

Asian Philosophy

PHIL 213

Summer Session II 2019

UNC Chapel Hill

MTWThF 11:30–1:00pm in CW213

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1 Course Description and Learning Goals

This course focuses on Classical Chinese Philosophy (CCP). There are seven units.

Unit One—Introduction. We’ll start the course with some introductory discussion and reflection. As well as learning about the context of CCP, we’ll consider the baggage and assumptions we’re bringing to the table. In particular, we’ll consider what “philosophy” is, and what it means for it, or anything else, to be “Asian” or “Western.”

Unit Two—The *Analects*. The *Analects* of Kǒngzǐ (latinized as “Confucius”) is one of the most important texts, philosophical or otherwise, in world history.¹ We’ll carefully

¹ Throughout this document, I’m including the diacritical tone signifiers for the Chinese names and terms the first time they occur. I’ll omit them subsequently. **Don’t worry** if you don’t know anything about Chinese language, ancient or modern. We’ll go over everything you’ll need, which isn’t much at all.

read much of the text to understand its key themes, including: *lǐ* (or ritual), ethical cultivation, the *dào*, partiality, and *rén* (or humaneness). We'll use this foundational text to frame much of the rest of the course, reading subsequent thinkers as in some way responding to or building on the *Analects*.

Unit Three—The Mohist and Yangist Critiques. Some of the earliest critics of Confucianism were Mòzǐ and Yáng Zhū. The former objected strongly to Kongzi's emphasis on partial caring. The latter advocated for acting out of self-interest.

Unit Four—The Mengzi. Mèngzǐ was described by later Confucians as the “second sage”—second, that is, only to Kongzi himself. We'll take a look at some of the work named after him, paying particular attention to his responses to Mohism and Yangism, and to his view of human nature as fundamentally good.

Unit Five—Daoism. The *Dàodéjīng* is the cornerstone of the Daoist tradition. Whereas Confucianism stresses the cultivation of character through ritual, Daoism counsels following one's nature through *wúwéi* or nonaction. We'll also read some of the *Zhuāngzǐ*, the eponymous author of which was classified by later scholars as a Daoist thinker. (Although, as we'll see, there was no community of thinkers self-identifying as Daoist until after Zhuangzi's time.)

Unit Six—The Xunzi and Funerary Rites. Xúnzǐ was another great Confucian thinker. As well as responding to Daoist criticisms, he clashed with Mengzi over human nature: Xunzi argues that human nature is bad, which is why we need *li* or ritual for ethical cultivation. We'll use this as an opportunity to reflect on the proper role of ritual, taking funerary rites as a case study and comparing Xunzi's views to Mozi's and Zhuangzi's.

Unit Seven—Beyond Classical Chinese Philosophy. We'll end the course by stretching our horizons beyond CCP. We'll look at some Chinese Buddhist thought, and some feminist criticisms and reappropriations of classical Chinese doctrine. You'll also have a chance to pick a tradition or thinker of your own to explore. Options include, but are by no means limited to: Indian Buddhism; Indian Nyāya philosophy; Japanese philosophy; Korean philosophy; Neo-Confucianism; Confucianism in the context of 20th Century Chinese Communism.

The course has five primary learning goals.

Content. You'll learn about the most important thinkers and theories of CCP.

Integration. You'll integrate what you've learned into your life. This may sound ambitious or even absurd, but by the end of the course you'll have no problem seeing the perennial relevance and importance of classical Chinese philosophy.

Learning How to Learn. You'll think about learning itself as a skill that you can improve over time. In doing so, you'll learn how to become a lifelong learner, something that will be useful whatever you do in the future.

Reflection. You'll form your own, reasoned views on the issues discussed. This will require careful thought and reflection on your own values.

Skills. You'll gain key philosophical skills, including: critical reading and thinking; presenting arguments for your views both in writing and discussion; engaging in respectful and productive dialogue.

2 Classroom Climate and Preparation

Respect and Diversity

Although I take ultimate responsibility, it is up to all of us to create a learning environment that fosters respect for everyone involved. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including: ability, age, economic status, ethnicity, first language, gender expression and identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexuality.

Note. This is *completely compatible* with being critical of one another's views. Respecting others means taking them and their views seriously. That in turn means examining their views' strengths and weaknesses, asking questions, and offering constructive criticism or alternative viewpoints where appropriate. It also means thinking about how the views of others challenge our own, and being open to what they have to teach us. Valuing diversity is not merely a matter of having an attitude, but of developing a practice. This practice includes:

- Having good reasons for your views while being willing to change your mind.
- Learning to listen to other perspectives and being open to criticism.
- Not rushing to judgment and being charitable in your criticisms of other positions.
- Learning to express criticisms and differences of opinion in ways that are not personal or hurtful and that leave space for other voices.

