



PHIL 3264: Classical Chinese Philosophy & Culture

Class Time: M/W/F 2:30–3:20 P.M.

Class Location: TBD

Instructor: Chris Rahlwes

Email: chris.rahlwes@uconn.edu

How to reach me: *Please drop by my open office hours (TBD) or email me to make an appointment (either in-person or online). Always include PHIL 3264 in the subject of your email for a quicker response. I will respond within 48 hours Monday–Friday.*



Course Description:

In this course we look at the pre-Qin formative period of Chinese philosophy. We will focus on Daoist, Confucian, and Mohists philosophy as well as the philosophical arguments arising from the School of Names (*Mingjia*). The main topics we will focus on are metaphysics (esp. personal identity), ethics, logic, and philosophy of language. Each of these topics intersect and rely on the others during this formative period, and we will focus on the interconnection between the four throughout the semester. Further topics we will cover are human nature, proper governance, thriving (individual and community), knowledge, non-being, and “way” (*dao*). We will read selections from: *Yijing*, *Lunyu (Analects)*, *Dao De Jing (Laozi)*, *Mengzi (Mencius)*, *Mozi*, *Gongsun Longzi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Xunzi*.

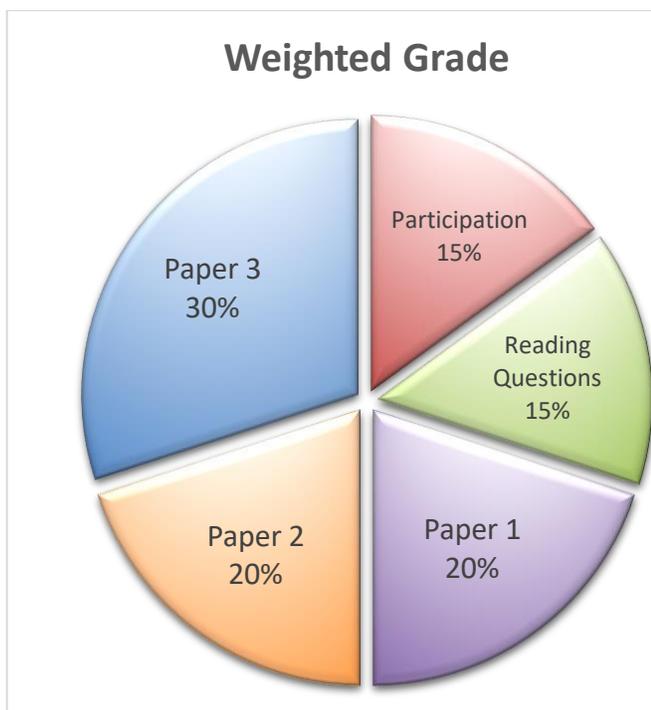
Course Goals:

By the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and summarize the three main “schools” of pre-Qin Chinese philosophy (Confucian, Daoist, and Mohist).
 2. Evaluate and analyze arguments made by these three schools as well as the so-called School of Names’ critiques of the philosophy of language within these schools.
 3. Engage in interpretive debates surrounding issues in the texts covered.
 4. Advancing positions based on these texts using the tools of philosophical argument.
 5. Develop a research project focusing on a pre-Qin philosophical text, in which you carefully and with great precision explain a key philosophical principle in that text.
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Means of Evaluation

- **Participation (15%).** Participation will be measured through active class engagement as well as group questions and workshops.
- **Reading Questions (15%).** The Sunday before each class you are required to email two questions you have regarding the readings for the week (at least one question must be on the primary text). These will help guide the lecture throughout the week.
- **Paper 1 (20%) 4–6 Pages.** This paper focuses on your ability to explain a key philosophical principle (e.g., *dao*, rectification of names, or disputation) clearly and precisely from one of our texts. Your grade is determined by your accuracy in demonstrating you understand the author’s position, the structure of your paper, and if your argument is compelling. You are allowed up to two revisions of this paper.
- **Paper 2 (20%) 4–6 Pages.** Same as Paper 1, but you must focus on a different tradition or text.
- **Paper 3 (30%) 8–10 Pages.** This paper is a revision of Paper 1 or Paper 2, in which you further develop your explanation, ideas, and/or argument. This paper is the culmination of the course and shows your ability in designing a research project that is philosophically fruitful. You will be asked to submit a brief prospectus for this paper.



