

PHIL 350: *Asian Philosophy*
FALL 2007

Class meeting time: T R 4:00-5:15 pm
Classroom: H 226
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Instructor: JeeLoo Liu
Office location: H-311A
Office hours: T/R 2:30 – 4:00 pm
or by appointment

Text:

1. JeeLoo Liu. *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy: Ancient Philosophy and Chinese Buddhism*. Blackwell Publishing, 2006. [Available at [Little Professors](#)]
2. Packet: *Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy [selections]* [Available at [CopyCo](#)]

Course description:

Prerequisite: completion of General Education category III.B.2.

This course will teach Asian philosophies with heavy emphasis on Chinese philosophy such as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism (especially Zen) and Neo-Confucianism. We will study the different worldviews, conceptions of human nature and the good life from these philosophical perspectives, and where suitable, make comparisons with Western philosophies, religions and values. The course will be conducted in the lecture/discussion format.

Learning Goals:

Learning Goals for GE - Implications, Explorations, and Participatory Experience in the Arts and Humanities:

1. To understand broad, unifying themes in the arts and/or humanities from cross-disciplinary perspectives.

This course explains and discusses basic questions of human existence as understood and addressed by Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism.

2. To solve complex problems that require artistic or humanistic understanding.

This course raises basic questions of how human beings should live in society. These are questions that each individual must resolve for him or herself through the study of history, seminal religious and philosophical texts, literature, art and through thoughtful discussion and private reflection. Though focused on seminal Asian texts, such as classics of Asian literature like the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Daodejing*, this course is presented in a socio-economic and historical context and also discusses the influences of religion and philosophy on artistic expression.

3. To relate the arts and/or humanities to significant social problems or to other related disciplines.

One of the main issues in this course has to do with different conceptions of society and what it should be like. In this regard, comparisons are made between our own society and the ideals of society found in Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. In particular, different conceptions of the relationship between people and society are compared and discussed vis-a-vis social problems having to do with marriage, family, aging, education, child rearing, government, violence and war.

Learning Goals for GE Cultural Diversity

1. To understand that culture is socially constructed and fundamental to social interaction.

This course is all about identifying and understanding the cultural assumptions that underlie Asian, as well as Western, cultures. This includes understanding the relationship between these basic assumptions about the nature of human beings and how they relate to norms of social structure and human relationships.

2. To appreciate the complex relationships that gender, ethnicity and class bring to a discussion of society and culture.

Like all religious philosophies, Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism address issues of gender, ethnicity and class in both theory and practice. In discussing these philosophies we contrast the ways in which they have been institutionalized in society and how they do or do not reflect the basic ideas and ideals of their founders. For example, Confucius' ideas of distinct gender roles poses one of the most serious challenges to the continued relevance Confucianism in the modern world. However, many oppressive practices attributed to Confucianism, such as female foot binding, are not at all parts of his original philosophy.

3. To understand that because we live in an inter-connected world, we need to understand the diversity and relationships within and among cultures.

Studying different Asian philosophies involves understanding both the ways in which they conflict and the ways in which they can co-exist. Comparing Asian cultures to our own involves the same kind of understandings. China is a good example of how the often-conflicting perspectives of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism can also co-exist harmoniously in the same society.

Similarly comparing Asian and Western cultural assumptions helps us to understand sources of conflict as well as compatibilities.

4. To recognize and evaluate how one's cultural history affects one's sense of self and relationship to others.

Central to this course are different social conceptions of the human person. For example, students of Asian ancestry are often torn between the individualistic conception of human beings they find in American society and the relational or group conception of self that is found in many Asian families (as well as in more traditional Latino families). That central difference lies at the core of our ideas about who we are and how we should relate to parents, friends, spouses, children and society at large.

