

## PHIL 510A 002

### Ancient Philosophy: Warring States Chinese Thought

Tuesdays, 2:00-4:45 p.m. Buch D324

Instructor: Edward Slingerland ([edward.slingerland@ubc.ca](mailto:edward.slingerland@ubc.ca))

OH: Virtual M 1-2 pm  
W 9:30-10:30 am

<https://ubc.zoom.us/j/4422938752?pwd=aGxFRVU5bkZvUS9kUWxSMmFsWktCdz09>

Meeting ID: 442 293 8752

Passcode: 520254

This course will introduce students to central thinkers and important themes in Warring States (6<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE) Chinese thought. Parallels with issues in Western philosophy will be explored, as well as connections to modern moral psychology, cognitive science and evolutionary theory. Readings will be in English translation with occasional reference to key classical Chinese terms.

#### Required Texts

Slingerland, Edward. Confucius *Analects*. Hackett

Ivanhoe, P.J. *The Daodejing of Laozi*. Hackett

Van Norden, Bryan. *Mengzi*. Hackett

Watson, Burton. *Mozi: Basic Writings*. Columbia U Press

Watson, Burton. *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. Columbia U Press

#### Class Structure

Class meetings will typically be broken into two sessions, structured as follows, with the first session generally focusing on primary texts and the second on secondary literature.

Session	Component	Duration	Time (Pacific)
Session 1	Introduction	5 minutes	2-2:05 pm
	Talk or presentation	20 minutes	2:05-2:25 pm
	Discussion	50 minutes	2:25-3:15 pm
Break	Rest & break time	15 minutes	3:15-3:30 pm
Session 2	Introduction	5 minutes	3:30-3:35 pm
	Talk or presentation	20 minutes	3:35am-3:55 pm

	Discussion	50 minutes	3:55pm-4:45pm
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## Course Assessment

Course participation and engagement 10%

This component of your grade will reflect class attendance, your engagement with class discussion and level of preparation, taking into account individual differences in comfortableness speaking out in class, etc.

Course presentations (15% each) 30%

At the beginning of term students will pick two different weeks when they would like to present, once on the assigned primary texts, once on the assigned secondary literature. These presentations should be aimed at raising central points in the readings that are interesting or problematic, confusing, etc., with the aim of stimulating discussion.

Final term paper 60%

The primary assessment tool for the course will be a 4,000-5,000 word final term paper, which should engage with course materials in a critical and creative fashion, ideally relating it to the student's own philosophical interests, and also exploring further relevant secondary scholarship on the topic. Students will schedule an individual 15-minute meeting with the instructor in Week 11 to discuss their paper proposal, and papers will be due **May 4, 2022**.

## Schedule of Class Meetings, Topics and Readings

### Week 1 (Jan 11)

Introduction to course, general themes in early Chinese thought  
Knowing How vs. Knowing That

Slingerland, Edward. "Effortless Action: the Chinese Spiritual Ideal of Wu-wei," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 68.2 (June 2000): 293-328

### Week 2 (Jan 18)

The *Analects* I: Role-ethics vs. virtue-ethics

*Primary Texts*

Analects, pp. 1-63 (Books 1-6)

*Secondary Scholarship*

Ramsey, John. 2016. "Confucian Role Ethics: A Critical Survey." *Philosophy Compass* 11: 235-245

Van Norden, Bryan. Chapter 5: "Virtue Ethics and Confucianism," in *Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy* (ed. Bo Mou) (pp. 99-121)

Angle, Stephen and Michael Slote. 2013. "Introduction" (pp. 1-11) in *Virtue Ethics and Confucianism* (Routledge)

**Week 3 (Jan 25)**

The *Analects* II: Interiority and Virtue

*Primary Texts*

*Analects*, pp. 64-137 (Books 7-12)

*Secondary Scholarship*

Fingarette, Herbert. 1979. The problem of the self in the *Analects*. *Philosophy East & West* 29.2: 129-140.

Wilson, Stephen. Conformity, Individuality and the Nature of Virtue, in Van Norden (ed.), *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*, Ch. 5.

Shun, Kwong-loi. Ren and Li in the *Analects*, in Van Norden, *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*, Ch. 3.

**Week 4 (Feb 1)**

The *Analects* III: Spontaneity, Flexibility and the Moral Life

*Primary Texts*

*Analects*, pp. 138-230 (Books 8-19)

*Secondary Scholarship*

Kupperman, Joel. 2002. Naturalness revisited: Why western philosophers should study Confucius. In *Confucius and the Analects: New essays*, ed. Bryan W. Van Norden. New York: Oxford University Press, Ch 2

Lai, Karen. “*Li* in the *Analects*: Training in Moral Competence and the Question of Flexibility,” *Philosophy East & West* Vol. 56, No. 1 (Jan., 2006), pp. 69-83

Olberding, Amy. “Dreaming of the Duke of Zhou: Exemplarism and the *Analects*.” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 35:4 (2008):625-639.

