

Political Science 15541
Chinese Political Thought
Fall, 2007

Instructor: Peter Moody, 534 Flanner; MWF 9:00-10:00, TTh 2:00-3:00, and by appointment.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance, completed readings, and participation in class discussion.
2. A set of writing assignments, brief essays on topics within the following categories:
 - A “philological” analysis: By library research, find out and discuss the way in which any particular Chinese classic text of your choice came into being: when was it written? How much of it can be attributed to its supposed author? So forth.
 - A comparative analysis of the ideas of one thinker (or set of thinkers) we study in class, putting the ideas into more general philosophical or political context.
 - A close analysis of the ideas of one of the thinkers included in Chan's book, but not explicitly discussed in class, putting those ideas into the general context of the school of which they are a part and of Chinese thought generally.
 - One analytic review of a book (a secondary work) on Chinese philosophy, thought, religion, or culture. There are some suggestions at the relevant dates below.
 - One final writing assignment, requiring some outside research, in which the ideas of one of the thinkers or approaches we have discussed will be applied to a contemporary political, cultural, or moral issue of your choice.

The required readings are found in a course packet, a general reader, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, by Wing-tsit Chan, and a traditional Chinese novel, Monkey. The books should be available in the bookstore, the course packet at LaFortune.

Tentative schedule

GENERAL BACKGROUND:

September 3. Some basic concepts of value, and a way of looking at life.

Selection from the “Three Character Classic” (will be sent as e-mail attachment).

September 5. The general political background.

Benjamin Schwartz, The World of Thought in Ancient China, Chs. 1 and 2 (Course packet, pp 1-20)

Chan, Ch. 1

September 10. The Yi Jing

To get some of the flavor of the Yi Jing (or I Ching), look over the website: <http://oaks.nvg.org/re5ra19.html> In the next class, for the fun of it, we shall go into more detail about how the book is used.

Schwartz, Ch. 9 (Course packet, pp 21-33)

Chan, Chs. 11, 13

September 12. In-class Yi Jing exercise.

THE HUNDRED SCHOOLS

September 17. Confucius

Chan, Ch. 2

September 19. Mo-tzu

Chan, Ch. 9, 10

In Course Packet, "Hunt in the Central Mountains" (will be sent as e-mail attachment)

September 24 Lao-tzu

Chan, Ch. 7

September 26 Chuang-tzu

Chan, Ch. 8

October 1. Mencius

Chan, Ch. 3

October 3. Hsun-tzu

Chan, Ch. 6

October 8. Han Fei-tzu

Han Fei-tzu, Chs. XI, XII, XL, XLIX (in course packet, pp. 34-59)

Chan, Ch. 12

(Read Chan's introduction to Ch. 12, then the chapters in the course packet, then the rest of Ch. 12 (which has miscellaneous excerpts from Han Fei-tzu's book.)

October 10. Philological exercise

In the library, find three recent works translating one of the thinkers we have been studying, or studying his works. Peruse the introductions, commentaries, and other relevant material, and write an essay discussing the age of the work, the authorship, its general authenticity, the way in which it was compiled and transmitted to the present age.

THE CLASSICAL AGE: BUDDHISM

October 15. Buddhism: General

Chan, Ch. 23

October 17 Book review: read one of the following, and write an analytical critique of the book.

Max Weber, The Religion of China

Samuel B. Griffith, Sun Tzu: The Art of War

H. G. Creel, What Is Taoism?

Norman A. Girardot, Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos

Herbert Fingarette, Confucius: The Secular as Sacred

David Hall, Roger Ames, Thinking Through Confucius

Donald J. Munro, The Concept of Man in Early China
 Chad Hansen, Language and Logic in Ancient China
 Jung Young Lee, Embracing Change: Postmodern Interpretations of the I Ching from a Christian Perspective.
 François Jullien, The Propensity of Things: Toward a History of Efficacy in China
 I. A. Richards, Mencius on the Mind
 Vitaly A. Rubin, Individual and State in Ancient China
 Anne Burrell, Chinese Mythology: An Introduction
 Roger T. Ames, The Art of Rulership: A Study in Ancient Chinese Political Thought.
 Fu Zhengyuan, Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics
 A. C. Graham, Disputers of the Tao

October 29. Zen Buddhism
 Chan, Ch. 26

October 31. Analytical study: write a short essay on one of the following topics.
 What might be some consequences of a view of the world as operating in accord with the principles of yin and yang?

Discuss the relationship in the Analects between humanity (jen) and ritual (li).

Compare the teachings of Mo-tzu with the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill

Discuss Lao-tzu's evaluation of the feminine.

Lao-tzu says: The sage treats the people as straw dogs. What does he mean?

Discuss Lao-tzu's treatment of Confucian ethics (particularly jen and li).

Compare the Taoism of Lao-tzu with that of Chuang-tzu.

Discuss some possible political implications of the theories of human nature of Mencius and Hsun-tzu?

Discuss Chuang-tzu as a "post-modern" thinker.

Compare Mencius, Hsun-tzu, and Chuang-tzu in their conceptions of the natural.

Analyze the approach to language taken by Chuang-tzu and Hsun-tzu.

Compare the political thought of Han Fei-tzu to that of Hobbes and Machiavelli.

