to Read a Text" (online)
9/4	Historical and Metaphysical Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>RCCP</i>, "Introduction" - Wilhelm, "Introduction to the I Ching" (online)
9/7	Major themes in Confucianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>RCCP</i>, pp. 1-28
9/11	Major themes in Confucianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>RCCP</i>, pp. 28-57
9/14	Normative ethical theory in the <i>Analects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ivanhoe (1990), "Reweaving the 'One Thread' of the <i>Analects</i>" (online)
9/18	Mozi's consequentialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>RCCP</i>, pp. 68-76 ("Impartial Caring") - <i>RCCP</i>, pp. 80-90 ("For Moderation in Funerals")

9/21	Mengzi on Human Nature and Differentiated Care	- <i>RCCP</i> , pp. 115-159
9/25	Mengzi on Moral Motivation	- Wong (1991), "Is There a Distinction Between Reason and Emotion in Mencius?" (online)
9/28	Themes from Mengzi	- No assigned reading; continue discussion of previous themes and readings
10/2	Xunzi on Learning and Ritual	- <i>RCCP</i> , pp. 255-309 - Attend annual Sullivan Lecture by Prof. Stephen Angle (Wesleyan) on Confucianism! 5:30-7PM Lincoln Center McNally Theater (<i>strongly encouraged</i>)
10/5	Xunzi on Human Nature and Moral Motivation	- Wong (1996), "Xunzi on Moral Motivation" (online)
10/9	Themes from Xunzi	- No assigned reading; continue discussion of previous themes and readings
10/12	Review First Essay Assigned	- No assigned reading; writing workshop
10/16	Daoist metaphysics and the concept of <i>wuwei</i>	- <i>RCCP</i> , pp. 161-205
10/19	Political philosophy in the <i>Daodejing</i>	- Feldt (2010), "Governing Through the Dao: A Non-Anarchistic Interpretation of the <i>Laozi</i> " (online)
10/23	Zhuangzi's skepticism and relativism	- <i>RCCP</i> , pp. 207-253
10/26	Zhuangzi's existentialism	- Fraser (2011), "Emotion and Agency in <i>Zhuangzi</i> " (online)
10/30	Themes from Daoism	- No assigned reading; continue discussion of previous themes and readings
11/2	EXAM 1	- Daoism exam
11/6	Review and Transition to Chinese Buddhism	- Sidertis, "Buddha" (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy – online)
11/9	Tian-tai Buddhism	- Selections from the <i>Lotus Sutra</i> and Zhi-yi's commentary (online)
11/13	The concept of truth in Tian-tai	- Swanson (1989), "Truth in T'ien-t'ai Philosophy" (online) - Paper conferences

11/14 <u>or</u> 11/15		- Additional mid-week office hours for paper conferences
11/16	Buddha-nature and Pure Mind in Tian-tai	- Selections from <i>The Great Calming and Contemplation</i> (online) - Paper conferences
11/20	Review of Tian-tai Buddhism	- No assigned reading; continue discussion of previous themes and readings
11/23		THANKSGIVING BREAK
11/27	Ch'an Buddhism	- <i>The Sutra of Hui-Neng</i> , pp. 5-43
11/30	Ch'an Buddhism	- <i>The Sutra of Hui-Neng</i> , pp. 44-81
12/4	Ch'an Buddhism	- Cheng (1973), "On Zen (Ch'an) Language and Zen Paradoxes" (online)
12/7	Final Review	- No assigned readings
Finals Week	EXAM 2	- Paper due - Buddhism exam (check official exam schedule)

Learning Objectives

- To understand the key theories of classical Chinese philosophy, including Confucianism, Moism, and Daoism
- To be able to articulate the notion of the self and its relation to society underlying these theories
- To understand the relationship between philosophy and religion in the context of the historical development of Buddhism
- To develop critical reading and thinking skills
- To develop academic and professional writing skills

Required texts

- Ivanhoe & Van Norden (eds.). *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. Hackett (2001). ISBN: 0872207803 (paperback)
- *The Sutra of Hui Neng*. Trans. Thomas Cleary. Shambala (1998). ISBN: 9781570623486 (paperback).

Additional reading assignments and course content will be made available on the course website.

Grading

Letter Grade	Numerical equivalent	Meaning of the Grade
A	94-100	Excellent. Honors-level work, outstanding.

A-	90-93	Still excellent.
B+	87-89	Very good. High Level of performance.
B	83-86	Good. Solid and above average level of performance.
B-	80-82	Good. Still above average.
C+	77-79	Average level of performance.
C	73-76	Satisfactory. Acceptable level of performance.
C-	70-72	Minimally acceptable.
D	65-69	Passing, but unsatisfactory. Below average performance.
F	<65	Failure. Inferior performance.

