

# PHIL213 Asian Philosophy (Classical Chinese Philosophy)

Spring 2023 | Tuesday and Thursday 8:00-9:15am | Dey Hall 307

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**Office:** Caldwell 206A

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30am-10:30am; Tuesdays 1:00pm-2:00pm; and by appointment

## Content Warning

Some of the materials that we will read and discuss in this course might be difficult for students from a variety of backgrounds. (These topics include: assumptions about fixed gender roles, discussion of death and funerals, and more.) If you have any concerns about any elements of the course, or if there is any way that we can together make things easier to bear, please contact me by email, by Zoom, or in person.

## Textbook

The required textbook for this course is *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (2nd edition), edited by Ivanhoe and Van Norden (ISBN: 9780872207806). All other readings will be made available on Sakai. If you, for any reason, have difficulty obtaining the required textbook, please do not hesitate to let me know.

## 1. Course Description

In this course, we will study some of the major traditions in Classical Chinese Philosophy. In particular, we will examine how insights and lessons from these traditions interact with contemporary debates in ethics and moral psychology. Here are some of the potential questions that we will discuss in class: How should we live? How could we cultivate ourselves to become virtuous? What obligations do we owe to others? What is the role of emotions in our moral development?

Target Audience: This is an introductory course which does not presume any prior background or coursework in philosophy.

## 2. Learning Objectives

This course has three learning objectives.

- You'll be introduced to some of the most important thinkers and theories of Classical Chinese Philosophy (with a focus on their ethical views).

- You'll practice key philosophical skills, including: identifying and critically evaluating different perspectives on a complicated issue, forming your own views based on such evaluation, and clearly communicating your views in writing and in speech with interlocutors who may have different or opposing opinions while engaging in respectful dialogue.
- You'll reflect on how the topics that we've discussed in class relate to issues outside of the classroom and form your own views on those issues.

### 3. Commitment to Respect and Diversity

Together as a class, we are committed to creating a safe learning environment for everyone involved, irrespective of their ability, age, economic status, ethnicity, first language, gender expression and identity, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexuality. Personal offenses or discriminatory remarks toward others on any of these bases will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Climate survey. During the semester, we will have *anonymous climate surveys* to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and respected during class discussions and lectures. If you have any concerns about the learning environment at any time during the semester, please do not hesitate to let me know.

### 4. Course Assignments and Assessment

The required assignments for this course are as follows:

Due Date	Assignment	Percentage
Daily	Attendance & Participation	10%
TBD	Group Discussion Facilitation	10%
Daily	Reading Reactions	20%
Throughout the Semester	Four Reflection Journals	10% (2.5% each)
2/24 (Fri)	Paper I (2-3 pages) + Outline (1 page)	10%
4/14 (Fri)	Paper II (4-6 pages) + Outline (2 pages)	20%
5/8 (Mon)	Final Exam	20%

Note: I am required to assign you at least 10 pages of written work, not including in-class examinations. Your paper assignments will suffice to meet this requirement.

Note 2: On a typical week, you are expected to spend 10-12 hours on class meetings, readings, and other assignments/activities for this course.

## Attendance & Participation (10%)

You will meet this requirement *in part* by attending class regularly. But you will also need to regularly participate in discussions and in-class activities to get full points. While I will also provide alternative ways of earning participation points, *some* kind of participation in class—not mere attendance—is expected. If it's a struggle for you, please visit my office hour or drop me an email, and we will discuss ways to make this easier for you.

Cold calling. In class, I will occasionally “cold-call” you to share your thoughts. You can always feel free to “skip” a particular question or “opt-out” of being cold-called at any point during the semester for a particular class, a unit, or the entire semester.

Mid-semester estimate. In the mid-semester, I will release an *estimate* of your participation grade—this does not count toward your overall grade and only serves to give you a sense of how you've been doing so far. If what you see is not the grade you expected or wanted, come talk to me and we will discuss ways to boost your grade!

## Group Discussion Facilitation (10%)

At least twice a semester, each of you will lead a discussion in your group. Your task includes: (1) extra carefully doing the assigned readings, (2) coming up with 3-5 discussion questions, (3) facilitating/moderating your group discussion on that day, and (4) sending me a short report of how it went. We will discuss the expectations in more detail in class.

Note. This assignment satisfies the collaboration and presentation assignments requirements.

## Reading Reactions (20%)

Prior to each class meeting where there's a new required reading, you will write a brief reaction (1-2 paragraphs) to the reading.

How to submit. Include your reaction in the body of a message, not as an attachment, and send it via Sakai message, with the subject line RR Last Name Class Date (e.g. RR Jang 1/10), by **11:59 pm** the night before the class meeting.

There will be 23 reading reactions in total, which I will grade *pass/fail*. I will drop your lowest 3, and the remaining 20 will count toward your grade. You will pass the reading reaction if it clearly shows that you have carefully done the reading and made a serious attempt to engage with it. You will fail the reading reaction if it does not clearly show this attempt.

