

PL245: Chinese Philosophy

Spring of 2008, Juniata College

Instructor: Dr. Xinli Wang

Office: Good-Hall 414, x-3642, wang@juniata.edu

Office Hours: MWF: 10:00-10:55 am

WELCOME

According to the tradition of Chinese Philosophy, the function of philosophy is to help human beings to achieve moral and spiritual perfection. The highest form of achievement that a human being is capable of is to be a Hsien (a morally perfect person) or a Sheng (a sage or a spiritually perfect person). A sage is the person who achieves the identification of the individual with T'ien/Heaven. Philosophy teaches the Way (Tao) of how to reach such identification. Therefore, the central problem of Chinese philosophy is this: If human beings want to achieve this identification, do they have to abandon society or even to negate life? Contrary to some superficial impression that Chinese philosophy is this-world philosophy, what Chinese philosophy has striven for is the synthesis between this-worldliness and other-worldliness. A sage is the person whose character can be described as "sageliness within and kingliness without." The task of philosophy is to enable human beings to develop this character, and herein lies the spirit of Chinese philosophy (Fung Yu-Lan).

In the history of Chinese philosophy, the more influential thinkers have been those who have attempted to synthesize this-worldliness and other-worldliness. Their philosophies have been the mainstream of Chinese philosophy in the past more than 2,500 years and have substantially shaped the Chinese mind. Our course will focus on those thinkers and their philosophies. We will start with ancient (pre-Chin) Confucianism (Confucius, Mencius, and Hsun Tzu) and its discontents (Mohism and the School of Names), Taoism (Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu), Yin-Yang Confucianism, via Chinese Buddhism, and end with modern Sung Ming neo-Confucianism (Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-Ming).

Required Texts

1. Fung, Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, the Free Press, 1948 (Fung).
2. Chan, Wing-Tsit (translated and compiled), *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton University Press, 1963 (Chan)
3. Handouts (on P-drive)

Course Requirements

Your course grade will be determined by the combination of following factors:

1. **Attendance, Preparation, and Participation** (10 %)
 - Class attendance is mandatory. There will be some deduction from your course grade for each lecture you miss without an official excuse. The first absence is automatically excused. Excessive unexcused absences (more than FOUR) will result in the lowering of your final letter grade up to one full letter grade (10 points). After you have accumulated more than SIX unexcused absence, it will no longer be possible for you to pass the course (in this case, you will be issued a "F," not even a "WF").
 - Whenever possible, our class will proceed in seminar-format. This means that class time will be devoted to lecture/discussion, with emphasis on class discussion. (a) It is essential for you to do the assigned readings *faithfully* before each class. If it is determined that you have not finished an assigned reading, you might be asked to hand in a reading report (about 2 pages) summarizing the reading assignment missed. (b) Needless to say, your active participation in class discussion is an indispensable part of the success of our course. Active participation in all activities (such as asking questions, participating in class discussion, etc.) of classes will definitely boost your course grade.

2. **Pop quizzes and formal class group-discussions** (15 %): there will be *some* pop quizzes with sole purpose to make sure that you finish the required readings (taking a few minutes to finish). We will have *many* formal group discussions based on the questions posted by the instructor (grades are based on group).
3. **One In-Class Group Presentation** (15%): in the last two weeks of the semester, we will have 10-12 group presentations on either (a) the applications of Chinese Philosophy in today's society, in our everyday life, or in your area of study, or (b) comparison between Chinese thought, philosophy, and Western thought and culture. Each group consists of 2-3 students, and each presentation will last 40 minutes. The grade is based on group performance. Since each of our classes will last about 90 minutes (10:30-12), we will schedule those group presentations in some evenings to make up the extra hours required (about 8 hours).
4. **Three papers** (60 %): one on pre-Chin Confucianism, one on Taoism, and one on neo-Confucianism. Each paper should be roughly 6-8 pages in length (I may pick up some papers to be presented in class).

Policy

1. Late Paper: a late paper will be penalized.
2. Academic Honesty: remember that acknowledging others' contributions in footnotes and citing all works to which you refer (including websites and class notes) in references are necessary components of your papers.
3. Withdrawal Policy: withdrawal from the course will be granted before the deadline. A "WP" will be issued only if you have made reasonable progress to meet our course requirements. Otherwise, a "WF" will be issued.

