

# Religious Studies 471

## Confucian Thought and Practice

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**Spring 2012**  
Tues. 7-10 p.m.  
Timberlake 5  
Office hours: MWF 3-4, T 2-4  
and by appointment

- [Links](#)
- [Selected handouts](#)
- [Paper format guide](#)
- [Paper criteria](#)

This seminar will explore the philosophical and cultural history of the Confucian tradition in China, from its inception to the present day. Readings will include both primary texts and secondary studies, covering the Five Classics and the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, the Neo-Confucians of the Sung and Ming dynasties, and the "New Confucians" of the twentieth century. Among the general questions to be considered are: In what senses can Confucianism be considered a religious tradition? How is Confucianism in China related to the tension between tradition and modernity? Which aspects of the tradition are culture-bound and which are universally applicable? The last few weeks will focus on the question of human rights in China and its connection with Confucianism.

### READING

- Raymond Dawson, trans., *The Analects*
- D.C. Lau, trans., *Mencius*
- Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 1
- Barry C. Keenan, *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*
- Wm. Theodore de Bary and Tu Weiming, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights*
- [Moodle](#) readings



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Master Kong

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Participation** (25% of grade). The seminar format requires regular attendance, completion of reading assignments, and active participation in discussion by all members, every week. Necessary absences must be cleared in advance with the instructor; unexcused absences will result in a grade penalty.
2. **Three shorter papers** (15% each), 4-6 pages each, due the Mondays after weeks 2, 6, and 9. You must follow the [Paper format guide](#).
3. **Research paper** (30%), 10-12 pages plus bibliography, using at least three sources outside of assigned readings and following the [Paper format guide](#), due **Tuesday, May 8**.

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE

### 1 Jan 17 Introduction, overview

**Film:** “A Confucian Life in America”

### 2 Jan 24 The Five Scriptures (*Wujing* 五經)

**Reading (Moodle):**

- Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*: ch. 1

**(Course Reserve):**

- Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, chs. 2-6 (read the chapter on the Classic you are assigned)
- Read the one you are assigned and skim the rest:
  1. Richard Wilhelm, *I Ching [Yijing]*: 3-15 (first two hexagrams), 262-272 (Discussion of Trigrams), 280-355 (Great Treatise)
  2. Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs [Shijing]*: 226-280
  3. James Legge, *Shoo King [Shujing]* (following Prolegomena): 1-75, 92-127, 141-151, 184-198, 213-219, 281-297, 300-305
  4. James Legge, *Li Ki [Liji]*, vol. 27: 1-14, 61-90, 109-119, 120-132, 161-173; vol. 28: 29-39, 93-114, 173-185, 200-235, 428-434.
  5. James Legge, *Ch'un ts'ew [Chunqiu]*: skim

**Monday, Jan. 30: Paper 1 due**



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### 3 Jan 31 Confucius (Kongzi 孔子) and the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語)

**Learning the cultural tradition (*wen* 文) and reviving the Way (*dao*) of the Sages;  
Being humane (*ren* 仁), ritually proper (*li* 禮), and appropriate (*yi* 義)**

**Reading:**

- Dawson, *The Analects* (complete)

4 Feb 7 **Mencius (Mengzi 孟子)**  
**Heaven and human nature (*renxing* 人性)**

**Reading:**

- Lau, *Mencius*, sections 1A; 1B; 2A; 3A:3-4; 4A; 4B:12-14, 28, 32; 5A:5-6; 5B:9; 6A; 6B:2; 7A; 7B



Master Meng 孟子

5 Feb 14 **Xunzi 荀子**  
**The *Daxue* 大學 (Great Learning)**  
**The *Zhongyong* 中庸 ("The Mean")**

**Reading:**

- de Bary and Bloom, *Sources*:159-183, 329-339

6 Feb 21 **Reflections on the Classical tradition**

**Reading ([Moodle](#)):**

- Thomas Berry, "Individualism and Holism in Chinese Tradition: The Religious Cultural Context"
- Tu Wei-ming, "The Creative Tension Between *Jen* [*Ren*] and *Li*"
- Philip J. Ivanhoe, "The 'Golden Rule' in the *Analects*"
- Irene Bloom, "Mengzian Arguments on Human Nature (*Ren Xing*)"
- David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*: 11-25, 131-138

**Monday, Feb. 13: Paper 2 due**

7 Feb 28 **Han 漢 through Tang 唐 dynasties**  
**Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒**  
**The *Yijing* 易經 (Scripture of Change)**  
**The *Xiaojing* 孝經 (Scripture of Filiality)**  
**Confucian texts by or about women**  
**Han Yü 韓愈**

**Reading:**

- *Sources*: 283-285, 292-297, 314-329, 344-346, 568-573, 582-585, 819-836

<< Spring Break >>

8 Mar 20

**Neo-Confucianism: Northern Song 宋****Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤: Daoism and the *Yijing*****Shao Yong 邵雍: numerology and the Sage****Zhang Zai 張載: ethics based on *qi* 氣****Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤: metaphysics of *li* 理 and *qi***

Zhou Dunyi

**Reading:**

- Keenan, *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*, xxi-72
- *Sources*: 587-590, 596-604, 609-612, 625-629, 641-643, 667-697
- Robin R. Wang, ed., *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*: 316-320 ([Moodle](#))

9 Mar 27 **Neo-Confucianism: Southern Song 宋****Zhu Xi 朱熹: architect of the *Daoxue* 道學 synthesis****Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵**朱熹  
Zhu Xi**Reading:**

- de Bary and Bloom, *Sources*: 697-725, 729-734, 742-748, 837-840
- Wang, *Images of Women*: 321-326 ([Moodle](#))
- Joseph A. Adler, "Varieties of Spiritual Experience: *Shen* in Neo-Confucian Discourse" ([Moodle](#))

**Monday, April 2: Paper 3 due**10 Apr 3 **Ming 明, Qing 清, and 20<sup>th</sup> century****Wang Yang-ming 王陽明****Dai Zhen 戴震****Kang Youwei 康有為****"New Confucians"****Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century critiques****Reading:**

- Keenan, *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*, 75-112
- *Sources*, vol. 1: 841-851
- de Bary and Lufrano, *Sources*, vol. 2 ([Moodle](#)): 41-46, 260-273, 351-356, 545-564, 574-583



Wang Yangming

11-12 Apr 10-17    **Confucianism and human rights (1-2)**

**Reading:**

- de Bary and Tu, *Confucianism and Human Rights*: Introduction, chs. 1-5, Epilogues (2)

13 Apr 24    **Confucianism and human rights (3)**

**Reading (Moodle):**

- Randall Nadeau, "Confucianism and the Problem of Human Rights"
- A.T. Nuyen, "Confucianism and the Idea of Citizenship"
- Richard Madsen, "Confucian Conceptions of Civil Society"

14 May 1    **Concluding perspectives**

**Reading (Moodle):**

- Tu Weiming, "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism"
- Yao Xinzong, *An Introduction to Confucianism*: 38-47 (A religious tradition?), 273-286 (Confucianism and its modern relevance)
- Joseph A. Adler, "Confucianism as Religion / Religious Tradition / Neither: Still Hazy After All These Years"
- Daniel A. Bell, "On Being Confucian: Why Confucians Needn't Be Old, Serious, and Conservative"
- Magda Hornemann and Hans Petersen, "[CHINA: Will fashion for Confucius retard religious freedom?](#)" ([Forum 18](#), 6/21/07)

**Final papers due: Tuesday, May 8, 4:30 p.m.,  
in my office**



The Confucian Temple (Kongzi Miao) in Taipei, Taiwan