Ancient Chinese Thought

Fall 2012

Syllabus

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Course Description and Objectives: Philosophy has played a dominant role in the history of Chinese culture, influencing every phase of life: religious, social, artistic, and political. The two fundamental ancient schools of Chinese thought, Confucianism (6th century BC) and Taoism (4th century BC), construct the intellectual and moral framework from which the culture emanates. The primary objective of the course is threefold: (1) To examine the work of the major philosophers of each school of thought (Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Chuang Tzu) with an eye toward understanding the wisdom that they offer and determining whether or not this wisdom is perennial – that is, can it come alive and be meaningful for us in the 21st century? (2) To understand how the worldview of Ancient Chinese Philosophy differs from that of the traditional Western philosophical perspective; and (3) To reflect on the Chinese cultural revolution of the 1950’s, as brutal as it was, to determine conceptually if some kind of intellectual upheaval was necessary for the evolution of Chinese culture.

As a course in intellectual history, the broad objectives follow:

Impart specific intellectual values: intellectual integrity and honesty

Develop respect for the materials of historical inquiry

Foster a capacity for dialogue with the past

Engender an understanding of good scholarly technique and practice
**Course Requirements:** Two short take-home papers (about 6 pages each); one art project related to some aspect of the course; all reading assignments must be carefully read and contemplated prior to class; in-class participation is strongly encouraged; attendance is *mandatory*.

**Grade Determinants:** Each take-home paper is worth 30 points (a total of 60% of your grade); the art project is worth 10 points (10% of your grade); attendance and in-class participation is worth 30 points (30% of your grade).

**Required Texts:**

*The Analects of Confucius*, Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont, translators

*Tao te Ching*, Stephen Mitchell, translator

*Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*, Burton Watson, translator

*The Importance of Living*, Lin Yutang

**Class Schedule**

Aug 27:  Introduction to Ancient Chinese Thought

Sep 3:    Labor Day (no class)

Sep 10:   Introduction to Confucianism

Sep 17:   *The Analects* [Book 1 (sections 2,6,8); Book 2 (17); Book 4 (5,8,10,17); Book 5 (26); Book 6 (21); Book 7 (1,8,21,37,38)]

Sep 24:   *The Analects* [Book 8 (4,6); Book 9 (4); Book 12 (7); Book 13 (18); Book 14 (13,36); Book 15 (28); Book 16 (4,10); Book 17 (25); Book 19 (2,4)]

Oct 1:    DVD: *Amongst White Clouds* (* 1st paper due)*

Oct 8:    Introduction to Taoism

Oct 15:   Fall Break

Oct 22:   *Tao te Ching* (Please read entire text)
Oct 29:  *Tao te Ching*

Nov 5:  *Chuang Tzu* (Sections 1,2)

Nov 12:  *Chuang Tzu* (Sections 3-7)

Nov 19:  *The Importance of Living* (The Scamp as Ideal; Art as Play and Personality)

Nov 26:  Art Presentations

Dec 3:  Art Presentations

Dec 10:  Final Class (2nd paper due)

**ADA Compliance:** In MICA’s efforts to provide the highest possible quality education for every student, MICA maintains compliance with the requirements of the ADA and Section 504. Any student who feels he or she may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Learning Resource Center at 410-225-2416, in Bunting 458, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to [http://www.mica.edu/LRC](http://www.mica.edu/LRC).

**Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)**

It is the responsibility of faculty and students to follow health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities and processes, and to review MICA’s Emergency Action Plan and attend EHS training. It is each faculty member’s responsibility to coordinate with the EHS Office to ensure that all risk associated with their class activities are identified and to assure that their respective classroom procedures mirror the EHS and Academic Department guidelines. Each of these policies and procedures must be followed by all students and faculty. Most importantly, faculty are to act in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, as employees of this college and are expected to act as examples of how to create art in a way to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Faculty must identify and require appropriate personal protective equipment for each art making process, for each student, in all of their classes, when applicable. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment appropriate for their major. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection are in place.