A Word of Advice: the Chinese mode of reasoning

Because of the unique mode of reasoning embodied in the pre-modern Chinese intellectual tradition, the particular way in which Chinese philosophers have expressed themselves is significantly different from the way in which the Western philosophers have. Chinese philosophers were accustomed to express themselves in the form of aphorisms, allusions, and illustrations. In fact, suggestiveness, instead of articulateness, is the ideal of all Chinese arts, especially Chinese philosophy. It is expected that beginners, who are accustomed to clear articulation, systematic reasoning, and well-developed argumentation in Western philosophy, will sometimes be at a loss to understand what these Chinese philosophers are saying. Here we encounter the two distinct modes of reasoning or methods of metaphysics. One is the negative method that attempts to eliminate distinctions and to tell what its object is not. The suggestiveness of Chinese philosophy is an ideal vehicle of executing this method. On the contrary, Western philosophy has naturally been dominated by the positive method that attempts to make distinctions and to tell what its object is. These two methods are not contradictory, but rather complement each other. In this sense, the suggestiveness of Chinese philosophy should be counted as its main virtue instead of its flaw. After you finish this course, you may realize that it is this method, not the ready-made conclusions of Chinese philosophy, from which you will benefit the most (Fung Yu-Lan).

(Tentative) CLASS SCHEDULE

Wk. 01 (1/15-17) **Introduction: the Spirit of Chinese Philosophy**

Tu: Course requirements; Introduction: the spirit of Chinese Philosophy

- Fung, pp. xi-xvii, and ch.1 & 2;
- Handout: Fung, "Introduction: The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy", from Fung, *The Spirit of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 1-9

Th: **The Book of Changes: the Cosmological Foundation of Chinese Philosophy**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, pp. 129-31, 138-42, 166-72; (b) Chan, pp. 262-3
- Selections from *The Book of Changes*, in Chan, pp. 264-70
- Handout: Liu, “Yijing: The Cosmological Foundation of Chinese Philosophy”, from J. Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, ch.1
- Handout: a table: significance of the trigrams in the book of changes

Wk. 02 (1/22-24) **Confucius: the founder of Confucianism**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch. 3 & ch.4; (b) Chan, pp. 14-8
- Selections from *The Analects*, in Chan: (a) humanism (Jen-Tao); humanity (Jen); (b) rectification of names (Cheng-Ming); (c) righteousness (Yi); (d) love and Golden Rule (Chung-Shu) [see Chan, p. 18 for the numbers of the selections].

Wk. 03 (1/29-31)

Tu: Confucius

- Selections from *The Analects*, in Chan: (e) ceremonies and music (Li and Yueh); filial piety (Hsiao); virtue; mean and central thread (Te); (f) heaven, spirit, destiny; Way (Tao); (g) government; (h) knowledge and wisdom; education and learning; literature and art; (i) Confucius; superior man; words and acts; (j) nature, human.

Recommended:

- Handout: Li, “Family: duty vs. rights” from C. Li, *The Tao Encounters the West*, pp.115-38
- Handout: Graham, “Confucianism and 20th Century Western Philosophy,” from A.C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, pp. 22-31

Th: **Mo Tzu on Utilitarianism, Universal Love, and Government**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch. 5, and pp. 70-3, 122-5; (b) Chan, pp. 211-3
- Excerpts from the *Mo Tzu*, in Chan: (a) utilitarianism, pp 226-7; (b) the will of Heaven, pp. 217-21; (c) universal love, pp. 213-7; (d) on the origin of the state (“elevating the worthy to the government position” and “agreement with the superior), pp. 229-31
- Excerpts from *Mencius*, in Chan: 3A: 5, 7A: 45, 46.

Wk. 04 (2/5-7) **Mencius: Idealistic Confucianism**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch.7; (b) Chan, pp. 49-51
- Selections from *The Book of Mencius*, in Chan: (a) nature, human, and innate virtue; equality (of human nature); (b) humanity (Jen) and righteousness (Yi); great man; undisturbed mind; (c) human relations; social classes; (d) benevolent government; unbearing mind; (e) people and revolution [See Chan, p. 51 for the numbers of the selections].