OR: Write an analysis of the thought expressed in one of the following Chapters of Chan, putting it in the general context of the school to which it belongs and of Chinese thinking generally:

Chapters: 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25

November 5. Buddhism in Action: Taming the Soul
Monkey, Chs. I-X

November 7. Buddhism in Action: Achieving Salvation
Monkey, Chs. XI-XXX

November 12. Book review: read one of the following, and write an analytical critique of the book.

Interpretation

Huang Liu-chung, A Complete Book Concerning Happiness and Benevolence
 John B. Henderson, The Development and Decline of Chinese Cosmology
 Wu Hung, The Wu-ling Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art
 Wolfgang Bauer, China and the Search for Happiness
 Edward H. Schafer, Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars
 Patricia Buckley Ebrey, Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China
 Stephen Feuchtwang, The Imperial Metaphor: Popular Religion in China
 Peter Bol, "This Culture of Ours": Intellectual Transition in Tang and Song China
 Holmes Welch, Buddhism Under Mao
 Henri de Lubac, Aspects of Buddhism
 Meir Shahar, Crazy Ji: Chinese Religion and Popular Literature
 Alistair Johnston, Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History.
 John W. Chaffee, The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations.
 James T. C. Liu, Reform in Sung China
 Mark Elvin, The Pattern of the Chinese Past
 Harold S. Kuhn, Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign
 Thomas H. C. Lee, Government Education and Examinations in Sung China
 Ray Huang, 1587: A Year of No Significance
 John W. Dardess, Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty
 Chung-ying Cheng, Tai Chen's Inquiry into Goodness
 William Theodore de Bary, Self and Society in Ming Thought
 A. C. Graham, Two Chinese Philosophers: Ch'eng Ming-tao and Ch'eng Yi-ch'uan
 J. Perry Bruce, Chu Hsi and His Masters
 Benjamin A. Elman, From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Later Imperial China
 William Theodore de Bary, The Liberal Tradition in China
 Tu Wei-ming, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth
 Julia Ching, To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-ming
 Julia Ching, Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study
 Alan T. Wood, Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights.
 Thomas A. Metzger, Escape from Predicament: Neo-Confucianism and China's Evolving Political Culture
 Paul S. Ropp, Dissent in Early Modern China: Ju-lin Wai-shih and Ch'ing Social Criticism
 John Meskill, Academies in Ming Times: A Historical Essay
 Richard John Lufrano, Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China.
 Susan Mann, Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century.
 Lin Yu-sheng, The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness
 Benjamin Schwartz, In Search of Wealth and Power
 Chang Hao, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China

Susan Naquin, Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813
 Guy Alito, The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity
 Jerome Grieder, Intellectuals and the State in Modern China: A Narrative History
 William Theodore de Bary, Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of Mind-Heart
 D.W.Y. Kwok, Scientism in Chinese Thought, 1900-1950
 Y.C. Wang, China's Intellectuals and the West
 Perry Link, Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament
 Jiwei Ci. Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution: From Utopianism to Hedonism.

THE CLASSICAL AGE: NEO-CONFUCIANISM

November 14. Chu Hsi: Confucian rationalism

Chan, Ch. 34

November 19. Analytical study: write a short essay on one of the following topics

Compare the metaphor of the journey in Monkey with a western work centered on a journey (for example, The Canterbury Tales; Pilgrim's Progress; Moby Dick; Huckleberry Finn; Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance)

Analyze the role of Pigsy in Monkey.

If the Monkey represents the mind, what would seem to be the Buddhist attitude toward the mind?

Discuss: can Monkey convey a religious message while at the same time treating religion as an object of satire?

What is the role of Kuan-yin in Monkey?

Tripitaka is Hsuan-tsang (Chan, Ch. 23). Compare the view of life in Monkey with Hsuan-tsang's version of Buddhism.

OR: Write an analysis of the thought expressed in one of the following Chapters of Chan, putting it in the general context of the school to which it belongs and of Chinese thinking generally:

Chan, Chs. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33

November 19 Wang Yang-ming: Confucian idealism

Chan, Chs. 4 and 35

November 21. Analytical study: write a short essay on one of the following topics:

Compare the aspects of the thought of Chu Hsi with that of Thomas Aquinas.

In neo-Confucian thinking, if we are by nature good, how can "human desires" be the source of evil?

How does fate or destiny figure in neo-Confucian moral reasoning?

Comment on Wang Yang-ming's thesis: the principle of Heaven is entirely contained within the mind.

If the universe is within the mind, what about trees and flowers?

Compare the thought of Chu Hsi and Wang Yang-ming with that of Confucius.

Compare Chu Hsi and Wang-yang-ming on the function of the mind.

Compare Wang Yang-ming's thought with western idealism (say Berkeley or Kant).

November 26. Wang Fu-chih: Confucian empiricism
Chan, Ch. 36

November 28. Analytical essay: write a short essay on one of the following topics:

What is the relationship of "principle" to individual things.

Comment on Wang Fu-chih's thesis: prior to bows and arrows, there was no Way of archery.

Compare the thought of Wang Fu-chih with that of David Hume.

OR: Write an analysis of the thought expressed in one of the following Chapters of Chan, putting it in the general context of the school to which it belongs and of Chinese thinking generally:

Chan, Chs. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43

December 3 In consultation with the teacher, develop a question relevant to Chinese political thought, and write a short research essay answering that question. General discussion of research essay.

December 5. Discussion of research essays

December 10. Review and conclusions