Letter Grade Cutoffs:

Grade	Percentage
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	67%
D	63%
D-	60%
F	Below 60%

Note: These are cut-off points: *decimals will not be rounded up.* Temporary grades: N (no basis for grade), I (incomplete grade), X (final assessment absence)

Required Materials:

- All course readings will be available on [HuskyCT](#).
- You will need to bring material to write, take notes, and access the internet during class.
- You will need a word processor (such as [Google Docs](#) or [Microsoft Word](#)), a pdf reader (such as [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)), and a web browser.

Course Policies:

Submission of Late Work

If you are unable to submit the assignment on [HuskyCT](#) by the schedule due date, extensions can be granted for the papers. Participation can be completed outside the classroom through meeting with me during office hours. Weekly questions cannot be made up nor can they be submitted late, but you are allowed to miss up to three.

Extensions for the papers need to be requested via email before they are due.

Cheating & Plagiarism

This course expects you will act in accordance with [the Guidelines for Academic Integrity](#) at the University of Connecticut. Reach out to me if you have doubts about what counts as plagiarism or complete the UConn Library's [Understanding Plagiarism](#). In cases of cheating, I will follow [the Academic Misconduct Procedures](#) per the University of Connecticut's standards.

Accessibility & Equity

If you have difficulty accessing the course or its materials based on a disability or pregnancy, please contact [the Center for Students with Disability](#). They will confidentially provide me a letter describing accommodations that will help make the course more accessible. If there are other issues that make the course inaccessible, please reach out to me via [email](#).

Mutual Respect

Differing opinions and arguments are encouraged in this course but must be engaged in a respectful manner. Do not mock someone for their opinion or use slurs. You should never feel embarrassed or ashamed about your opinion, concern, or question. We all come to this class in different ways, and we should feel comfortable in sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Remember that we all (including me) are working towards improving our communication skills in presenting our arguments as well as the arguments from the readings.

Recording & Copyright

My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. I will inform you as to whether you are authorized to record my lectures at the beginning of each semester. If you are so authorized to record my lectures, you may not copy this recording or any other material, provide copies of either to anyone else, or make a commercial use of them without prior permission from me.

Attendance & Participation

Per University of Connecticut's policies, attendance is not graded. Attending class is important as it enables you to ask question and engage the material. Class participation is 15% of your grade as well.

COVID & Illness

The University of Connecticut [policy regarding masking](#) encourages wearing masks in indoor settings. As such, please consider wearing masks in the classroom. If you do become sick (COVID or otherwise), please do not come to class. Contact me via [email](#) and I will work with you to catch you up on the material and assignments.

Tentative Schedule (Subject to Change)

	Date	Topic/Readings	Assignments
Module 1: Introduction & <i>Yijing</i>			
Week 1	1/18 1/20	Introduction to the Course Early Chinese Culture Key Philosophical Terms	
Week 2	1/23 1/25 1/27	<i>Yijing</i> <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I-Ching</i> (All) • Smith (1998) The Place of the <i>Yijing</i> in World Culture: Some Historical and Contemporary Perspectives 	Weekly Questions
Module 2: <i>Lunyu</i> (<i>Analects</i>)			
Week 3	1/30 2/1 2/3	<i>Ren</i> (Humaneness), <i>Li</i> (Ritual), <i>Yi</i> (Rightness), and Role Ethics <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analects</i> Ch. 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 17 • Lai (2014) <i>Ren</i> 仁: An Exemplary Life. 	Weekly Questions
Week 4	2/6 2/8 2/10	<i>Xiao</i> (Filial Piety) and <i>Zheng Ming</i> (Rectification of Names) <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analects</i> Ch. 2 & 11 • Ames & Rosemont (2014) Family Reverence (<i>xiao</i>) in the <i>Analects</i>: Confucian Role Ethics and the Dynamics of Intergenerational Transmission 	Weekly Questions