Finally, never be afraid to ask a question or to risk saying something that might be wrong—that's how we learn. Equally, never be afraid to listen to the questions and answers of others, and to let their views challenge and change how you think. This is especially important in philosophy, which, rather than a combative hurling of rhetoric in pursuit of personal victory, ought to be a collaborative effort in search of deeper understanding, and truth.

Preparation for Class

Before each class, you should actively, carefully, and critically read that day's reading. Active philosophical reading involves much more than running your eyes over the text. You need to follow the author's arguments and ask yourself questions. Adequately engaging with a reading will usually require going over it more than once. Don't worry if there are parts that are difficult to understand; an important element of active reading is to delineate your comprehension. But you shouldn't just give up on hard portions of text—try to work out what the author might or ought to be saying, given the bits that you do understand and your background knowledge. You'll have succeeded in reading the text well if you come to class

ready to discuss the ideas raised, and ready to ask questions. You should bring a copy of the day's reading to class, whether electronic or otherwise.

I allow the use of laptops in class, though I reserve the right to rescind this permission if they become too much of a distraction. Remember that if you check social media, or otherwise don't engage during class, you're not only putting yourself at a disadvantage, but also those around you who can see your screen.

Whether you bring a laptop to class or not, you should bring paper and something to write with in order to complete in-class exercises and activities.

The **required text** for this class is *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd edition, edited by Ivanhoe and Van Norden. You can find details of the text at <http://tinyurl.com/UNCCH-Summer-2019-PHIL-213-1>. There are also some recommended readings on that site for your interest. I will provide copies of all the readings other than those from the required text. If you anticipate trouble obtaining the required text, for any reason at all, please let me know.

3 Course Requirements and Expectations

The requirements for this course are as follows. (This might seem like a lot, but many of them build on each other.)

Date Due	Requirement	Percentage
Throughout Semester	In-Class Activities	20%
Throughout Semester	Learning Portfolio	20%
Sun July 7 th	Paper I Outline	2%
Sun July 14 th	Paper I (2–3 pages)	8%
Fri July 19 th	Paper II Outline	5%
Mon/Tues July 22 nd /23 rd	Presentation	10%
Sat July 27 th	Paper II (4–5 pages)	15%
Mon July 29 th	Final Exam	20%

I am required to assign you at least 10 pages of written work, not including in-class examinations. Your papers, in-class activities, and learning portfolio meet this requirement.

Expectations for Assignments

In-Class Activities

This requirement is instead of an attendance or participation grade. I do want you to turn up to class and engage productively: it'll be more enjoyable and educational for us all if you do so. But mere attendance doesn't reflect participation well, and participation is hard to quantify and keep track of (especially without letting implicit biases creep in). So here's what we'll do instead.

There'll be 20 In-Class Activities that you'll be required to do over the course of the semester.² These will be graded pass/fail: 1 point for pass; 0 points for fail. That gives you a total out of 20 by the end of the semester that will contribute to your overall grade. I'll keep track of this using Sakai's "Attendance" function.

There are 23 classes and 20 In-Class Activities. So there'll be at least three classes with no official In-Class Activity. I won't tell you ahead of time when these will be; by far the easiest way to do well on this requirement is to come to class and to participate.

Learning Portfolio

One the major themes of CCP is the cultivation of virtue. Over the course of the semester, we (I'm going to do this as well) will try and put this into practice by working on improving some character trait or other. To help with this, we'll be writing short reflective pieces throughout the semester. Yours will be turned in through the Sakai site's "Messages" function. Mine will be available on the Sakai site's forums for you all to see. Note that these assignments are **not** subject to the page limit policy. While it will be hard to complete them successfully if you go far under the limit, you're welcome to write more than the page guidelines.

The bulk of the Learning Portfolio (LP) will be made up of 4 pieces of reflective writing.