Standards for Distinguishing between Excellent, Good, Average and Poor:

- Professionalism: Papers should demonstrate good grammar as well as good spelling. They should also be copy-edited to reduce or eliminate typos.
- Writing Quality: Writing should be clear and exhibit good structure. Paragraphs should be cohesive and build towards a complete essay with a substantial thesis (as opposed to a string of disconnected thoughts).
- Accuracy and Understanding: Papers should be able accurately to re-create an argument or a position. They should find the relevant issues and argument(s) worthy of analysis.
- Argument: Papers should argue for or against a position rather than merely exchange opinions. Is the argument for or against a position constructed persuasively within the confines of the paper? (Note: I am not looking for your argument to be true — there is no need to guess my opinion. What I want to see is *persuasion.*)

Grade Breakdown

Paper: 40%

- Stage 1: 15%
- Stage 2: 25%

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Quizzes: 20%

Paper

You will write one paper for this course of approximately 3000-4000 words. The paper writing assignment will be broken down into two stages: (1) a research stage in which you select a topic, find 5-10 secondary sources, and write a preliminary literature review; and (2) a final paper that aims to articulate and defend an original thesis. All students must schedule a conference for the week of Nov. 12 to discuss the direction of their paper.

Exams

There will be two exams covering material on Daoism and Buddhism. Exams consist of a combination of short answer and essay questions.

Quizzes

I give relatively frequent short (about 5 minutes to complete) and easy (just summary,

no interpretation) in-class pop quizzes on the reading assignments. These quizzes will be easy if you do the reading. I drop the two lowest quiz grades for the semester. If you miss a quiz due to *unexcused* lateness or absence, you receive a zero for that quiz.

Plagiarism:

The instructor reserves the right to deal with instances of plagiarism on a case by case basis. Penalties for plagiarism may include, but are not limited to:

- A reduced grade on an assignment
- Receiving a zero for the assignment
- Failure of the entire course

JUST DON'T DO IT. It is not worth it. It is easier than ever to plagiarize today, and it is easier than ever for your professor to catch you. If you are unsure if something counts as plagiarism (such as if/how you should cite something), just ask me, that's what I'm here for. It is better to ask and error on the side of caution.

From Fordham's student handbook:

Violations of Academic Integrity:
A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when individuals attempt to present as their own what has come from another source. Plagiarism takes place whether such theft is accidental or deliberate. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Failing to acknowledge the ideas of another person, whether or not such ideas are paraphrased, from whatever source including oral, print, broadcast or computer-mediated communication.
- Attempting to rewrite borrowed material by simply dropping a word here and there, substituting a few words for others, or moving around words or sentences.
- Failing to place quotation marks around borrowed material in the approved style. It is no defense to claim that one has "forgotten" to do so.
- Presenting as one's own an assignment, paper or computer program partially or wholly prepared by another person, whether by another student, friend, or by a business or on-line service that sells or distributes such papers and programs.

Some advice on plagiarism and paraphrasing from Joe Williams and Larry McEnerney, "Writing in College," in *Engaging the Humanities at the University of Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 206-207.

Here is a simple test for inadvertent plagiarism: be conscious of where your eyes are as you put words on paper or on a screen. If your eyes are on your source at the same moment your fingers are flying across the keyboard, you risk doing something that weeks, months, even years later could result in your public humiliation. Whenever you use a source extensively, compare your page with the original. If you think someone could run her finger along your sentences and find synonyms or synonymous phrases for words in the original in roughly the same order, try again. You are least likely to plagiarize inadvertently if as you write, you keep your eyes not on your source, but on the screen or on your own page, and you report what your source has to say after those words have filtered through your own understanding of them.

Class policies

- “A friend is one before whom I may think aloud” –Emerson

My fundamental policy in this class is to have a class environment of mutual respect where we help one another achieve our course objectives. The course policies in this section are designed to help achieve that environment.

Correspondence

- Email is the best way to reach me. I will reply to all emails within one business day.
- Class announcements and other information about the course readings, schedule changes, due dates, etc. will all happen through Fordham email and our course website. It is your responsibility to check your Fordham email daily and have access to the course website.
- General tip for emailing college professors: always err on the side of formality. You would be amazed how many emails I get that begin with “Hey” or no greeting at all. Email is a form of professional communication and has different rules than texting. When emailing a professor or TA or generally *anyone* other than your close friends and family, begin the email with “Dear Professor...,” and end it with “Sincerely...” or “Best...”.

Electronic Devices

- Laptops and tablets are permitted for course readings and note-taking. I reserve the right to ask you to close your laptop if it is becoming an obvious distraction.
- Silence your phone. Don’t look at it.

Food and Drink

- If it requires utensils or smells, don’t bring it.

Attendance

- A general note: success in this course highly depends on regular attendance. You will not receive points for simply showing up, but doing well on quizzes, exams, and the paper will be exceedingly difficult if you frequently miss class.
- Excused absences: If you miss class for a medical reason or some serious reason, you must provide me with verifying documentation.
- In the case of both excused and unexcused absences, it is the student’s responsibility to inquire after any material they may have missed. Office hours is an appropriate place to do this; an email reading “Hey professor what did I miss?” is not.

Late work policy

- Late work will be penalized one full letter grade per day late.
- Extensions are granted at the instructor’s discretion.
- Requests for extensions must be made well in advance of the deadline.
- When requesting an extension I expect you to provide a rationale and a concrete plan for finishing the work.

Disability Statement:

Fordham University, in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of disability in administration of its education related programs and activities. We have an institutional commitment to provide equal educational opportunities for disabled students who are otherwise qualified. Students seeking services should meet with Disability Services staff for an initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information please visit: https://www.fordham.edu/info/20174/disability_services