Module 3: <i>Dao De Jing</i> (Laozi)			
Week 5	2/13 2/15 2/17	<i>Dao</i> (Way), <i>Wu</i> (Lack), and the Limits of Language <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dao De Jing</i> (All) • Liu (2017) <i>Be-ing (you) and non-be-ing (wu) in the Dao De Jing.</i> 	Weekly Questions
Week 6	2/20 2/22 2/24	The Guodian Laozi <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Guodian Laozi</i> (All) • Cook (2019) <i>Which Comes First? Dao or De: Evidence from the Guodian Manuscripts.</i> 	Weekly Questions
Module 4: <i>Mengzi</i> (Mencius)			
Week 7	2/27 3/1 3/3	<i>Xin</i> (Heart-mind) and Human Nature <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mencius</i> 2A, 4A, 6A, 7A, 7B • Choi (2019) <i>The Heart of Compassion in Mengzi 2A6</i> 	Weekly Questions
Week 8	3/6 3/8 3/10	Role Ethics and Moral Dilemma <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mencius</i> 1A, 2B, 3A, 4B • Ramsey (2015) <i>Mengzi's Externalist Solution to the Role Dilemma</i> 	Weekly Questions Paper 1 Due 3/10
Week 9	3/13 3/15 3/17	Spring Break	
Module 5: <i>Mozi</i> & <i>Gongsun Longzi</i>			
Week 10	3/20 3/22 3/24	<i>Jian 'ai</i> (Universal Love) and Socio-Ethics <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mozi</i> 4, 8–10, 14–16, and 26–28. • Fraser (2014) <i>The Philosophy of the Mozi</i> (Ch. 1) 	Weekly Questions

Week 11	3/27 3/29 3/31	<i>Bian</i> (Disputation) and <i>Ming</i> (Naming) <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mozi</i> 40–45. • The <i>Gongsun Longzi</i> (All) • Liu & Zhang (2010) <i>New Perspectives on Moist Logic</i> 	Weekly Questions
Module 6: <i>Zhuangzi</i>			
Week 12	4/3 4/5 4/7	<i>Shi/Fei</i> (This/Non-this) and Perspectivism <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zhuangzi</i> Ch. 1 & 2 • Sturgeon (2015) <i>Zhuangzi, Perspectives, and Greater Knowledge</i>. 	Weekly Questions
Week 14	4/10 4/12 4/14	Role Playing & Skill Stories <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Zhuangzi</i> Ch. 3, 4, 6, 7, 13, 19, 21, & 29 • Sellmann (2019) <i>Butcher Ding: A Meditation in Flow</i> 	Weekly Questions
Module 7: <i>Xunzi</i>			
Week 15	4/17 4/19 4/21	Ritual, Humanness, and Human Nature <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Xunzi</i> Ch. 2, 3, 4, 18, 19, 23, 30 • Sung (2012) <i>Ritual in the Xunzi: A Change of the Heart/Mind</i> 	Weekly Questions Paper 2 Due 4/21
Week 16	4/24 4/26 4/28	Language, Logic, and The Rectification of Names <u>Required Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Xunzi</i> Ch. 22 • Fraser (2016) <i>Language and Logic in the Xunzi</i> 	Weekly Questions
Finals Week	5/1 5/3 5/5		Paper 3 Due TBD

Resources Available to All Students:

College is a challenging time in your life.

Here is a list of resources that can help you navigate your experience as a student at the University of Connecticut, Hartford Campus. It is important to remember that you are not alone, and these resources are there for you when you need help to achieve your academic goals.

[The Writing Center](#)

[Academic Achievement Center](#)

[Academic Advising](#)

[Center for Students with Disabilities](#)

[Food Assistance at Uconn](#)

[Dean of Students \(email\)](#)

[Information Technology Services](#)

[Mental Health – Student Health and Wellness](#)

[Title IX Office](#) – if you are experiencing gender-based violence or discrimination.

[ADA Coordinator and the Office of Institutional Equity](#)

[Student Health and Wellness](#) – if you are sick or injured and need medical care.

[Student Care Team](#)

[African American Cultural Center](#)

[Asian American Cultural Center](#)

[Native American Cultural Programs](#)

[Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center](#)

[Rainbow Center](#)

[Women's Center](#)