## Paper I (*total* 10%)

Before submitting your Paper I, you will submit a 1-page outline for your paper. The outline counts for a tiny portion of your overall grade (1%), so it's a low-stakes opportunity to try out your ideas and make mistakes. The paper itself should be 2-3 pages in length and is worth 9% of your overall grade. I will release a specific guideline for the outline and the paper closer to the due date.

## Paper II (total 20%)

You'll also submit an outline for your Paper II. The goal is again to give you a chance to try out your idea for the paper. This outline should be 2 pages in length and is worth 2% of your overall grade. The paper itself should be 4-6 pages in length and is worth 18% of your overall grade. I will release a specific guideline for the outline and the paper closer to the due date.

## Reflection Journals (10%)

In addition to your two paper assignments, you will submit four reflection journals throughout the semester. Each of these journals are worth 2.5% of your overall grade; together, they are worth 10% of your overall grade. A detailed guideline with a prompt will be released for each of these journals.

## Final Exam (20%)

The exam will ask you to answer both short-answer questions and essay questions. There will be an exam review session on the last day of classes. A detailed study guide will be posted on Sakai.

## 5. Grading and Other Class Policy

Each assignment will be marked out of the number of percentage points that it contributes to your overall grade. This will give you a total score of 100, which I'll convert to your final letter grade:

<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
94	90	87	84	80	77	74	70	67	60	0-59

For papers, I'll also give you a corresponding letter grade. We'll look at grading criteria closer to the due dates, but here's a rough description of what these letter grades signify<sup>1</sup>:

**A:** "*Mastery* of course content at the *highest level* of attainment that can reasonably be expected of students at a given stage of development."

**B:** "*Strong* performance demonstrating a *high level* of attainment for a student at a given stage of development."

**C:** "*A totally acceptable* performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment for a student at a given stage of development."

**D:** "*A marginal* performance in the required exercises demonstrating a minimal passing level of attainment [at a given stage of development]."

**F:** "For whatever reason, an *unacceptable* performance [at a given stage of development]."

Pluses and minuses will be given to papers that fall in between these descriptions.

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<sup>1</sup> These descriptions are from UNC's official "Explanation of Grading System" (<https://registrar.unc.edu/academic-services/grades/explanation-of-grading-system/>).

## Anonymous Grading

I will grade the papers and the final exam *anonymously*. This means that you shouldn't put any identifying information on them, other than your PID number. Make sure to include your PID number *both* in the body of your paper *and* in the file name.

## Page Limit Policy

Paper I and II (but not outlines!) are subject to strict page limits. To standardize length, all submissions should be: 12pt font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. If you have a nonstandard formatting, I will convert it to standard formatting to check for length.

*I will dock a third of a letter grade for each half of a page you are over or under the required page range: 2-3 pages for Paper I; 4–6 pages for Paper II (excluding the reference list).*

## Late Policy and Extension

All paper assignments are due at **11:59 pm** sharp on the dates indicated below.

Extension. You cannot ask for an extension for Reading Reactions, since the whole point of this assignment is to engage with the readings and write out your reactions before class discussions. For any other assignments, you can earn for an extension simply by asking me **at least 24 hours before** the assignment due dates. I will grant your request pretty much for any reason or no reason at all—unless granting it will get in your way of completing required course works or my way of submitting the final grades on time.

Grace period. Your paper assignments (Paper I, Paper II, and Reflective Journals, but not outlines) will have a **24-hour grace period**. This means that you can submit the assignment *within* this 24 hour late-window without late penalty. Your Paper I and Paper II outlines will not have this grace period, though you may still ask for an extension before the due dates.

Late penalty. A late assignment without a pre-approved extension will be subject to a late penalty of a *full letter grade (10 points out of 100 points) for each calendar day (or part of a day) that it is late.* (For instance, a paper due on a Friday that is turned in on Saturday by 11:59pm will be docked a full letter grade.)

## Electronics

Electronics—laptops and tablets, but no phones—are allowed in class for accessing the electronic copies of the readings and note-taking. Please note that I reserve the right to rescind this permission if they become of a distraction. Whether you bring a laptop to class or not, you should bring paper and something to write with in order to complete in-class exercises and activities.

## Plagiarism and the Honor Code

You are expected to abide by UNC's Honor Code, and refrain from any kind of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism. At UNC, plagiarism is defined as “deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in

connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise.” This includes *unintentionally* stealing another person’s work or failing to give credit to someone else’s idea *by accident*.

Just as you are bound by the Honor Code not to plagiarize, I am bound by it to report suspected cases of academic dishonesty of any kind to the Honor Court. If you are ever in any doubt as to whether something constitutes plagiarism, check with me first!

## 6. Resources

### Accessibility Resources & Service

If you need special accommodations for class assignments, please register with the Accessibility Resources & Service Office (<https://ars.unc.edu/>). Once I receive an official request from the ARS Office, I’d be happy to make the arrangements.