- *LP I—The Path to Self-Improvement (1 page)*. To begin with, we'll start with a plan for trying to improve a virtue. There'll be a 1-page reflection due on Friday June 28th. This will be worth 4% of your overall grade. In it, you'll need to do 4 things and you'll get 1 point for each. First, reflect on where you are in your life. What do you have going on? Where are you headed? Where would you *like* to be headed? Second, identify a virtue to improve and briefly explain your rationale for wanting to work on this virtue. Third, decide what will show that you've successfully improved and how you can test that. Fourth, produce a plan of action, including some concrete steps, to try and make that improvement happen.
- *LP II—Checking In (0.5 pages)*. After you've been working on cultivating your virtue for a while, you'll write up a brief, 0.5-page reflection on how things are going. This is due on Friday 5th July and is worth 2% of your overall grade. In it, you'll need to do 2 things and you'll get 1 point for each. First, describe what you've been doing to work on your virtue. Second, reflect on how it's going: what's going well? What badly?

² The capital letters are to signify that these are the activities that count toward your grade. We'll do plenty of things in-class that won't be part of this official requirement.

- *LP III—Midsemester Calibration (1 page)*. Once you've had some more time to work at your virtue, it's time to take more serious stock of how things are going. To do so, you'll write a 1-page reflection due on Wednesday July 10th, worth 5% of your overall grade. In it, you'll need to do 5 things and you'll get 1 point for each. First, honestly assess, using the metric you came up with in the first LP assignment, your progress. Second, explain whether you still want to pursue the same goal or not. Third, tweak your plan of action to help you better achieve your aim. Fourth, construct a ritual that you can perform to help you progress. Fifth, explain your rationale for your tweaks and the ritual.
- *LP IV—Wrapping Up (1 page)*. Towards the end of the semester, you'll reflect on how the process has gone. To do so, you'll write a 1-page reflection due on Wednesday July 24th, worth 5% of your overall grade. In it, you'll need to do 5 things and you'll get 1 point for each. First, describe what you've done since the midsemester calibration, including the ritual performance. Second, reflect on how what you've done has helped, or not, your project of self-cultivation, or not. Third, assess again whether you've made progress since the beginning of the semester. Fourth, reflect on what you've learned, if anything, about self-improvement. Fifth, think about some applications of this going forward.

Together, those assignments are worth 16% of your overall grade. That leaves 4% for some micro-assignments that I'll sprinkle throughout the semester.

Paper I (2–3 pages)

Writing philosophy papers is difficult, especially if you've never done it before. I want you to do well in this course, so before submitting Paper I you'll have given me an outline of about 1 page in length. The outline counts for a very small portion of your overall grade (2%), so it's a low-stakes opportunity to try things out and make mistakes. The outline is due on Sunday July 7th. We'll discuss a more specific rubric for the outline closer to that date.

The paper itself is due on Sunday July 14th and is worth 8% of your overall grade. It should be 2–3 pages in length and it (but not the outline) is subject to the Page Limit Policy (see page 7). This paper will ask you to do something quite specific: explain and evaluate a Mohist or Yangist criticism of Confucianism. We'll discuss how exactly to do that and a more specific rubric for the assignment closer to the due date.

In order to successfully submit this paper, you'll need to include a *paper wrapper*. This is a cover sheet on which I'll ask you to answer a few questions. This won't take much work and we'll talk in much more detail closer to the time. A submission lacking a wrapper **will be considered late** and subject to the late policy (see page 9).

Paper II (4–5 pages)

You'll also submit an outline for your second paper, due on Saturday July 20th. This outline should be about 2 pages in length and is worth 5% of your overall grade. Again, the goal is to give you a chance to try out your idea for the paper before committing to the final draft. We'll discuss a more specific rubric for the outline closer to the due date.

The paper itself is due on Saturday July 27th and is worth 15% of your overall grade. It should be 4–5 pages in length and it (but not the outline) is subject to the Page Limit Policy (see page 7). This paper will ask you to explore a philosopher or tradition beyond classical China and compare their work with at least one other thinker or tradition covered in the course. We'll discuss how exactly to do that and a more specific rubric for the assignment closer to the due date.

In order to successfully submit this paper, you'll need to include a *paper wrapper*. This is a cover sheet on which I'll ask you to answer a few questions. This won't take much work and we'll talk in much more detail closer to the time. A submission lacking a wrapper **will be considered late** and subject to the late policy (see page 9).

Page Limit Policy

The papers are subject to strict page limits. **To standardize length, all submissions should be: 12pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.** If you have nonstandard formatting, I will convert it to standard formatting to check for length.

I will dock a third of a letter grade for each half of a page you are over or under the required page range (2–3 pages for Paper I; 4–5 pages for Paper II (the outlines and the LP assignments are not subject to the page limit policy)). **This does not include the reference list or bibliography.** You will not be penalized for going over the limit with your reference list or bibliography.

