Chinese Philosophy  
*Philosophy 145A · Spring 2016*

**Instructor:** Dr. David Corner  
**Office:** MND 3014  
**Office Hours:** Physical: TR 12:30-1:20; 3:00-3:30 and by appointment  
Virtual (SacCT): W 3:00-4:00 and by appointment  
**Office Phone:** 278-6970  
**Voicemail:** 572-6474  
**Philosophy Department:** 278-6424; 278-5364 (fax)  
**Email:** dcorner@csus.edu  
**Web:** [http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/cornerd](http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/cornerd)

**Required Texts**  
All are available in Kindle format. Electronic versions (ePub and pdf) are also available from the publisher.

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*  
  by Philip J. Ivanhoe (Editor), Bryan W. Van Norden (Editor)  
  REQUIRED

- *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han to the 20th Century*  
  by Justin Tiwald (Editor), Bryan W. Van Norden (Editor)  
  REQUIRED

- *Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy*  
  by Bryan W. Van Norden (Author)  
  OPTIONAL: But in some cases you may find it easier to base your summaries on Van Norden’s narrative rather than the source texts.

Additional readings will be available online.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
**Catalog Description:** Survey of the major philosophical traditions of China and Japan, focusing on concepts of nature, man, society, freedom and knowledge. Special attention will be given to Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and recent philosophical movements.

This course satisfies Area C2 (Humanities), which prescribes that students be able to:

A. Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.

B. Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.

C. Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
D. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.

**Prerequisites:** Passing score on the Writing Proficiency Exam.

The intensive writing requirement specifies that students will complete writing assignments totaling not less than 5000 words. In this course, this goal will be met with a combination of critical summaries, discussion posts, and a final paper, for 7,600 words total. (The writing requirement is exceeded because, for this fully online course, in-class discussion is being replaced by written discussion posts.) The instructor will be working actively with students to assist them in sharpening their analytic skills and improving their writing styles.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- **Familiarize students with the major schools of traditional Chinese philosophy, enabling them to identify the major tenets of the schools of Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism. They should be able to describe the views of the major contributors to each of these traditions, and to describe areas in which these traditions agree and disagree.**

- **Students will become familiar with the assessment of the human condition that is made by these schools.**

- **Students will compare and analyze various conceptions of humanity that can be found in the major philosophical traditions of China.**

- **Students will gain an understanding of the main philosophical traditions of China, and their relation to Chinese culture and the development of Chinese society.**

- **Students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the methods and conventions appropriate to the study of the humanities. In regard to the philosophical method in particular, this will show itself in an ability to critically assess complex philosophical argumentation, and in an improved capacity to develop a reasoned framework for their own worldview.**

- **Enhance students’ ability to reason logically and write clearly in prose.**

- **Expose students to highly sophisticated non-western schools of philosophical thought**

**Course Delivery**

All course content will be delivered on SacCT. You will find video lectures there, as well as links and dropboxes for all assignments.

**COURSE GRADE**

The following cutoff scheme represents a guarantee of the maximum course total required for each letter grade. Target scores for the individual assignments are also provided.
### Description of Requirements

**Quizzes:** Students will be expected to complete a short quiz on each lecture video. Each quiz will consist of about 10 questions, depending on the length of the video. You will be allowed two attempts at each quiz. If you make a second attempt at a quiz, you will keep the second score, even if it is lower than the first. (If you kept the higher of the two scores, there would be no incentive to review the material before making a second attempt. I strongly recommend that you review the material before taking any quiz for the second time.)

Quizzes will be due weekly. You will be required to complete quizzes on each week's material no later than 10 days after the beginning of that week.

At the end of the term I will calculate your final quiz total as follows: (Number of points you earn) / (Number of points possible) x 150.

**Discussion Posts:** Discussion posts are due weekly. There will be a forum open each week for discussion of that week's course material. You may post comments on the material, or questions about the material, or comments and questions together. You may also post comments or replies to the posts of others, but please remember to be courteous and respectful at all times.

Another option for your discussion posts: You may post your own multiple choice question on the current material—but if you do, please include 5 possible answers, and indicate which answer is correct, and why, i.e. you should provide a short justification and discussion for your choice. Multiple choice questions may be based on the lecture material, or on the reading. If your question concerns the reading, please include, in your justification, the page number where the answer may be found.

