

Classical Philosophers of China (先秦哲学纲要)

Seminar, Summer Semester, 2006
Mo 10-12, Burse, Schellingzimmer

Instructor:

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Description:

This is an introduction to important theories and viewpoints of the Pre-Qin Chinese philosophers who flourished between the 6th century and the 3rd century B.C. It is generally recognized that philosophy of this period, forming the basis and origin of all later developments, is crucial to understanding the whole Chinese philosophy and hence the whole culture. The course is intended to display, based on a reading in the (translated) original scriptures, the basic ideas of Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism and the School of Names. Furthermore, it tries to render the ideas in a way that they appear as logically understandable and coherent, contrary to the folklore that the Chinese philosophy does not fit into or is beyond the Western framework of logic.

Contents and Arrangements:

1. *April 24*, instructor's introduction
 - General Remarks
 - 1) Historical background
 - 2) The ways of the philosophers
 - 3) The bearing of Chinese language on philosophical thinking
2. *May 8*, instructor's introduction
 - Confucius
 - 1) A first glimpse of Confucianism
 - 2) Life and work
 - 3) General teachings
 - Family as the starting point
 - Confucian virtues
 - Self-cultivation
 - Government
3. *May 15*, participants' report and discussion
 - Explain the following Confucian concepts, possibly in a systematic way, and comment on Confucianism in general. (Use any of the translations of the *Analects*, for example, Wing-tsit Chan's translation. See Wing-tsit Chan 1963, p. 18 for the index of the key concepts.)
 - humanity 仁, righteousness 义, love and golden rule, mean and central thread 忠、恕, filial piety 孝悌, rectification of names 正名
4. *May 22*, instructor's introduction
 - Lao Zi (Lao Tzu)
 - 1) The man and his book
 - 2) *Tao Te Ching*
 - 3) Lao Tzu and Taoism
5. *May 29*, participants' report and discussion
 - Explain Lao Zi's views on the the following concepts, based on the text of *Tao Te Ching* (Wing-tsit Chan's translation. See Wing-tsit Chan 1963)
 - Tao (See 1, 4, 14, 21, 25, 34, 38, 40, 41, 42, 51 of *Tao Te Ching*)
 - Nature (See 17, 23, 25, 51, 64 of *Tao Te Ching*)
 - Non-Action (See 2, 3, 8, 19, 24, 29, 43, 47, 63, 67 of *Tao Te Ching*)
 - Being and Non-being (See 1, 2, 11, 40 of *Tao Te Ching*)
 - Government (See 3, 17, 29, 30, 31, 57, 58, 60, 65, 80 of *Tao Te Ching*)

6. *June 12*, instructor's introduction
Mencius
 - 1) Life and influence
 - 2) The *Book of Mencius*
 - 3) On human nature
 - 4) Political theory
7. *June 19*, participants' report and discussion
Explain the following Mencian concepts. Pay attention to their relations to relevant concepts of Confucius. Comment on Mencius' argument for the goodness of human nature. (See the translation in Wing-tsit Chan 1963. The key words index is found on p. 51.)
humanity, righteousness, human nature, unbearing mind, great man, undisturbed mind
8. *June 26*, instructor's introduction
Zhuang Zi (Chuang Tzu)
 - 1) A recluse life
 - 2) Work
 - 3) General ideas
 - Tao and Te
 - Nature and man
 - Theory of knowledge
 - Absolute happiness
 - Political philosophy
9. *July 3*, participants' report and discussion
Read the translation of *Zhuang Zi* by Wing-tsit Chan or by others. Choose a topic and discuss it.
10. *July 10*, instructor's introduction
Mo Zi (Mo Tzu)
 - 1) Life and work
 - 2) Mohism in general
 - 3) Ten Mohist doctrines
 - 4) Objective standards
 - 5) Political theory
11. *July 17*, participants' report and discussion
Read Wing-tsit Chan 1963, pp.211-231. Comment on the Mohist universal love and the Mohist criticism of Confucianism.
12. *July 24*, instructor's introduction
The School of Names
 - 1) The "debaters"
 - 2) "All sayings are false" (Hui Shi)
 - 3) Horse, whiteness and hardness (Gong Sun Long)
 - 4) Concluding remarks

Textbooks:

1. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton University Press, 1963. (App.)
2. Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1960. (UB-Lesesaal - Aa 2865c)

References:

1. Wolfgang Bauer, *Geschichte der chinesischen Philosophie*, Verlag C.H. Beck München, 2001.(App.)
2. 胡适:《中国哲学史大纲》, 商务印书馆 1919 年, 东方出版社 1996 年重印。Hu Shih, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*, Shanghai: Oriental Book Co., 1928.
3. Zhang Dainian, *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*, translated and edited by Edmund Ryden, Beijing: Foreign Language Press, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.
4. Clarence Burton Day, *The Philosophers of China*, The Citadel Press, Secaucus, N.J., 1962, 2nd paperbound printing, 1978.