Grading:

Homework Study Questions (see policy #1, #2)	20 %
Mid-term Exam (in class)	20 %
One paper (5 pages)	20 %
Final Exam (non-umulative)	20 %
Presentation of course materials	10 %
Debate or panel discussion	10 %
Full attendance	2 points extra credit

To receive a final grade for the course, no portion of your grade can be a "zero".

COURSE GRADES:

Calculated on the following scale

97-100	A+
94-96	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
Under 60	F

Academic Dishonesty:

“Academic dishonesty is comprised of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive, fraudulent, or unauthorized means.” The most commonly observed form of academic dishonesty is copying others’ writings on the Internet. Even when you are merely borrowing a single sentence from someone else, doing so without proper quotation marks and author-attribution counts as plagiarism. **Students who commit acts of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the course.** Students with questions about how to cite others’ work should see the instructor.

Class Attendance and Participation:

Students must be conscientious about attending classes on a regular basis. Any consecutive absences must be given proper explanation. Students are allowed to miss three classes without prior explanation (however, full attendance will be rewarded with two extra points in the final average). To excuse your absences from that point on, you will need to present credible documentation. Class participation includes active discussion in class, raising relevant questions, answering questions, and paying close attention in class. **Everyone (each student as well as the instructor) is responsible for making this class interesting, engaging, and thought-provoking.**

Classroom Etiquettes:

Classroom environment is for the instructor and all students to interact with one another in a professional and intellectual manner. Students are expected to observe common classroom etiquettes. Behavior that interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior. Such behavior includes (but not restricted to)

- (i) constant late arrivals;
- (ii) early departures without proper explanation;
- (iii) chatting with your neighbors during lectures;
- (iv) eating in class;
- (v) doing things unrelated to the course in class, such as reading other books, doing assignments for other courses, or playing with your laptop.
- (vi) **not turning off your cell phone in class.**

Students with repeated disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom.

General policies:

1. For each reading assignment, I will give out a sheet of study questions the class before. It is your responsibility to obtain these study questions from me should you miss a class. There will be 21 sheets of study questions throughout the semester. In some cases, there may be one essay question; in some others, there may be a list of short questions. **I do not accept late study questions whatsoever.** The grade for this set of assignment will be decided as follows:

21	A+ (=100)
19-20	A (=95)
17-18	A- (=90)
16	B+ (=87)
15	B (= 84)
14	B- (=80)
13	C+ (=77)
12	C (=74)
11	C- (=70)
10	D+ (=65)
9	D (=60)
7-8	F (=40)
below 7	0

- Sharing study questions answers with others is considered cheating. Any student suspected of cheating will be questioned. Students caught cheating will automatically fail the course. All students must hand in the complete set of study questions on the day of the final. If you fail to submit the set of study questions, you will receive a 3-point deduction of the final grade.**
- Attendance is highly emphasized in this class. **Students are allowed up to three absences without explanation. After the 3rd absence, every absence will constitute a half-grade reduction (3 points off in the final average) in your final grade.** Do not squander your three absences – there are always unexpected things that would prevent you from coming to class on a given day. If you use up your free absences, you will have to take the penalty when you do miss one more class.
- Everyone will be required to participate in one group project (either a debate or a final panel discussion). Your grade for this project constitutes 10% of the total grade.
- After the mid-term, students will form small groups to present course materials. The presentation will take half of the class time and presenters need to prepare a handout (outline for the presentation) for the whole class.
- There will be one paper assignment, to be completed in stages: introductory paragraph, completed paper, and the revised final version. The due dates are specified in the content of the syllabus. Even though only the last version will receive a letter grade, tardy submission of any of the drafts will receive the following penalty in the paper's final grade: **half-grade off (e.g. from B to B-) for each day delayed.** I hope you will appreciate the importance of finishing an assigned project on time.
- No make-up exam will be given unless you obtain permission from the instructor at least two days in advance or if you present your special reason with acceptable documentation.**

8. Students are expected to arrive on time for exams. Late arrivals will not be given time extension.
9. To receive a final grade for the course, all assignments must be completed. In other words, if you get a “zero” for any of the assignments (papers, exams, study questions, participation and panel discussion), you will automatically fail the course.
10. You are encouraged to meet with me during my office hours, send e-mail messages to me, or call me if you have any question regarding the course.

