

## KÍN321G Confucianism



# 儒



Confucianism (Ch. rujia or ruxue) could be described as a philosophical, ethical, political and even religious doctrine that can be traced back more than two millennia and has had tremendous impact on the social and cultural development in China as well as in East Asia at large, e.g. in Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Its teachings are therefore an invaluable key to these cultures, not least the Chinese, or as the scholar and activist Liang Qichao put it almost a century ago: “Confucianism does not equate with the whole of Chinese culture, but if you take Confucianism away, I am afraid not much else will remain.”

Roughly half of the course will be used to introduce Confucianism’s main notions and thus to read selected parts of its ‘Four Books’, i.e. The Confucian Analects (Lunyu), Mencius (Mengzi), Centrality and Commonality (Zhongyong) and The Great Learning (Daxue), in order to familiarize students with its central theories, ideas and values. This part will also include some discussion of the main critics of Confucianism in ancient times, i.e. Daoism, Mohism and Legalism, and consider the writings of Xunzi. After looking briefly into Han Confucianism we shall move to the Confucian ‘renaissance’ during the Middle Ages, namely the variously called ‘Neo-Confucianism’, ‘Song-Ming Confucianism’ or ‘Li-Learning’ (lixue), which was both a response to and a partial merger with Daoism and Buddhism. Some discussion of the development of Confucianism elsewhere in East Asia will be provided in this part of the course. Finally, we shall briefly address Confucian influences in neighbouring countries and the kind of Confucianism that has been emerging after the mid-19th century, is still very much active and generally seeks to respond to the demands of ‘modernization’ introduced by the Western powers.

The language of instruction is English, and students are expected to participate actively in class and be prepared to undertake a considerable amount of reading on topics, issues and thinking that may be both challenging and unconventional. Students are further offered the option to submit an essay of 4 ECTS additional to the course requirements and thus finish with a total of 10 ECTS.

#### Instructors:

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#### Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course the student should be capable of:

- explicating the main notions and general teachings of Confucianism;
- discussing the contents of the ‘Four Books’ of Confucianism and providing differentiating accounts of them;
- contextualizing the origin of Neo-Confucianism and outlining its particularities;
- expounding Confucianism’s crisis in the 19th century;
- explaining at least a part of the efforts, aims and foci characterizing Confucianism since then.

**Arrangement:**

We convene once a week, on Tuesdays, for three class hours (15:00-17:20). Generally classes are intended for lectures, but three textual analysis group sessions will be held on 26 September, 17 October and 21 November during which the last 80 minutes will be reserved for discussion on primary materials. Discussion, however, is encouraged at all times.

**Assessment:**

Two Moodle quizzes, 6 October and 30 November (30%), three textual analysis group sessions 26 September, 17 October and 21 November (peer evaluation) (30%), and reflective journal (40%). Students are further offered the option to submit an essay of 4 ECTS additional to the course requirements and thus finish with a total of 10 ECTS. Please consult further instructions available in a separate document on the course homepage.

**Language:**

As long as there are students with insufficient Icelandic skills attending the course, the course will be taught in English. However, Icelandic speakers have the option of preparing the reflective journal, and the essay, should they decide to write one, in Icelandic.

**Material:**

The main textbook, **an absolute compulsory reading**, is by Ronnie L. Littlejohn: *Confucianism. An Introduction* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011) (identified as 'RL' in syllabus). However, it must be supplemented by a number of primary readings. The *Confucian Analects* is the most fundamental of all the many texts on which Confucianism is based. There is a plethora of translations of the *Analects* into English, some of which differ considerably. The following version is especially recommended for its philosophical import, but it is not compulsory:

Ames, Roger T. and Rosemont Jr., Henry (trans.). *The Analects of Confucius. A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine, 1998.

The following translations by Robert Eno of the Four Books (*Analects*, *Mencius*, *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*) are available online free of charge and here made available electronically on the course homepage on Moodle:

Eno, Robert (trans.). *The Analects of Confucius*. An Online Teaching Translation. 2015. [http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects\\_of\\_Confucius\\_\(Eno-2015\).pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Analects_of_Confucius_(Eno-2015).pdf)

Eno, Robert (trans.). *Mencius*. An Online Teaching Translation. 2016. <http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Mengzi.pdf>

Eno, Robert (trans.). *The Great Learning and The Doctrine of the Mean*. An Online Teaching Translation. 2016. <http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Daxue-Zhongyong.pdf>

Using other translations is also acceptable. Comparing two or several translations can be helpful to get a sense of the limited translatability of the ancient texts. The outstanding website [www.ctext.org](http://www.ctext.org) provides original texts and some translations of the Chinese classics. A good selection of translated texts can be found in Wing-tsit Chan's *Sourcebook*.

