Chinese Philosophy

Philosophy 145.A • Summer 2015

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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 journals 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 C4: Further Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and satisfies the intensive writing requirement.

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, which is in the range of 17-20 pages depending on formatting. In this course, this goal will be met with a combination of journals (3750 words total), an essay final (1000 words), and discussion posts that should be well over 250 words total. Weekly discussion posts will also help to satisfy the writing intensive requirement. The instructor will be working actively with students to sharpen 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 Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, as well as the views of some of the major contributors to each of these traditions, and to be able to describe areas in which these traditions agree
- Improve students’ abilities to critically assess complex philosophical argumentation
- Improve students’ abilities to develop a reasoned framework for their own worldview
- Enhance students’ composition skills
- Expose students to highly sophisticated non-western schools of philosophical thought

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Quizzes</th>
<th>Discussion Posts</th>
<th>Journal (x5)</th>
<th>Final</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1000</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>120</td>
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</table>

The instructor will be following the Philosophy Department’s grade definitions.

**Description of Requirements**

**Quizzes:** Students will be expected to complete a short quiz on each lecture video. Generally each quiz will consist of 4-5 questions, but this may depend 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.)

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 100.

**Discussion Posts:** 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 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.

At the end of the term I will calculate your final discussion post total as follows: (Number of points you earn) / (Number of points possible) x 100.

**Journal:** Students are asked to write a course journal of about 3750 words. This journal will be written in weekly chapters; each of these should be at least 750 words in length. Each chapter 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 chapter 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 journal 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 in philosophical writing, please see the Philosophy Department’s writing guidelines.

Journal chapters will be checked for originality by Turnitin.com. Chapters will normally be due on Thursday at 11:59 pm. They may be submitted up to 24 hours late, i.e. up to Friday at 11:59, without penalty. The dropbox for each chapter will remain open for yet another 24 hours, until Saturday night at 11:59, but a 12-point penalty will apply to chapters submitted on Saturdays.

Chapters will be read in the order they are submitted. I will normally be able to guarantee that you receive your chapter back, with a score and comments, at least a couple days before your next one is due, but only if it is submitted by Thursday night. The later you turn in your chapter, the more you risk not seeing comments on it before your next chapter is due.

Students who do not submit at least three chapters satisfying the minimum page length will receive a grade of F in the course. Students who submit only three journal chapters may receive an F as well, and in any case are very unlikely to receive a grade of C- or better.

It is your responsibility to insure that all of your chapters are properly submitted. It is a requirement of this course that you check to be sure you have received credit for each chapter 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 chapters if you do not turn them in.

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

**Makeup Chapter:** Students will have the opportunity to submit one journal chapter as a makeup at the end of the term. This chapter may be used to replace any low chapter score, including scores of 0 for chapters not submitted, but it may also be a rewrite of a chapter that was turned in earlier. If you choose to rewrite a chapter, please be sure that your rewrite involves substantial changes.

**Final Exam:** The final exam should be about 1000 words in length, and will consist of a single essay question, as follows:

“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 *wuwei* to each of the traditions we study.

**Extra Credit:** Where a student shows serious effort and mastery of the course material, discussion posts may receive more than their listed maximum credit.
**Additional Requirement:** 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 every 48 hours. 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 daily while the course is in progress.

**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 withdraw will be denied.

**Incompletes** will be granted only when circumstances beyond a student’s control prevent them from completing the course. Normally there will not be more than a single assignment outstanding; otherwise, withdrawal is the appropriate remedy. University policy forbids assigning an incomplete to any student who is currently failing the course. Absent extenuating circumstances, arrangements for an incomplete must be made prior to the end of finals week. In all cases I will have to set up an incomplete contract which you must accept online at least 48 hours before grades are due.

**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 paper. Those who permit others to cheat are considered accomplices and thus guilty of plagiarism themselves.

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. 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.

**Outside Sources:** Students sometimes try to use material from outside sources on their course assignments, when they find that their notes are inadequate—perhaps because they were not attentive during lecture, did not understand the lecture and did not ask for help, did not do the required reading, or were simply absent. If you consult outside sources you should indicate the source of your material in your work. You are strongly advised to check these sources with me, as many (e.g. Wikipedia) are unreliable and therefore completely unsatisfactory for scholarly purposes. Students sometimes fail their assignments when they rely on such dubious sources.

I recommend, as a source for background information, the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Articles in the IEP, unlike those in Wikipedia, are reviewed for accuracy by people who know something about the subject matter. Another good source for advanced work is the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, though many of its articles are not written with an undergraduate audience in mind.