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 form 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
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-líng Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art*
Wolfgang Bauer, *China and the Search for Happiness*
Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: Tang 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*
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-yíng 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.*
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*
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 Husan-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