### Writing Center

To ensure the anonymous grading, I will not read the paper drafts. But you can always set up an appointment with one of the coaches at the UNC Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/>) to improve your paper at any stages of writing—from brainstorming, to polishing a full draft.

### Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS (<https://caps.unc.edu/>) is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, both for short-term and long-term needs.

### Title IX Resources

Any students impacted by acts of discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, stalking, and related retaliation are encouraged to report the incident and seek resources on campus or in the community.

Please contact the Director of Title IX Compliance (Rebecca Gibson: [rmgibson@unc.edu](mailto:rmgibson@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential: [caps@unc.edu](mailto:caps@unc.edu)), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators (confidential: [gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu)) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at <https://safe.unc.edu/>.

## 7. Reading Schedule (Subject to change)

### Week 1

1/10 Tue – *Course Introduction*

- No reading!

### Unit 1. Kongzi (Confucius)

1/12 Thu – *Introduction to CCP*

- Course Syllabus
- RCCP: *The Analects*, Introduction and Book 1-3
- ICCP: Ch 1 and 2

### Week 2

1/17 Tue

- RCCP: *The Analects*, Book 4-13

1/19 Thu

- No class!

1/20 Fri

- **Reflection Journal 1 due!**

### Week 3

1/24 Tue

- RCCP: *The Analects*, Book 14-20
- ICCP: Ch 3

1/26 Thu

- Re-read *The Analects* 1-20 (with a special focus on Book 1-3)

### Week 4

1/31 Tue

- Hagop Sarkissian, “Minor Tweaks, Major Payoffs: The Problems and Promise of Situationism in Moral Philosophy” (2010)

### Unit 2. Mozi and Yang Zhu

2/2 Thu

- RCCP: *Mozi*, Introduction and Book 11, 16-17, 25-26, 32, and 35
- ICCP: Ch 4

### Week 5

2/7 Tue

- Susan Wolf, “Morality and Partiality” (1992)

2/9 Thu

- RCCP: Yang Zhu, “Robber Zhi”
- ICCP: Ch 5

2/10 Fri

- **Paper I Outline due!**

### Week 6

2/14 Tue – *Wellness Day* (no class)!

2/16 Thu – ***Paper Writing Workshop I***

- No reading!

2/17 Fri

- **Reflection Journal 2 due!**

### Week 7

2/21 Tue

- James Rachels, “Ethical Egoism” (2003)
- Optional: Joel Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism” (2004)

## Unit 3. Mengzi (Mencius)

2/23 Thu

- RCCP: *Mengzi*, Introduction and selections from Book 1-3
- ICCP: Ch 6

2/24 Fri

- **Paper I due!**

### Week 8

2/28 Tue

- RCCP: *Mengzi*, selections from Book 4-7

3/2 Thu

- Roger Ames, “Mencius and a Process Notion of Human Nature” (2002) **OR** Owen Flanagan, Hagop Sarkissian, and David Wong, “Naturalizing Ethics” (2008)



## Unit 4. Laozi

### Week 9

3/7 Tue

- RCCP: *The Daodejing*, Introduction and Book 1
- ICCP: Ch 8

3/9 Thu

- RCCP: *The Daodejing*, Book 2

### Week 10

3/14 Tue – *Spring break* (no class)

3/16 Thu – *Spring break* (no class)

## Unit 5. Zhuangzi

### Week 11

3/21 Tue

- RCCP: *Zhuangzi*, Introduction and Chapter 1-3
- ICCP: Ch 9

3/23 Thu

- RCCP: *Zhuangzi*, Chapter 12-13, 22-23, 26

3/24 Fri

- **Reflective Journal 3 due!**

### Week 12

3/28 Tue

- Edward Slingerland, excerpts from *Trying Not to Try* (2014)

3/30 Thu

- Edward Slingerland, excerpts from *Trying Not to Try* (2014)

3/31 Fri

- **Paper 2 Outline due!**

## Unit 6. Xunzi

### Week 13

4/4 Tue – *Paper Writing Workshop 2*

- No reading!

4/6 Thu

- RCCP: *Xunzi*, Introduction and Ch1-2, 17, 20-21, 23
- ICCP: Ch 10

#### Week 14

4/11 Tue

- RCCP: *Xunzi*, Ch 19; *Mozi*, Ch 25; *Zhuangzi*, Ch. 18

4/13 Thu

- Amy Olberding, “Etiquette: A Confucian Contribution to Moral Philosophy” (2016)

4/14 Fri

- **Paper 2 due!**

### Unit 7. The Value of Comparative Philosophy

This is a *tentatively* suggested theme for our last unit. We’ll discuss other options (e.g., applications of CCP to feminist/biomedical/care ethics, contemporary philosophy in East Asia, etc.)

#### Week 15

4/18 Tue

- TBD

4/20 Thu

- TBD

4/21 Fri

- **Reflection Journal 4 due!**

#### Week 16

4/25 Tue – *Wrapping up*

- TBD

4/27 Thu – *Final Exam Review Session*

- No reading!

5/8 Mon – **Final Exam** (8:00am-11:00am)