

**UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

PHIL 3920: Chinese Philosophy

Instructor: K. Dorter

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Extension: 53218

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Office Hours: whenever I'm there (except the hour before class when I'm preparing), which is most of the time I'm not teaching. My teaching schedule is in Courselink and next to my door at 353 MacKinnon.

COURSE OUTLINE

Description: The primary readings and class discussion will cover selected philosophers from Confucius to WANG Yang-ming (WANG Shou-jen\*) in Wing-tsit CHAN, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. These will be supplemented by outside readings in FUNG Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (see below, Final Exam).

Assignments: In addition to the final exam (50%) you may write **either** two 1250 word essays (25% each) **or** one 2500 word essay (50%). 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths – **essays may be longer if justified by the content**. You can also use the first 1250 word essay as a trial run for the 2500 word essay, or you can expunge the grade for your first essay by submitting a 2500 word essay later – in both cases resubmit the original essay along with the final version. If you want preliminary feedback submit something by the first deadline. **Submit on paper** – electronic submissions will not be accepted. See the attached Essay Guidelines for due dates.

Essays: See guidelines on p. 4. Essay topics may be of two kinds. 1) Discussion of a general problem in Chinese philosophy (see next page for suggested topics). 2) Explication of a philosopher **not dealt with in class** (i.e. not on the list of readings below) — since some selections are brief you may need to find additional material or make comparisons. Sample philosophy essays are available on Courselink.

Readings in Wing-tsit Chan:

Introduction (3-13)

Confucius (14-48)

*The Great Learning* (84-94)

*The Doctrine of the Mean* (95-114)

Lao Tzu (136-176: nine chapters per class)

Seng-chao (343-350)

Chi-tsang (357-361)

Hsüan-Tsang (370-95)

Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism (425-449)

Chu Hsi (588-620, 620-653)

Wang Yang-ming (654-667, 667-691)

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\* Where Fung uses a different form of the name than Chan it's given in parenthesis. I capitalized the family names because while we place given names before family names, the Chinese do the reverse. Books in English may use either convention, which can be confusing.

Final Exam (April 15 2:30-4:30): Essay questions on the material covered in class, and identification questions on the material in the outside reading (*A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*). The essay questions will be selected from a list handed out at the last class, which will be a review class. The short answer questions will be selected from the following philosophers: Mo Tzu, Mencius, Hsün Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Kung-sun Lung, Tsou Yen, Han Fei Tzu, Tung Chung-shu, Wang Ch'ung, Kumarajiva, Bodhidharma, Hung-jen, Chang Tsai, Ch'eng Hao, Ch'eng I (Ch'eng Yi\*), Lu Hsiang-shan (Lu Chiu-yüan\*), Wang Yang-ming. The group of identification questions will be worth the equivalent of one essay question.

Essay Topics: a) An exegetical essay on a philosopher **not studied in class**. Any of the philosophers in the list immediately above would be suitable **except** Wang Yang-ming who we may get to in class. Another possibility is the 13<sup>th</sup> century Japanese Zen master Dogen, whose *Shobogenzo* is available on Courselink. It consists of 96 individual essays – so you don't have to read all 1106 pages! b) If you want to write on a general topic rather than individual philosophers, here are four possibilities (if you have an idea for a different one check it out with me).

1. There was perennial debate among Confucianists whether people are by nature good (but corruptible) or evil (but correctable) — in fact every conceivable permutation is represented:

- a. All are born good (Mencius)
- b. All are born evil (Hsün Tzu)
- c. Some are born good, some are born evil (Shih Shih)
- d. All are born both good and evil (Yang Hsiung)
- e. All are born neither good nor evil (Kao Tzu)
- f. Our nature is good but our feelings evil (Tung Chung-shu)
- g. Our nature is evil but our feelings good (Liu Hsiang)

Discuss this at least in terms of the Mencius and Hsün Tzu selections in Chan, and any others you wish to add. See the index in Chan under “nature, human”, and in Fung under “nature (of man and creatures).” Since Fung is a secondary source it should be used only as a supplement.

2. Mencius and later Confucianists attacked Mo Tzu and his disciples (Mo-ists, Moists, Mohists) for rejecting Confucius' doctrine of discrimination, and arguing instead that we should love everyone equally, regardless of their rank and relationship to us. Discuss the merits of these competing claims and the arguments used to support them. See index in Chan under “Mo Tzu” §2, and in Fung under “Confucianism, Mohism” (since Fung is a secondary source it should be used only as a supplement).

3. The Neo-Confucianists accused the Taoists and Buddhists of being selfish, e.g. for emphasizing self-improvement at the expense of politics (cf. Han Yü pp. 453-6; Chang Tsai 502-3, 515-16; Ch'eng Hau 533-6, 542-3; Ch'eng-I 554-5; Liu Hsiang-shan [Lu Chiu-yüan] 575 ff; Chu Hsi 646 ff; Wang Yang-ming [Wang Shou-jen] 662, 676-8 ff). The Taoists and Buddhists, on the other hand, regarded the Confucianists as shallow for attaching so much importance to the material world (this is not well represented in the anthology but see 366 & note). Discuss the relative merits of both positions, with reference to specific doctrines.

4. Another difference between Taoism and Confucianism in general — but also *within* each of these schools — was whether concepts and intellectualism add to or detract from our ability to understand the nature of reality. Discuss with reference to the arguments actually used, not just on your own as an abstract question. In the case of Confucianism you probably have to use texts we studied in class, but for Taoism use Chuang Tzu so that you can add new material.

