Course Objectives

The goals of the course are twofold: to introduce you to the central texts and themes of early Chinese philosophy, and to help you develop your ability to read, discuss, and write philosophy. Each of these goals, in turn, is related to larger and longer-term objectives. The philosophical traditions that we will explore in this course have provided much of the intellectual context for the last two thousand years of Chinese— and in many cases, East Asian— culture. The course can thus serve as a foundation for further study of East Asia. At the same time, improved philosophical skills will assist you not only if you continue to study the world’s philosophical traditions, but also in any area outside philosophy in which clear analysis and careful argument play a role.

Two skills that will receive special emphasis are the interpreting complex or obscure texts, and identifying, assessing, and engaging in reasoning. Since we will at least tentatively presume that there is reasoning going on in the texts we are interpreting, the two skills are closely related. Some of the course’s assignments will focus quite specifically on understanding philosophical reasoning, both in general and as seen in particular in our Chinese materials.

Attendance

Class attendance is required. More than one unexcused absence will impact on your performance grade (see below), as well as on your overall grasp of material.

Please try your best to arrive at class on-time. If for some reason you need to leave the classroom during a class session, please bring all your belongings with you and do not re-enter the room while the class is in session.

Readings, Discussion Questions, Response Papers

The course will revolve around the reading and discussion of the six most important philosophic texts from early China. It is vital that you come to class having read the day’s assignment, ready to discuss or ask questions about its key points. The reading assignments you receive will include discussion questions keyed to each reading selection. I will expect each of you to have thought about possible answers to the questions, which may include looking back at a previous readings in order to draw comparisons or contrasts. I understand that you may not have a full answer to every question: answers like “I don't understand this point because…” or “I got lost at this point…” are acceptable, even helpful. The only answer to a discussion question that reflects poorly on you is “I haven’t given it any thought.”

In addition to the general requirement to have thought about each day’s discussion questions, you are required to turn in brief, written answers and/or reactions to one class’s discussion questions every two
weeks, according to a schedule worked out at the first class meeting. In these “response papers” you do not have to address every question, if you feel you have enough to say about one or two of the questions. Thinking in depth about an issue or issues raised in the reading is preferable to short answers to a whole series of questions. Your answers should average between 250 and 500 words. Response papers are due by 9 a.m. the day of the class. Answers should be turned in via email as an attachment. Acceptable formats include .doc, .pdf, and .rtf.

Readings will be from the books that I have ordered through Broad Street Books (347-1194), and a brief coursepack that will be available later in the term. The books are:

- Zhuangzi. The Essential Writings. Brook Ziporyn, trans. (Hackett, 2009)

Some of these texts are available in different editions with different translators. You must use the editions that I have indicated, so if you decide to buy a used copy or to use a library book, make sure that it is the correct version.

**On-Line Discussion**

In addition to in-class discussion, we will all take part in further discussions via the discussion forum on Moodle. This should provide opportunities to float ideas, ask questions about difficult passages, and pursue issues in more depth than we have time for in class. I will respond to questions when appropriate, but I hope that you all will strive to help one another out by offering your own answers whenever possible.

A minimum of *four postings* to Moodle over the semester are required.

**Assignments and Grades**

In addition to in-class and on-line discussion, the requirements for the course are:

- *Five response papers*, as described above. All five must be completed, but I will drop the lowest grade. If you miss your group’s turn to hand in a response paper, once in the semester you may make it up by turning in a response paper on the next set of questions prior to the next class.
- *Three minipapers*, which will focus on philosophical reasoning. Students who do poorly on the first of these will have the opportunity to rewrite it.
- *Two essays* of approximately seven pages. Late papers will be penalized one step (e.g., B+ to B) for each day late, with the exception that papers due on a Friday and turned in by the following Monday will be penalized only one step.

Your grade on each of the papers will count toward one-fifth of your final grade. The three mini-papers will contribute an additional fifth, as will the average grade from your response papers. The remaining fifth of the final grade will be based on my assessment of your performance. In arriving at an over-all assessment of your performance, I will weigh both quantity and quality, and allow outstanding performance in one aspect (e.g., Moodle discussion) to largely make up for a relative lack of performance in another (e.g., in-class discussion).
PHIL 205 / Classical Chinese Philosophy 先秦哲學
Fall, 2012 / Assignment Outline (Detailed assignment sheets available separately)

INTRODUCTION AND ANALECTS 《論語》
[2] Wed, Sept 5 — Analects (Confucius / Kongzi) 1 — Group 1

[Mon, Sept 17, No Class — Rosh Hashana]

• Minipaper 1 assignment distributed

MOZI 《墨子》
*[6] Fri, Sept 21 — Mozi 1 — no response papers [NOTE THIS CLASS IS ON A FRIDAY]
• Minipaper 1 due in class

[Mon and Wed, Sept 24 and 26, No Class — Yom Kippur and Prof. Angle in Taiwan]

[7] Mon, Oct 1 — Mozi 2 — Group 1

[Fri, Oct 5 — 1st Essay Due, 5pm]

MENGZI 《孟子》
[9] Mon, Oct 8 — Mengzi (Mencius) 1 — Group 3

[Mon, Oct 15, No Class — Fall Break]

• Minipaper 2 assignment distributed

DAO DE JING 《道德經》
• Minipaper 2 due in class

[Nov 1–4: Group meetings for Debate Preparation]

[Thu, Nov 1—Dan Lusthaus Lecture on Chinese Buddhist philosophy, 4:30pm]
[16] Mon, Nov 5 — Debate

**ZHUANGZI 《莊子》**
[17] Wed, Nov 7 — *Zhuangzi* (Chuang-tzu) 1 — Group 1
[18] Mon, Nov 12 — *Zhuangzi* 2 — Group 2
[20] Mon, Nov 19 — *Zhuangzi* 4 — Group 4

[Wed, Nov 21, No Class — Thanksgiving Break]

**XUNZI 《荀子》**
[21] Mon, Nov 26 — *Xunzi* 1 — Group 1
[22] Wed, Nov 28 — *Xunzi* 2 — Group 2
[23] Mon, Dec 3 — *Xunzi* 3 — Groups 3 and 4
  • Minipaper 3 assignment distributed

**HAN FEI ZI 《韓非子》**
[24] Mon, Dec 5 — Conclusion — no response papers
  • Minipaper 3 due in class

[2nd Essay due on date when final would be scheduled, 5pm]