



PHIL*3920 Chinese Philosophy

Winter 2021

Section(s): C01

Department of Philosophy

Credit Weight: 0.50

Version 1.00 - January 05, 2021

1 Course Details

1.1 Calendar Description

This course analyzes selected primary sources of Chinese philosophy, in translation, from the I Ching to Mao Tse-tung. Emphasis will be on the foundational works of Confucianism, Taoism, Ch'an (or Zen) Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism, concerning such issues as the ultimate nature of being, non-being and human destiny, proper government of the self, the family and society, and the principles and practice of enlightenment.

Pre-Requisites: 1.50 credits in Philosophy or 7.50 credits

1.2 Course 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*.

*Where Fung uses a different form of the name than Chan it's given in parenthesis. I capitalized family names because while we place given names first, the Chinese put family names first. Books in English may use either convention.

1.3 Timetable

Monday and Wednesday 11:30-12:50 on Zoom. the sessions will be recorded and available after class. The course homepage tells you how to access the meetings and recordings.

Timetable is subject to change. Please see WebAdvisor for the latest information.

1.4 Final Exam

The final exam will be a take-home exam. I'll send it to you April 15 and it will be due at the

end of the day April 18.

2 Instructional Support

2.1 Instructional Support Team

Instructor:	Kenneth Dorter
Email:	kdorter@uoguelph.ca
Telephone:	+1-519-824-4120 x53218
Office:	MCKN 353
Office Hours:	You can email me any time, or we can arrange to meet on Zoom.

2.2 Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistant:	Will Valliere
Email:	rvallier@uoguelph.ca

3 Learning Resources

3.1 Required Resources

Wing-tsit CHAN, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Textbook)

FUNG Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Textbook)

4 Learning Outcomes

4.1 Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Develop your skills in exegesis and in independent research (your essay)
 2. Be familiar with the history of Chinese philosophy between the 6th century BCE and the 16th century CE
 3. Have a good understanding of how empirical and spiritual issues can be related to each other in philosophy
 4. Have a good acquaintance with Confucianism, Taoism, Mahayana Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism
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5 Teaching and Learning Activities

Dates will depend on class discussion. I'll let you know by email when we move on to the next reading.

5.1 Lecture

Topics: Introduction (pp. 3-13 in Wing-Tsit Chan, *Sourcebook*)

Topics: Confucius (pp. 14-48)

Topics: *The Great Learning* (pp. 84-94)

Topics: *The Doctrine of the Mean* (pp. 95-114)

Topics: Lao Tzu (pp. 136-176). Read nine chapters per class (they're short). We'll skip around a lot but focus especially on chapters 1, 21, 25, 42, 2, 41, 70, 15, 13, 32, 20 (in that order).

Topics: Seng-chao (pp. 343-350)

Topics: Chi-tsang (pp. 357-361)

Topics: Hsüan-Tsang (pp. 370-95)

Topics: Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism (pp. 425-449)

Topics: Chu Hsi: 1. pp. 588-620, 2. pp. 620-653

Topics: Wang Yang-ming: 1. 654-667, 2. pp. 667-691

5.2 Outside Readings in FUNG Yu-Lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy

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 (Wang Shou-jen) - if we don't get to him in class. Names in parentheses are the versions that appear in FUNG Yu-Lan, the outside reading.

6 Assessments

6.1 Assessment Details

Essays (50%) (0%)

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. **All essays must be submitted to the Turnitin dropbox on Counselink.**

ESSAY TOPICS: Either a or b:

a) An exegetical essay on a philosopher **not studied in class**. Any of the philosophers in the outside reading list (see previous section) would be suitable **except** Wang Yang-ming (Wang Shou-jen) who we will probably get to in class. Another possibility is the 13th century Japanese Zen master Dogen, whose *Shobogenzo* is available on Counselink. 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 (read the **entire chapters** – not all the relevant material is at the beginning), 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. Neo-Confucianists accused Taoists and Buddhists of selfishness, 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). Taoists and Buddhists regarded Confucianists as shallow for attaching such 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. Taoists and Buddhists didn’t explicitly defend themselves against these charges, so their defense (and whether you support or reject it) has to come from you based on your readings.

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.

ESSAY GUIDELINES

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: Monday, March 15th; **OR** two 1250 word essays: Monday February 22nd and Monday, March 15th. **For the first deadline** late essays will be accepted until the end of the week without penalty; after that you'll have to defer to the single essay option. **For the second deadline** late essays will be penalized one mark (out of 100) per day. **No essay will be accepted after 9 a.m. the day the take-home final exam is due.** Students will not normally be required to answer questions about their essay but may in some cases. I'll email you if any questions arise so check your email daily since I won't be able to grade it if I can't reach you.

2. Subject: any Chinese philosopher **who isn't studied in class** (i.e. who is not listed under "Activities", above), 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. **Whether you write on a problem or a text consider possible objections to your own 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: The five paragraph model you learned in high school was training wheels to teach discipline. People don't really write essays like that. Just organize your ideas to be as clear as possible. Use double spaced full sized font (12 point). 1250 or 2500 words are minimum lengths - **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. References: Give references to all information and ideas taken from someone else, even

if they aren't direct quotations. Otherwise it may be plagiarism (when in doubt ask). Listing your sources in a bibliography isn't enough since it doesn't show where you make use of them. I don't care what reference format you use as long as it's clear what you mean. References should first list the **author** (or at least the individual title if the author is unknown) that you're citing. E.g., if you're using Wing-tsit Chan's anthology and your footnote is to something Chuang-tzu wrote on p.185 (**you must give page numbers**) 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". If you use the latter format I'll assume you're citing only a secondary source (what the editors wrote). The bibliography should say Chan, Wing-Tsit (editor), *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963. 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.

Final Exam (50%)

The final exam will be a take-home exam. I'll send it to you April 15 and it will be due at the end of the day April 18. It will consist of essay questions on the material covered in class, and identification questions on the material in the outside reading (Fung Yu-lan). The essay questions will be selected from a list handed out at the last class, which will be a review class. The group of identification questions will be worth the equivalent of one essay question.

7 University Statements

7.1 Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

7.2 When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for

Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

7.3 Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

7.4 Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

7.5 Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance

and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website
<https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

7.6 Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

7.7 Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

7.8 Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars
<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

7.9 Disclaimer

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and circulated by email.

7.10 Illness

The University will not normally require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for fall 2020 or winter 2021 semester courses. However, requests for Academic Consideration may still require medical documentation as appropriate.