Example 1. A Paper I is submitted that's 4.5 pages in length. It's worth an A⁻, but as it's 1.5 pages over it gets docked a full letter grade and so gets a B⁻.

Example 2. A Paper II is submitted that's 3.5 pages in length. It's worth a B⁻, but since half a page under it gets docked a third of a letter grade and so gets a C⁺.

Presentation

You'll give a 5 minute presentation to the class on either Monday July 22nd or Tuesday July 23rd. We'll determine who presents on which day closer to the time. The presentation will be on the topic of Paper II, for which you'll already have an outline. So the focus of the presentation will not be to come up with new content and ideas, but to present those you've already thought of to an audience in a clear and interesting way.

The presentation itself will be worth 7% of the overall grade. The other 3% for the presentation will come from asking questions of the other presenters. We'll discuss how to do all this well, and consider a more specific rubric, closer to the due dates.

Final Exam

The exam will be multiple choice. It is on Monday July 29th from 11:30am-1:30pm in CW213. (I don't expect you'll need the full 2 hours to finish it, but they'll be there if you do.)

It will consist of 20 questions, and you'll get 1 point for each question you answer correctly. That will give you a total out of 20 that contributes to your overall grade.

The exam is not designed to catch you out. Rather, it is to help you consolidate the core content knowledge of classical Chinese philosophy that you've gained over the semester.

On Thursday July 26th there will be an in-class review session for the exam. This won't be like normal review sessions. Instead of being lectured at, you'll write potential questions for the exam. I will then compile the exam drawing in part on the questions that you've written yourselves. I'll aim for around 10 class-written questions, more if you come up with lots of good ones; fewer if there aren't enough suitable ones. The rest will be questions of my own.

We'll talk about how to do well in the exam, and how to write good exam questions, closer to the time. But if you regularly participate in the class and attend the review session, then you should do well on the final.

4 Grading Policies

Grading

Each assignment will be marked out of the number of percentage points that it contributes to your overall grade. This will give you a total score for the class out of 100, which I'll convert to your final letter grade as follows:

A	A⁻	B⁺	B	B⁻	C⁺	C	C⁻	D⁺	D	F
94	90	87	84	80	77	74	70	67	60	0–59

I will grade the papers (including outlines) and the final exam anonymously. This means that you shouldn't put any identifying information on them, other than your PID. You also shouldn't use distinctive formatting or fonts: 12pt, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, please. I know it looks unattractive, but fancy styles threaten anonymity.

As well as giving you points, I'll give you a corresponding letter grade for the papers and the presentation. We'll look together at specific grading rubrics closer to the due dates, but here's a rough description of what the letter grades signify.³ I've emphasized some particularly important phrases.

A “*Mastery* of course content [or other learning goals] at the *highest level* of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students *at a given stage of development*.”

B “*Strong* performance demonstrating a *high level* of attainment for a student *at a given stage of development*.”

C “A *totally acceptable* performance demonstrating an *adequate level* of attainment for a student *at a given stage of development*.”

³ I've taken these descriptions from UNC's official “Explanation of Grading System” at <https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>. Note that grades on individual assignments should **not** be taken as signals of your promise in philosophy. No single assignment (or course, for that matter) can perfectly reflect someone's current philosophical ability nor potential for improvement.

D “A *marginal* performance in the required exercises demonstrating a *minimal passing* level of attainment [*at a given stage of development*].”

F “For whatever reason, an *unacceptable* performance [*at a given stage of development*].”

Due Dates and Late Policy

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at 11:59pm sharp on the due date. Unless otherwise informed, submit them to me electronically at chrisbt@live.unc.edu in a Word (.doc/.docx) format. The filename should include your PID.

I am extremely generous about granting extensions **in advance of the deadline**. I am extremely *ungenerous* about late assignments for which an extension was not granted. **Late pass/fail assignments will be graded as a fail. Late non-pass/fail assignments will be docked a letter grade (or equivalent) for every 24-hour interval of lateness.**

This is to ensure fairness. I realize that things come up, that your lives are busy, and that for a whole host of reasons you may need some more time to work on an assignment. So do talk to me about an extension ahead of time. But if you don't, and you turn in an assignment late, that's not fair to those students who handed their work in on time.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code

You are expected to abide by UNC's Honor Code, and refrain from any kind of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. It's worth considering plagiarism in more detail; it is a serious breach of academic integrity and will be unpleasant for all involved, if it occurs.

The UNC Instrument of Student Governance defines plagiarism as “deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” Just as you are bound by the Honor Code not to plagiarize, I am bound by it to report suspected cases of academic dishonesty of any kind to the Honor Court.

