

Comparative Philosophy: Chinese and Western

Instructor: Xingming Hu
Affiliation: Philosophy Department
Semester: Spring 2020
Level: Graduate
Credits: 3
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Course Description

The Greek word “philosophy” (*philosophia*) consists of two parts: *philos* (love) and *sophia* (wisdom). It literally means love of wisdom. According to an influential view, wisdom consists in knowing how to live a good life. In this course, we will examine how some Chinese and Western philosophical traditions (such as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Stoicism, hedonism, perfectionism, and so on) approach the question of how to live a good life. We will give special attention to Zhuangzi. Previous background in philosophy or Chinese is not a requirement for enrollment in this course.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students *who actively participate in class and complete all the assignments* will be able to:

1. Identify and more effectively evaluate arguments in philosophical texts
2. Make their own arguments for a philosophical claim
3. Write a better philosophy paper
4. Have a deeper understanding of some theories of wellbeing in Chinese and Western Philosophy

Required Texts:

1. Xingming Hu, *Basic Logic*, available on Hu’s Website
2. *Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters* (Hackett Classics) translated by A. C. Graham
3. All other readings will be distributed in .pdf form via email or Wechat.

Further Reading

- Xingming Hu (ed.). *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy (Chinese-English)*. Nanjing University Press 2018. (胡星铭(编):《中国古典哲学原著选读(汉英对照)》, 南京大学出版社2018)

Course Requirements

- Participation: 15%
- Logic assignments: 15%
 - You may re-do the logic assignments until you get a great grade.
- Response papers: 30%

- You have an opportunity to revise each response paper in light of my feedback.
- Term paper: 40%
 - You may write in English or Chinese.

Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week #1

Course Introduction (Introducing yourself, syllabus, how to read philosophy, etc.)
Exercises for Chapter 1 of Logic due on Sunday

Week #2

Fred Feldman: The Good Life: A Defense of Attitudinal Hedonism (Section 1-2)
Exercises for Chapter 2 of Logic due on Sunday

(Note: We will read the first three papers very closely in class so that you will have a sense of how to read philosophy)

Week #3

Fred Feldman: The Good Life: A Defense of Attitudinal Hedonism (Section 3-6)
Exercises for Chapter 3 of Logic due on Sunday

Week #4

Fred Feldman: The Good Life: A Defense of Attitudinal Hedonism (Section 7-10)
Exercises for Chapter 4 of Logic due on Sunday

Week #5

Thomas Hurka: The Well-Rounded Life (Section I--III)

Week #6

Thomas Hurka: The Well-Rounded Life (Section IV--V)
Response to this paper due on Sunday (you must write according to the guidelines)

Week #7

Amy Olberding: Confucius' Complaints and the *Analects'* Account of the Good Life (Section 1--5)

Week #8

Amy Olberding: Confucius' Complaints and the *Analects'* Account of the Good Life (Section 6--9)

Week #9

Chapter 1, 2 & 3 of the *Zhuangzi*

Week #10

Chapter 4 & 5 of the *Zhuangzi*

Week #11
Chapter 6 & 7 of the *Zhuangzi*

Week #12
David Wong: The meaning of detachment in Daoism, Buddhism, and Stoicism

Week #13
Paul Kjellberg: Skepticism, truth, and the good life: A comparison of Zhuangzi and Sextus Empiricus

Week #14
Chris Fraser: Wandering the Way: A Eudaimonistic Approach to the Zhuāngzǐ.
Response to this paper due on Sunday (you must write according to the guidelines)

Week #15
Jenny Hung: Is Zhuangzi a Wanton? Observation and Transformation of Desires in the Zhuangzi.

Week #16
Term paper presentation
Term paper outline due before class. You must write according to the guidelines.

Week #17
Term paper presentation
Term paper peer review due on Sunday

Week #18
Review
Term paper due on the last day of the semester

Academic Misconduct

You will be strictly held to the Nanjing University code of conduct. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, and unapproved collaboration.