**Pronunciation of Chinese Transliterations:** Wade-Giles and Pinyin systems  
(after Raymond Dawson, *A New Introduction to Classical Chinese*)

**CONSONANTS**

**W-G PY PRONUNCIATION**

ch	{ zh j	<i>j</i>
ch'	{ q ch	<i>ch</i>
hs	x	<i>sh</i> (But more like German "ich".)
j	r	<i>r</i>
k	g	<i>g</i>
k'	k	<i>k</i>
p	b	<i>b</i>
p'	p	<i>p</i>
t	d	<i>d</i>
t'	t	<i>t</i>
ts	} z	<i>dz</i>
tz		
ts'	} c	<i>ts</i>
tz'		

**VOWELS**

a	a	<i>father</i>
ai	ai	<i>Taiwan</i>
ao	ao	<i>ow</i>
e	e	{ <i>sir</i> After <i>y</i> it is pronounced as in "yes" (exceptions in Pinyin below).
ei	ei	<i>feint</i>
eng	eng	<i>ung</i>
erh	er	<i>fur</i>
i	i	{ <i>ee</i> Before another vowel it is shortened as in "piano" (exceptions in Pinyin below).
ien	ian	Between the two English pronunciations.
ih	i	Between "sir" and "good" (in Pinyin "zhi", "chi", "ri").
o	o	<i>awe</i> (Exceptions in W-G below.)
o	e	<i>her</i> (After W-G <i>h, k, k'</i> and PY <i>h, g, k.</i> )
ou	ou	<i>owe</i>
u	u	{ <i>good</i> (Almost silent in W-G "ssu", "tzu", "tz'u".) After <i>y</i> it is pronounced as in "yo".
ua	ua	<i>wa</i>
ui	} ui	<i>way</i>
uei		
uo	uo	<i>waw</i>
ung	ong	Between <i>oong</i> and <i>ong</i> .
ü	u	German "ü" or French "tu".

## GUIDELINES FOR ESSAYS

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you mention Lao Tzu, Ch’uang Tzu, Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu, Kao Tzu, etc, don’t refer to them simply as “Tzu”. Tzu is their title (“Master”) not their name.

1. **Deadline:** 2500 word essay: Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>; **or** two 1250 word essays: Thursday February 17<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. Please write “Second Essay” on your second 25% essay so I don’t mistakenly grade it as if it were a 50% essay. If it’s a rewrite of your first essay hand in your first essay with it so I can see my original comments. Late essays will be penalized one mark (out of 100) per weekday (the “day” ends at 4:30 when the office closes—if it’s in my mailbox in Room 343 the next morning I’ll count it as submitted yesterday; if it’s under my door I’ll count it as today). No essay will be accepted after **9 a.m. April 14<sup>th</sup>** (the **day before** the final exam). **Submit on paper** – electronic submissions will not be accepted. Students will not normally be required to answer questions about their essay, but may in some cases. Make sure you check your email daily in case I want to speak to you about it (if I can’t reach you it won’t be marked).

2. **Subject:** any Chinese philosopher who **isn’t studied in class** (i.e. who is **not** listed under “Readings in Wing-tsit Chan” on p.1 of this outline), or any relevant issue that wasn’t studied in class. Check with me to make sure. There’s nothing wrong with referring to works studied in class as long as they aren’t the main focus.

3. **Sources:** If the essay deals with a philosopher focus on **primary texts** (texts of the original author), although secondary sources (works *about* the original text) may be used as a supplement. **Quotations in a secondary source like Fung don’t count as primary texts** because they’re taken out of context. You need to be able to see the whole context. The point is to develop skill in exegesis and evaluation; reporting the results of other people’s exegesis and evaluation does not accomplish this. If little of the subject’s own writings has survived use at least three secondary sources.

4. **Content:** Combine scholarship and creativity, i.e. both attentiveness to the text (where applicable) and a personal response of your own. If you’re interpreting a particularly difficult text it may be enough just to give a clear analysis of it. Where the interpretation is more straightforward your creativity can take the form of considering objections to the author’s views and how the author might reply to them; explain why you think the author can or cannot withstand the criticisms. Also consider possible objections to your views. The more challenging you make it the better: treating answers as obvious is not worth as much as seeing how they are controversial and difficult.

5. **Format:** Use double spaced, full sized font (12 point). Also use page numbers. 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths – **the essays may be longer if justified by the content**.

6. **Style:** Use “I” rather than awkward and outdated circumlocutions like “the author.” And use inclusive language like “humankind” instead of “mankind”, “people ... they” instead of “a person ... he.” Other possibilities: “he or she”, “she or he”, “s/he”, etc.

7. **Footnotes:** Footnote all information and ideas taken from someone else, even if they aren’t direct quotations. Otherwise it may be plagiarism. Listing your sources in a bibliography isn’t enough since it doesn’t show where you make use of them or which page the reference comes from. Footnotes should **list the author that you’re citing first**. For example, if you’re using Wing-tsit Chan’s anthology and your footnote is to something Chuang-tzu wrote, it should say, “Chuang-tzu, in Wing-tsit Chan (editor), *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 185”, **not** “Chan, Wing-tsit, *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 185”. Only if you cite something that the editor wrote would you use the latter format. Only the first citation need be complete; after that you can abbreviate, e.g., “Chuang-tzu, Chan 185”.

Sample philosophy essays are available on Courselink.