As well as copying text verbatim, plagiarism includes:

- Failing to cite a source properly.
- Closely paraphrasing a source without citing it.
- Copying the structure of an argument or idea without citing it, even if you put it in your own words.
- Copying from work that you have previously submitted for this class, or another.
- Doing any of the above unintentionally.

I strongly recommend taking the plagiarism tutorial at <http://guides.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism>. If you are ever in any doubt as to whether something constitutes plagiarism, check with me before doing it.

5 Schedule (Subject to Change. Last Updated 13th July 2019)

Date	Topic	Required Reading (All from <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i> , except with *, which are on Sakai)
Unit One—Introduction		
Mon June 24 th	<i>What is “Asian Philosophy”?</i>	None, but reading the syllabus is strongly recommended
Tues June 25 th	<i>The Context of CCP</i>	*Van Norden <i>Intro</i> ch. 1 *Van Norden <i>Intro</i> Appendix A
Unit Two—The <i>Analects</i>		
Weds June 26 th	<i>Introduction to the Analects</i>	<i>Analects</i> Bks. 1 and 2 *Van Norden <i>Intro</i> ch. 2
Thurs June 27 th	<i>Kongzi and Virtue Ethics</i>	<i>Analects</i> Bk. 3 *Van Norden <i>Intro</i> ch. 3
Fri June 28 th LP I Due!	<i>Ritual</i>	<i>Analects</i> Bks. 4–8
Mon July 1 st	<i>Delving into the Text</i>	<i>Analects</i> Bks. 9–13
Tues July 2 nd	<i>Rounding Out the Analects</i>	<i>Analects</i> Bks. 14–17 Reread <i>Analects</i> Bks. 1–3
Unit Three—The Mohist and Yangist Critiques		
Weds July 3 rd	<i>Mozi’s Consequentialism</i>	<i>Mozi</i> chs. 16 and 35
Thurs July 4 th	Holiday for Freedom—No Class!	None
Fri July 5 th LP II Due!	<i>Yang Zhu’s Egoism</i>	Yangism “Robber Zhi”
Sun July 7th—Paper I Outline Due!		
Mon July 8 th	<i>Paper Workshop</i>	None
Unit Four—The <i>Mengzi</i>		
Tues July 9 th	<i>Mengzi’s Response to the Critiques</i>	<i>Mengzi</i> 1A1, 1A7, 2A6, 3A5, 3B9, 7A26
Weds July 10 th LP III Due!	<i>Mengzi on Human Nature</i>	<i>Mengzi</i> 4B28, 6A6, 6A8, 6A10, 7A15, 7A35, 7B31
Unit Five—Daoism		

Thurs July 11 th	<i>The Daodejing</i>	Either <i>Daodejing</i> Bk. 1 Or <i>Daodejing</i> Bk. 2
Fri July 12 th	<i>Zhuangzi's Dao</i>	<i>Zhuangzi</i> chs. 1 and 2, 7, 13, 22–23, 26
Sun July 14th—Paper I Due!		
Unit Six—The <i>Xunzi</i> and Funerary Rites		
Mon July 15 th	<i>Xunzi's Confucianism</i>	<i>Xunzi</i> chs. 2, 17, 21, 23
Tues July 16 th	Self-Improvement and Funerals in America	<i>Mozi</i> ch. 25
Weds July 17 th LP B Due!	<i>Funerary Rites</i>	<i>Xunzi</i> ch. 19 <i>Zhuangzi</i> pp. 222–223 (from “Master Nervous Magpie” to “every morning and evening”), 226 (from “When Laozi died” to “where it will end”), 237–240 (from “Master Sacrifice” to “Heaven’s petty person”), ch. 18
Unit Seven—Beyond Classical Chinese Philosophy		
Thurs July 18 th	<i>Buddhism</i>	*Zōngmì <i>On Humanity</i> *Selected Kōans
Fri July 19 th	<i>Feminism</i>	Either *Hé-Yīn Zhèn “On the Question of Women’s Liberation” Or *Olberding “A Sensible Confucian Perspective on Abortion” Or *Wang “Dao Becomes Female”
Sat July 20th—Paper II Outline Due!		
Mon July 22nd	Presentation Due!	None
Tues July 23rd	Presentation Due!	None
Weds July 24 th LP IV Due!	Paper Workshop	None
Thurs July 25 th	Review	None
Sat July 27th—Paper II Due!		
FINAL EXAM—Mon July 29th from 11:30am-1:30pm in CW213		