

## Religious Studies 471

# Confucian Thought and Practice

**Joseph Adler**  
 O'Connor 204  
[adlerj@kenyon.edu](mailto:adlerj@kenyon.edu)  
 427-5290

**Spring 2014**  
 Tues. 7-10 p.m.  
 Treleven 101  
 Office hours: MWF 3:10-4, 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 position of women in Confucianism, both in theory and in practice.

### READING

- Raymond Dawson, trans., *The Analects*
- Irene Bloom, trans., *Mencius*
- Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 1
- Robin R. Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*
- Barry C. Keenan, *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*
- [Moodle](#) readings



孔子  
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. For the first one (on one of the Five Classics) you will also give an oral presentation. You must follow the [Paper format guide](#), and should also refer to the [Paper criteria](#).
3. **Research paper** (30%), 10-12 pages plus bibliography, using at least *three* sources outside of assigned readings and following the [Paper format guide](#) and [Paper criteria](#). Due **Monday, May 5**.

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE

### 1 Jan 14 Introduction, overview

**Film:** "A Confucian Life in America" (Tu Wei-ming)

### 2 Jan 21 The Five Scriptures (*Wujing* 五經)

#### Reading

- Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*: ch. 1 (**Moodle**)
- Wang, *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture*: chs. 2-5, 8

#### 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

Friday, Jan. 24: Paper 1 due



Master Kong 孔子

### 3 Jan 28 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 4      **Mencius (Mengzi 孟子)**  
**Heaven and human nature (*renxing* 人性)**

**Reading:**

- Bloom, *Mencius*: Introduction; sections 1A; 1B; 2A; 3A3-4; 4A; 4B12-14, 28, 32; 5A5-6; 5B:9; 6A; 6B:2; 7A; 7B
- Wang, *Images*: ch. 13



Master Meng 孟子

5 Feb 11      **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
- Xunzi: additional excerpts from ch. 23 ([Moodle](#))
- Wang, *Images*: ch. 15

6 Feb 18      **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*"
- Yong Huang, "Filial Piety: Why an Upright Son Does Not Disclose His Father Stealing a Sheep"
- David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*: 11-25, 131-138

**Friday, Feb. 21: Paper 2 due**

7 Feb 25      **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
- Wang, *Images*: chs. 22-25, 31, 33, 40, 42-43, 46

**<< Spring Break >>**

8 Mar 18



Zhou Dunyi

### 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* 氣

#### Reading:

- Keenan, *Neo-Confucian Self-Cultivation*: xxi-72
- *Sources*: 587-590, 596-604, 609-612, 625-629, 641-643, 667-697
- Wang, *Images*: 316-320, chs. 49, 52

9 Mar 25



朱熹  
Zhu Xi

### Neo-Confucianism: Southern Song 宋

Zhu Xi 朱熹: architect of the *Daoxue* 道學 synthesis

Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵

#### Reading:

- Joseph A. Adler, *Reconstructing the Confucian Dao*: Intro, ch. 1 ([Moodle](#))
- de Bary and Bloom, *Sources*: 697-725, 729-734, 742-748, 837-840
- Zhu Xi, "Discussion of Humanity" and "First Letter to the Gentlemen of Hunan on Equilibrium and Harmony" ([Moodle](#))
- Wang, *Images*: 321-326, ch. 53

Friday, March 28: Paper 3 due

10 Apr 1

### Ming 明, Qing 清, and 20<sup>th</sup> century

Wang Yang-ming 王陽明

Kang Youwei 康有為

"New Confucians"

Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century critiques

#### Reading:

- Tu Weiming, Later history of Confucianism ([Moodle](#))
- 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 Apr 8 **Women in/and Confucianism (1)**

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

- Chan Sin Yee, "The Confucian Conception of Gender in the Twenty-First Century"
- Robin Wang, "Dong Zhongshu's Transformation of *Yin-Yang* Theory and Contesting of Gender Identity"
- Bettine Birge, "Chu Hsi [Zhu Xi] and Women's Education"
- Jian Zang, "Women and the Transmission of Confucian Culture in Song China"

## 12 Apr 15 **Women in/and Confucianism (2)**

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

- Henry Rosemont, Jr., "Classical Confucian and Contemporary Feminist Perspectives on the Self: Some Parallels, and Their Implications"
- Vivian-Lee Nyitray, "The Real Trouble with Confucianism"
- Chenyang Li, "Can Confucianism Come to Terms with Feminism?"
- Chenyang Li, "The Confucian Concept of *Jen* [*Ren*] and the Feminist Ethics of Care"

## 13 Apr 22 **Concluding perspectives**

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

- Tu, "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism"
- Adler, "Confucianism as Religion / Religious Tradition / Neither: Still Hazy After All These Years"
- Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*: 38-47 (A religious tradition?), 273-286 (Confucianism and its modern relevance)
- Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism*: Intro, ch. 1
- Magda Hornemann and Hans Petersen, "[CHINA: Will fashion for Confucius retard religious freedom?](#)" ([Forum 18](#), 6/21/07)

## 14 Apr 29 **Film: *Kongzi / Confucius*** (2010, starring Chow Yun Fat) At my house

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Final papers due: Monday, May 5, 4:30 p.m., in my office</b></p>
--