Wk. 05 (2/12-14) **Hsun Tzu: Naturalistic Confucianism**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch.13; (b) Chan, pp. 115-6
- Selections from the *Hsun Tzu*, in Chan: (a) on nature, pp. 116-24; (b) on the nature of man is evil, pp. 128-35; (c) on the rectification of names (logic and epistemology), pp. 124-7 (the end of 1st paragraph)

Wk. 06 (2/19-21)

Tu: **The School of Names**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch.8; (b) Chan, pp. 232-3
- Hui Shih’s ten paradoxes and the theory of relativity: excerpts from the *Chuang Tzu*, in Chan, pp. 233-5
- Kung-sun Lung’s theory of universals: excerpts from the *Kung-sun Lung Tzu*, in Chan: (a) on the white horse, pp. 235-7; (b) on the marks (chih) and things (wu), pp. 237-8; (c) on hardness and whiteness, pp. 240-2; (d) on names and actuality, p. 243

Th: Lao Tzu: the Natural Taoism

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch.6 & 9; (b) Chan, pp. 136-8
- Selections from *Tao-Te Ching*, in Chan: (a) name; Tao; being and non-being; one; (b) reversal; relativity, good and evil, paradoxes; natural [see Chan, pp. 138-9 for the numbers of the selections].

Paper #1 on pre-Chin Confucianism due in the Th's class, 2/21

Wk. 07 (2/26-28)

- Selections from *Tao-Te Ching*, in Chan: (c) weakness; virtue; tranquility; simplicity; desires; knowledge; humanity and righteousness; female, water; (d) wu-wei (taking no action); non-strife; (e) government.

Recommended:

- Handout: Clarke, "Western Interpretations of Daoism", from *The Tao of the West*, ch.3

Wk 08 (3/4-6) Spring Break! ☺ ☺ ☺

Wk. 09 (3/11-13) **Chuang Tzu: the Mystical Taoism**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, ch.10; (b) Chan, pp. 177-9
- Selections from *The Chuang Tzu*, in Chan: (a) Tao and nature, pp. 202-7; (b) the equality of things, pp. 179-91

Recommended:

- Handout : Li, "Being, Perspective vs. Substance," from C. Li, *The Tao Encounters the West*, pp. 11-33

Wk. 10 (3/18-20)

Tu: Chuang Tzu

- Selections from *The Chuang Tzu*, in Chan: (c) the greater teacher, pp. 191-202, and 207-10.

Recommended:

- Handout: Kupperman, "Chuang Tzu's strategies of communication", from J. Kupperman, *Learning from Asian Philosophy*, pp. 184-91

Th: Yin-Yang Confucianism

- Introduction: (a) Fung, pp. 131-8, and Chan, pp. 244-6; (b) Fung, pp. 191-9 (end of 1st paragraph), and Chan, pp. 271-2
- (a) Excerpts from *the Book of History, the Book of Changes*, and Lu's *Spring and Autumn Annals*, in Chan, pp. 246-50; (b) selections from *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, in Chan, pp. 279-84, 287

Wk. 11 (3/25-27)

Tu: **The Doctrine of Mean**

- Introduction: (a) Fung, pp. 172-7; (b) Chan, pp. 95-6
- Chapters from *the Doctrine of Mean*, in Chan, (a) on the mean and harmony, ch. 1-11, 14, 27, 30, 33; (b) on the common and the ordinary, ch. 4, 12; (c) on sincerity, ch. 20 (start from the last paragraph of p. 106), 21-6, 32; (d) the correspondence between Heaven and man, ch. 13, 17, 19-20, 22, 24

Th: Chinese Buddhism

Buddhism in China: (a) Fung, 241-4; (b) Handout: Mitchell, "The Teachings of Buddha", from D. Mitchell, *Buddhism*, ch. 2.

Paper # 2 on Taoism due in Tu's class, 3/25

Wk. 12 (4/1-3)

Tu: The Three Treatise School: the philosophy of emptiness:

- Fung, 245-6;
- Chan, ch. 22

Th: Seng-chao's and Tao-sheng's Philosophy

- Fung, 246-54;
- Chan, ch. 21

Wk. 13 (4/8-10)

Tu: The Ch'an School

- Fung, ch. 22;
- Chan, ch. 26

Recommended:

- Handout : "The Chan School (Zen Buddhism)", from J. Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, ch. 12