Syllabus

<u>Date</u>	<u>Content of discussion</u>	<u>Assignments for this class</u>
T 8/21	Introduction	None
[Preliminary: Chinese Cosmology]		
R 8/23	<i>Yijing</i> (1)	Handouts
T 8/28	<i>Yijing</i> (2)	Liu, Chapter 1 Study Qs #1
R 8/30	<i>Yijing</i> (3)	Packet #1 Study Qs #2
[Confucianism]		
T 9/4	Confucius (1)	Liu: Chapter 2 Study Qs #3
R 9/6	Confucius (2)	Packet #2 Study Qs #4
T 9/11	Mencius (1)	Liu: Chapter 3 Study Qs #5
R 9/13	Mencius (2)	Packet #3

		Study Qs #6
T 9/18	Xunzi (1)	Liu: Chapter 4 Study Qs #7
R 9/20	Xunzi (2)	Packet #4 Study Qs #8
T 9/25	Debate #1: Is human nature basically good or bad? — A debate between Mencius and Xunzi	
	[Mohism]	
R 9/27	Mozi	Liu: Chapter 5 Study Qs #9
	[Daoism]	
T 10/2	Laozi (1)	Liu: Chapter 6 Study Qs #10
R 10/4	Laozi (2)	Packet #5 Study Qs #11
T 10/9	Zhuangzi (1)	Liu: Chapter 7 Study Qs #12
R 10/11	Zhuangzi (2)	Packet #6 Study Qs #13
	[Legalism]	
T 10/16	Hanfeizi	Liu: Chapter 8 Study Qs #14
R 10/18	Debate #2: Between the Confucian political ideal and the Legalist political practice, which is the better way to rule a country?	
T 10/23	Mid-term Exam	
	[Buddhism]	
R 10/25	Introduction to Buddhism * paper assignment given in class	Liu, Part II Introduction pp. 209-219
T 10/30	Zen (Chan) Buddhism (1)	Liu: Chapter 12

	student presentation #1	Study Qs #15
R 11/1	Zen (Chan) Buddhism (2) student presentation #2 * Introductory paragraph due in class	Packet #7 Study Qs #16
[Neo-Confucianism]		
T 11/6	Zhang Zai [Chang T'sai] student presentation #3	Packet #8 Study Qs #17
R 11/8	Zhu Xi [Chu Hsi] student presentation #4	Packet #9 Study Qs #18
T 11/13	Lu Xiangshan [Lu Hsiang-shan] student presentation #5 * Completed paper (5 pages) due in class	Packet #10
R 11/15	Wang Yangming [Wang Yang-ming] student presentation #6	Packet #11 Study Qs #19
T 11/20	Thanksgiving Vacation	
R 11/22	Thanksgiving Vacation	
T 11/27	Wang Fuzhi [Wang Fu-chih] student presentation #7	Packet #12 Study Qs #20
R 11/29	Debate #3: Are material desires incompatible with our pursuit of “the Good”? Are material desires compatible with the “Heavenly principle”? Are we less than moral if our primary goal in life is to get rich? Should we aim to reduce our material and physical desires? Is the concern for righteousness on a higher moral plane than the concern for profit?	
T 12/4	Dai Zhen [Tai Chen] student presentation #8	Packet #13 Study Qs #21
R 12/6	Last class: Review and Reflections	

What is the spirit of Chinese philosophy? What are the major concerns in Chinese philosophy? What is *Dao* or the cosmic principle? How can one employ Chinese philosophy in today's world?

[Final Paper Due in Class]

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 11 5:00 - 6:50 PM

*** All students must hand in the complete set of study questions on the day of the final.**