

Chinese Philosophy

Philosophy 145A • Summer 2019

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Required Texts

All are available in Kindle format. Electronic versions (ePub and pdf) are also available from the publisher at hackettpublishing.com. In addition, you will have free online access to the texts through the University library; a link will be available online.

Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy
by Philip J. Ivanhoe (Editor), Bryan W. Van Norden (Editor)
ISBN-13: 978-0872207806
REQUIRED

Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han to the 20th Century
by Justin Tiwald (Editor), Bryan W. Van Norden (Editor)
ISBN-13: 978-1624661907
REQUIRED

Optional Text

Introduction to Classical Chinese Philosophy
by Bryan W. Van Norden (Author)
ISBN-13: 978-1603844680

This text is optional, but in some cases you may find it easier to base your summaries on Van Norden's narrative rather than the primary 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.

Prerequisites: Passing score on the Writing Proficiency Exam.

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.

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 (3000 words) and discussion forum posts (2100 words). The instructor will be working with students to assist them in sharpening their analytic skills and improving their writing styles.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Compare and contrast the major schools of Chinese philosophy, focusing on the major contributors and the major tenets of each school
2. Analyze each school's concept of humanity, and the human condition
3. Compare and analyze the various conceptions of humanity that can be found in the major philosophical traditions of China.
4. Articulate the ethics and worldview of the main philosophical traditions of China, and how each of these traditions relates to Chinese culture and the development of Chinese society.
5. Apply their knowledge of the methods and conventions appropriate to the study of the humanities. In regard to the philosophical method in particular, this means they will demonstrate the ability to critically assess complex philosophical argumentation, and construct a reasoned framework for their own worldview.
6. Demonstrate their ability to reason logically and write clearly in prose.
7. Describe highly sophisticated non-western schools of philosophical thought

Course Delivery

All course content will be delivered on [Canvas](#). You will find video lectures there, as well as links and dropboxes for all assignments.

Course Grade

Receiving a passing grade in the course (D- or better) presumes that you have made a serious attempt to satisfy all course requirements. This means that you have submitted the required number of summaries, and that you have viewed all, or nearly all, of the lecture videos. Assuming this basic requirement is satisfied, the following cutoff scheme represents a guarantee of the maximum course percentage required for each letter grade.

- A- 88%
- B- 80%
- C- 70%
- D- 60%

The instructor will be following [the Philosophy Department's grading standards](#).

The assignments will be weighted as follows:

Quizzes:	25%
Discussion Forums:	25%
Critical Summaries:	50%

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.)

Discussion Posts: Two discussion posts will be due each week. The first should be an original post of 240 words, and the format is open: The most obvious thing to do would be to give a very concise description of some philosophical position that you encountered in the current material, and then make a comment on that material, or pose a question. I may also post questions to the forum that you may answer/discuss.

The second post should be a 60-word comment on someone else's post. Please comment on a post that no other student has commented on, if one is available. (Instructor comments do not count.) Your comment may be a response to something they said, an answer to their question, or a reasoned agreement/disagreement; again, the format is open, but this is important: *Please remember to be courteous and respectful at all times.*

The total value for each set of two posts will be 30 discussion points maximum: 24 points for the original post, and 6 points for the comment. Assuming that the content of the post is focused on the recent course material, and the requirement of courtesy has been met, scores will be based on effort, as measured by the length of the post in words. A rubric for scoring will be provided separately, but generally, scores will be awarded at the rate of 1 point for each 10 words, up to the maximum for each post.

You will also be asked to introduce yourself in a discussion forum, and to comment on someone else's introduction.

Critical Summaries: Students are asked to write three critical summaries. Each of these should be at least 1000 words in length (about 3 pages), and will be scored on a 100-point scale using the standard values, e.g. 90 points for an A-, 80 points for a B-, etc. Each summary should accomplish these goals:

1. Give the reader a clear understanding of some philosophical issue as it arises in the recent reading. Summaries must be based primarily on the assigned reading- not lecture material or outside sources
2. Focus on some philosophically interesting claim that arises in the context of this material.

3. Give a critical discussion of the claim in (2) above.
4. Each summary should show familiarity with the assigned reading, and include references to the text which have been properly cited. (Parenthetical citations are fine.) These are not research papers; content should be confined to the assigned reading. You may refer to the lecture material if you wish, but make sure that the reading is your primary source.

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](#).

It is your responsibility to ensure that all of your summaries are properly submitted. It is a requirement of this course that you be able to show a receipt for all summaries submitted, and 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 succeed in submitting them.

Makeup Summary: Students will have the opportunity to submit one summary as a makeup at the end of the term. However, there will be a substantial (20%) penalty on this makeup. Please try to avoid having to write a makeup summary. The makeup penalty, in some cases, is sufficient to prevent students from passing the course.

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.

Outside Assistance: If you feel you need help with the course material, your first recourse should be to contact me, rather than seeking outside assistance from a source of undemonstrated competence who may even charge a fee for this service. Due to concerns about the reliability of the assistance you may receive, you are specifically forbidden from seeking assistance from an outside source- for example, an online service- without my approval.

Help with Writing: On the other hand, you are encouraged to seek help with your writing skills. An excellent resource is our campus [Reading and Writing Center](#).

Crisis Support: There are resources on campus to assist students who are in crisis, or who face unique challenges. [Contact CARES](#), Crisis Assistance and Resource Education Support.

Instructor Plan: I usually respond to emails and questions posted to the "About The Course" discussion forum within 24 hours. Weekends may be an exception, particularly if I am away from home. I normally check my CSUS email between the hours of 11:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Feedback on critical summaries will be given in time for the student to prepare for the next submission. These are graded in the order received, so in some cases you will receive grades and comments in a matter of hours. I am usually able to return all work submitted by its due date within one week, but summaries submitted late may take longer.

Discussion forum posts will normally be scored within 5 days after the forum closes.

Technical Support: If you have trouble with Canvas, you can go to AIRC, 2nd Floor, Room 2005, email the help desk at servicedesk@csus.edu, or call them at 916-278-7337.

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. You will find the University's accessibility policy at <http://csus.edu/irt/accessibility/>

Instructor Drops: Students who do not complete at least half of the work assigned for credit during the first two weeks of the semester will be considered to have abandoned the course and may be administratively dropped by the instructor. Thus e.g. if there are eight assignments due for course credit during the first two weeks, you will be expected to complete at least four of them. Re-enrollment will not be permitted. Do not, however, rely on me to drop you. If you do not plan to complete the course, you are responsible for your own drop/withdrawal.

Withdrawal from the course: Please be mindful of drop deadlines. After the end of the online drop period, 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 online drop period, 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. For face-to-face classes: 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 15% of the course total, which is likely to drop the offender at least one letter grade 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.