Th: **Chu Hsi's Neo-Confucianism: the School of Platonic Ideas**

- The rise of neo-Confucianism: (a) sources of neo-Confucianism: Fung, 266-9; (b) spiritual cultivation: Fung, 271-2; (c) emotion and happiness: Fung, 287-93 and Chan, pp. 631-2 (secs. 91-4)
- Introduction: (a) Cheng Yi's concept of Li: Fung, pp. 284-7; (b) Fung, ch. 25 (up to p. 301), and Chan, pp. 588-92
- On Li, Chi, and Tai Chi: selections from *The Complete Works of Chu Hsi*, in Chan: (a) Li and Chi: secs. 49 (p. 618), 55-61 (pp. 620-3), 63-4, 66 (pp. 624-5), 100-13 (pp.634-8); (b) Tai Chi: secs. 56 (p. 620), 85 (p. 630), 114-22 (pp. 638-41); (c) cosmology: secs. 123-9 (pp.641-3)

Wk. 14 (4/15-17) Chu Hsi

Tu: on nature, mind, and Li

- Fung, 301-303
- Selections from *Collection of Literary Works of Chu Hsi* and *The Complete Works of Chu Hsi*, in Chan:
 - Nature, human nature, and the problem of evil: treatise 2 (pp. 597-9), secs. 45-48 (pp. 616-8), 62, 65, 67-70 (pp. 623-6), 95-99 (pp. 632-3)
 - The distinction and synthesis between (human) nature and mind [(human) nature = Li/Jen *given* by Heaven and *possessed* by the mind which constitutes the substance of the mind; the mind = function/operation of the mind which is consciousness; so "nature ≠ mind," then "mind ≠ Li"]; treatises 1, 3, 4 (pp. 593-7, 600-4), secs. 2 (p. 605), 6 (p. 606), 32 (p. 612), 51 (p. 619), 75-84 & 86-91 (pp. 628-31)
 - "Nature is Li" (doctrine of the identity of nature with Li): secs. 31 (p. 612), 37-44 (pp. 613-6), 52-4 (pp. 619-20)

Th: on spiritual cultivation

- Introduction to *the Great Learning*: (a) Fung, pp. 181-3, 305-6; (b) Chan, pp. 84-5
- *The Great Learning*, in Chan, pp. 85-94
- Selections from *Classified Conversations of Chu Hsi*, in Chan: secs 1-30 (pp. 605-11)

Wk. 15 (4/22-24) **Wang Yang-ming's Neo-Confucianism: the School of Universal Mind**

Tu: The mind is Li

- Introduction: (a) Cheng Hao's idea of Jen: Fung, pp. 281-3; (b) Lu Chiu-yuan's concept of the mind: Fung, pp. 307-8; (c) Fung, pp. 308-10; (d) Chan, pp. 654-8
- Selections from *Instructions for Practical Living*, in Chan:
 - The universe is in the mind (idealism): p. 673, secs. 32 (p.674), 274-7 (p.685); 331 & 337 (pp.690-1)

- “The mind is Li” (doctrine of the identity of the mind and Li): secs. 3 (pp.667-8), 32-3 (p.674), 133 & 135 (p.681-3)
- The concepts of the mind and knowledge: p. 673, secs. 78 (p.675), 108 (p.679)

Th: On spiritual and moral cultivation

- Fung, pp. 310-6
- Selections from *Inquiry on the Great Learning* and *Instructions for Practical Living*, in Chan:
 - Original human nature and intuitive/innate knowledge of good: (a) pp. 659-61, 664-5; (b) secs. 34 (p.674), 135 & 155 (pp.682-4), 262 & 274 (pp.684-5), 308 & 315 (why different theories of human nature? pp. 685-8)
 - Good & evil (the problem of evil) and dealing with emotion: (b) secs.101 (pp.677-9), 228 (p.684)
 - The man of humanity (form one unity with all things): (a) p. 659-61; (b) secs. 89 & 93 (p.675)
 - “To investigate things” as to “rectify the mind” (and to extend innate knowledge of good): (a) pp. 665-6; (b) secs. 6-7 (pp. 671-4), 135 (pp.682-3), 319 (p.689)
 - The doctrine of the unity of knowledge and action: (b) secs. 5 (pp. 668-70), 26 (p.674), 132-133 (p. 679-82)

Wk. 16 (4/29)

Tu: Wang Yang-ming

Paper # 3 on neo-Confucianism due on the reading day (Wed. 4/30, before 6 pm)