Each post will be worth 10 points. Suggested length is 140-200 words for each post. Posts of less than 140 words will likely receive fewer than 5 points, depending on content. Content requirements: The post should be relevant to the week's material, and should consist of some original observation or question regarding that material. Each weekly forum will be open for 10 days; e.g. the forum for the Week 1 material will be open for 10 days after the beginning of Week 1, and so posts for each week will be due by the time that forum closes. Discussion posts will normally be graded within one week after the forum closes.

The instructor will be following the Philosophy Department’s grading standards.
**Extra Credit:** Students may expect to get 2 points of extra credit for any discussion post that shows genuine insight into the course material and substantially exceeds 200 words.

**Critical Summaries:** Students are asked to write four critical summaries. Each of these should be at least 750 words in length. Summaries will be due every 3-4 weeks and their content is expected to be drawn from the 3-4 week period in which they are due. Each summary should accomplish these goals:

1. Give the reader a general sense of the direction of the course material over the week.

2. Focus on some philosophically interesting view that arises in the context of this material.

3. Give a critical discussion of the view in (2) above.

4. Each summary should show familiarity with the reading as well as the lecture, and included references to the text which have been properly cited. (Parenthetical citations are fine.)

The emphasis of the summaries will be on the critical examination of complex philosophical argumentation. Detailed comments will be given on all writing assignments to help students improve their skills in both analytic reasoning and composition on subsequent assignments. For an explanation of what is involved writing analytical essays, please see the Philosophy Department’s writing guidelines.

Summaries will be checked for originality by Turnitin.com, through the Turnitin module on SacCT. They may be submitted up to 24 hours late, without penalty. Summaries submitted 24-48 hours late will receive a 10% penalty. Each dropbox will remain open for an additional five days, but summaries will receive only half credit if turned in more than 48 hours late.

It is your responsibility to insure that all of your summaries are properly submitted. It is a requirement of this course that you check to be sure you have received credit for each summary before the next one is due. Negligence in this regard can mean failing the course even though you have done all of the work. You cannot get credit for your summaries if you do not turn them in.

You will be asked to complete an Academic Integrity quiz before being able to submit any summaries.

**Makeup Summary:** Students will have the opportunity to submit one summary as a makeup at the end of the semester, i.e. by the last day of finals week. There will be a 20% penalty on this makeup.

**Final Paper:** The final paper should be 1000 words in length, written in response to this question:

“Write an essay on the notion of *wuwei* in Chinese Philosophy. How is it expressed in the various traditions we have studied this semester? Whose understanding of it seems
the most reasonable? Defend your answer.”

The traditions we are studying are, broadly, Classical Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and Neoconfucianism. I suggest you work on your final throughout the term, as we discuss the application of wo Wei to each of the traditions we study. Your final paper should build on the techniques of critical analysis that you have been practicing on your critical summaries and, since the notion of wo Wei runs throughout the Chinese philosophical tradition, should also reveal a comprehensive understanding of the course material.

Communication: A fully online course like this one requires you to stay in close communication with the instructor. Please check online for course updates at least twice each week. I will try very hard to minimize the amount of email I send you, but there may be time-sensitive announcements that need to go out over email; please be sure you check your Saclink email regularly while the course is in progress - I recommend that you check it at least twice each week on days that you do not log on to our SacCT page.

Disability Accommodation: If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to Services to Students with Disabilities, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or during my office hours early in the semester.

Withdrawal from the course: Please be mindful of drop deadlines. After the end of the second week of classes, you will be asked to justify any request to withdraw, and if your explanation is not satisfactory your petition to drop will be denied. (The criteria are on the back of this form.) In the large majority of cases, if a student does not withdraw during the first two weeks, she is committed to finishing the class.

Academic Dishonesty: This usually involves using unauthorized notes during an exam or plagiarism, which is presenting the work of someone else—whether copied or paraphrased—as one’s own. When material is copied without use of quotation marks, plagiarism is presumed. Please understand that it is not enough simply to reword material you find online to avoid the charge of plagiarism. You are responsible for what you turn in; check to be sure all appropriate citations are included in your work. If unauthorized notes are found to be accessible to you during an exam, you will be presumed to be using them. Those who permit others to cheat are considered accomplices and are guilty of cheating as well.

Please review the University’s policies regarding academic dishonesty. The library also maintains a very useful page on plagiarism.

Anyone caught cheating will lose credit for the assignment on which they cheated, with no possibility of make-up. The minimum penalty will be 150 points, which is likely to drop the offender 1-2 letter grades in the course. Egregious cases (e.g. multiple infractions, failure to cooperate with an investigation into academic dishonesty) may result in a student’s failing the course. Please be aware that I am required to report all cases of cheating to the University’s Office of Student Conduct, which may take further action.