

Classical Chinese Philosophy

MR 3:30-4:50, Library 250

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Office Hours: R 10:00-12:00 or by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces students to philosophical traditions from classical Chinese Philosophy, including Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism. These traditions emerged out of intense political turmoil and ferment, and provide competing visions of how to live well in accordance with nature – both individually and collectively – that remain compelling today. Thus, in addition to situating these traditions within the historical contexts of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods of ancient Chinese history, this course will examine the influence of these ideas both on later Chinese as well as Western intellectual history. Facility with the Chinese language is not a prerequisite for participation in the course.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Develop an understanding of major trends in Classical Chinese Philosophy.

Develop an understanding of methods of argumentation used by Classical Chinese philosophers.

Hone ability to analyze philosophical arguments and conduct original research in the history of philosophy/history of Classical Chinese Philosophy.

Students may use any skills in Chinese/Classical Chinese to read primary sources and conduct research in the original language.

Course Evaluation Criteria

Expectations for a “satisfactory” evaluation include regular attendance (no more than 3 absences during the semester), exhibition of an understanding of course material, participation in class discussion, and on-time completion of assignments.

Assignments:

Short written reflections upon reading material (one per week).

1 short paper (5-6 pages) thoroughly analyzing an argument or textual passage

1 longer research paper (8-10 pages) that engages secondary literature and defends an interpretation of a particular philosopher or text. Students will develop their projects on the basis of feedback from both peers and the instructor.

Disability Services:

New College of Florida is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its student body. Students are welcome to privately discuss any concerns related to barriers to both fully participating and learning in this course. I highly encourage students with accommodations to meet with me as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may contact the office of Student Disability Services (SDS) in order to request official accommodation(s). Students may contact SDS in-person (HCL3), at 941-487-4496 OR disabilityservices@ncf.edu. Additional information regarding SDS can be accessed here: <https://www.ncf.edu/student-disability-services/>

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Students are expected to be familiar with the college's academic dishonesty policy, as described in the General Catalog. Any violation of this policy may result in academic sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the college.

Required Books:

1. Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy, 2nd Ed.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001. ISBN-13: 978-0872207806 [Abbreviated as *Readings* below]
2. Confucius. *The Most Venerable Book (Shang Shu)*. Penguin, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0141197463
3. *The I Ching or Book of Changes*. (Bollingen Series XIX) 3rd. Edition. Translated by Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967. ISBN-13: 978-0844295909
4. *Mengzi, with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Translated by Bryan W. van Norden. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008. ISBN: 978-0872209138
5. *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings, with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Translated by Brook Ziporyn. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009. ISBN: 978-0872209114

Additional course materials will be posted in PDF form on the course Canvas page.

Schedule of Readings (Tentative)

Monday 8/27 Introductions, Syllabus Review

Thursday 8/30 Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy Van Norden (Canvas)

Monday 9/3 No Class – Labor Day

Thursday 9/6 Shang Shu 5-26, 83-116, 135-137, 174-179

Monday 9/10 Kongzi (Confucius): *Analects (Lunyu)*, Readings 1-28
Thursday 9/13 Kongzi (Confucius): *Analects (Lunyu)*, Readings 28-54

Monday 9/17 Kongzi (Confucius): *Great Learning*, Canvas
Thursday 9/20 Kongzi (Confucius): *Doctrine of the Mean*, Canvas

Monday 9/24 Selections from Mozi, *Readings* 58-90
Thursday 9/27 Selections from Mozi, *Readings* 90-113

Monday 10/1 Mengzi (Mencius), Books 1A, 1B, 2A, *Readings* 1-49
Thursday 10/4 Mengzi (Mencius) Books 2B, 3A, 3B, *Readings* 50-87

Monday 10/8 Mengzi (Mencius), Books 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, *Readings* 88-142
Thursday 10/11 Mengzi (Mencius), Books 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, *Readings* 143-197 First

First Paper due Friday 10/12

10/15-10/19: Fall Break

Monday 10/22 *I Ching* (Book of Changes), 280-304, 3-24
Thursday 10/25 *I Ching* (Book of Changes) 24-85

Monday 10/29 Laozi, *Dao de Jing*, Chapters 1-37, *Readings* 160-180
Thursday 11/1 Laozi, *Dao de Jing*, Chapters 38-81, *Readings* 181-203

Monday 11/5 Zhuangzhi *Inner Chapters*, 3-54
Thursday 11/8 Zhuangzhi *Outer Chapters*, 57-92

Monday 11/12 No Class – Veteran's Day
Thursday 11/15 Zhuangzhi *Miscellaneous Chapters*, 95-125

Monday 11/19 Xunzi, *Readings* 254-285
Thursday 11/22 No Class – Thanksgiving

Monday 11/26 Xunzi, *Readings* 285-307
Thursday 11/29 Han Feizi, *Readings* 310-359

Monday 12/3 Open/TBD

Final Paper Due Wednesday of Exam Week (12/12)

Resources/Further Reading

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Features thorough entries with bibliographies on many of the philosophers and general philosophical themes that we will study in this course: plato.stanford.edu

Rules for Studying the History of Philosophy:

Guidelines on how to read/conduct research in the history of philosophy from Peter Adamson, host of the History of Philosophy Podcast (“History of Philosophy without any Gaps”): <https://historyofphilosophy.net/rules-history-philosophy>

Warp, Weft, and Way

Group blog on Chinese and Comparative Philosophy. Lists a number of resources helpful for the study of Chinese Philosophy: <http://warpweftandway.com>