### **Week 5 (Feb 8)**

Mozi: The rationalist, consequentialist challenge to Confucianism

#### *Primary Texts*

*Mozi*, pp. 19-80, 113-140

#### *Secondary Scholarship*

Chris Fraser, “Mohism,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (sections 1-5, 7)

Flanagan, Owen. 2008. “Moral Contagion and Logical Persuasion in the *Mozi*,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*.

### **Week 6 (Feb 15)**

Laozi and the *Daodejing*: The Primitivist Challenge

#### *Primary Texts*

*Daodejing*, pp. 1-84

#### *Secondary Scholarship*

Yan, Hektor. 2009. “A Paradox of Virtue: The *Daodejing* on Virtue and Moral Philosophy,” *Philosophy East & West*.

Lai, Karyn. 2007. “Ziran and Wuwei in the *Daodejing*: An Ethical Assessment,” *Dao* 6: 325-337.

### **Midterm Break**

### **Week 7 (March 1)**

Mengzi I: Emotions and extension

#### *Primary Texts*

*Mengzi*, pp. 1-102 (Books I through IVA)

*Secondary Scholarship*

Emily McRae. 2011. The cultivation of moral feelings and Mengzi's method of extension. *Philosophy East and West* Vol. 61, No. 4: 587-608

Wong, David. 1991. Is There a Distinction between Reason and Emotion in Mencius? *Philosophy East & West* 41.1: 31-44

Ihara, Craig. 1991 David Wong on Emotions in Mencius. *Philosophy East & West* 41.1: 45-53

Wong, David. Response to Craig Ihara's Discussion *Philosophy East & West* 41.1: 55-58

**Week 8 (March 8)**

Mengzi II: Argumentation and Metaphor

*Primary Texts*

*Mengzi* pp. 103-197 (Books IVB-VIIB)

*Secondary Scholarship*

Jones, Nicholas. 2016. "Correlative Reasoning about Water in Mengzi 6A2." *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 15.2: 193–207

Slingerland, Edward. "Metaphor and Meaning in Early China," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 10.1 (Winter 2011): 1-30

**Week 9 (March 15)**

Mengzi III: Mencius and Hume, moral psychology

Cary, Jeremiah and Rico Vitz. 2020. Mencius, Hume, and the virtue of humanity: sources of benevolent moral development. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 28(4):693-713

Chan, Sin Yee. "Evaluative yu in the Mencius" (2016) *Philosophy East and West*, 66 (4): 1168-1195

Slingerland, Edward. 2011. "'Of What Use Are the Odes?'" *Cognitive Science, Virtue Ethics, and Early Confucian Ethics*," *Philosophy East & West* 61.1 (January 2011): 80-109

Flanagan, Owen, and Robert Anthony Williams. 2010. "What does the modularity of morals have to do with ethics? Four moral sprouts plus or minus a few." *Topics in Cognitive Science* 2, no. 3 (July 2010): 430–53

### **Week 10 (March 22)**

Mengzi vs. Mozi: Virtue ethics and consequentialism

Wong, David. "Universalism versus love with distinctions: An ancient debate revived." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16, no. 3 (January 1, 2021): 251–72

Cline, Erin. "Putting Confucian Ethics to the Test: The Role of Empirical Inquiry in Comparative Ethics'." *Journal of Religious Ethics* (2017)

Marsh, Abigail et al. 2014. Neural and cognitive characteristics of extraordinary altruists. *PNAS* 111 (42): 15036-15041

Paul Bloom exchange with Jamil Zaki:

<https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/12/29/does-empathy-guide-or-hinder-moral-action>

### **Week 11 (March 29)**

Zhuangzi I: Skepticism, Language and reality

#### *Primary Texts*

*Zhuangzi*, pp. 23-71 (Chapter 1-5)

Excerpt from Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil*, "On the prejudices of philosophers")  
Selections from Later Mohist Canons

#### *Secondary Scholarship*

Ivanhoe, P.J. 1996. "Was Zhuangzi a relativist?" In Kjellberg and Ivanhoe, *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism and Ethics in the Zhuangzi*, Ch. 9

Wong, David. "Constructive skepticism and being a mirror in the Zhuangzi." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 44, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2021): 53–70

### **Week 12 (April 5)**

Zhuangzi II: Skill knowledge, wu-wei as moral/spiritual ideal

#### *Primary Texts*

*Zhuangzi*, pp. 73-141

Barrett, Nathaniel F. (2011). Wuwei and flow: Comparative reflections on spirituality, transcendence, and skill in the Zhuangzi. *Philosophy East & West*, 61(4), 679-706.  
Secondary Scholarship

Higgins, Kathleen Marie. 2005. Negative Virtues: Zhuangzi's Wuwei. In *Virtue Ethics: Old and New*, Ch. 6

**Final Paper due noon Pacific Time May 4 2022**