Consulting the following readings is highly recommended (all available electronically on Moodle homepage):

- Angle, Steven C. "Neither Ethics nor Law: Ritual Propriety as Confucian Civility." In Angle: *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy. Toward Progressive Confucianism*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012.
- Chan, Wing-tsit. *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Cheng, Chung-ying. "Recent Trends in Chinese Philosophy in China and the West." In *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, eds. Chung-ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. and Bryan W. Van Norden (eds.). *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. New York/London: Seven Bridges Press, 2001.
- Kim, Jung-Yeup. "Introducing the Notion Qi, the Philosopher Zhang Zai, and the Text *Zhengmeng (Rectifying the Ignorant)*. In Kim: *Zhang Zai's Philosophy of Qi. A Practical Understanding*. Lanham et al.: Lexington, 2015.
- Kim, Jung-Yeup. "Zhang Zai and Sö Kyöngdök's Philosophy of Ki". In Kim: *Zhang Zai's Philosophy of Qi. A Practical Understanding*. Lanham et al.: Lexington, 2015.
- Lai, Karyn. "Chinese Philosophy". In Lai: *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Li, Chenyang. "Fang Dongmei: Philosophy of Life, Creativity, and Inclusiveness." In *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, eds. Chung-ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Liu, Shu-hsien. "The Characteristics and Contemporary Significance of Sung-Ming Neo-Confucian Philosophy." In Liu: *Understanding Confucian Philosophy. Classical and Sung-Ming*. Westport/London: Praeger, 1998.
- Rosemont Jr., Henry and Roger T. Ames. *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence. A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009.
- Rosemont Jr., Henry. "Chinese socio-political ideals". In *A Companion to World Philosophies*, eds. Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
- Shun, Kwong-loi. "Zhu Xi's Moral Psychology". In *Dao Companion to Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, ed. John Makeham. Dordrecht et al.: Springer, 2010.
- Tang, Refeng. "Mou Zongsan on Intellectual Intuition." In *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, eds. Chung-ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Taylor, Rodney L. *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2005.
- Taylor, Rodney L. "The Religious Character of the Confucian Tradition." *Philosophy East and West* 48;1 (1998): 80-107.
- Tien, David W. "Metaphysics and the Basis of Morality in the Philosophy of Wang Yangming." In *Dao Companion to Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, ed. John Makeham. Dordrecht et al.: Springer, 2010.
- Tu Weiming. "Chinese philosophy: a synoptic view". In *A Companion to World Philosophies*, eds. Eliot Deutsch og Ron Bontekoe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999.
- Yao, Xinzhong. "Ritual and Religious Practice". In Yao: *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Yu, Jiyuan. "Xiong Shili's Metaphysics of Virtue". In *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, eds. Chung-ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin. Malden/Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
- Zhang, Yunyi. "Philosophy's predicament and Hegel's ghost: Reflections on the view that there is 'no philosophy in China'". *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 2;2 (2007): 230-246.

## Syllabus (subject to modification if necessary)

Week 1 (GS) 29 Aug.	Course introduction; intro to Chinese worldview and cosmology. Readings: RL, xi-xxiv; Lai; Tu Weiming; Zhang.
Week 2 5 Sep.	No class
Week 3 (GS) 12 Sep.	Overview of the origin and development of Confucianism. Reflections on approaches. Readings: RL, ch. 1, 1-16; <i>Analects</i> (start reading); Taylor (religious character); Yao.
Week 4 (GS) 19 Sep.	Basic writings, notions and value-orientations. Challenges from other schools of thought. Readings: RL, ch. 2, 17-38; <i>Analects</i> (continue); Rosemont (socio-political ideals);
Week 5 (GS) 26 Sep.	Basic writings, notions and value-orientations. Challenges from other schools of thought (continued). <b>Textual analysis session 1.</b> Readings: <i>Analects</i> (continue); Rosemont and Ames ( <i>Xiaojing</i> ).
Week 6 (GS) 3 Oct.	Confucius's followers: Mencius and the authors of <i>Daxue</i> and <i>Zhongyong</i> . <b>Moodle quiz 1 (6 Oct.).</b> Readings: RL, ch. 3, 39-60; <i>Mencius</i> ; <i>The Great Learning</i> and <i>The Doctrine of the Mean</i> .
Week 7 GS) 10 Oct.	Confucius's followers: Mencius and the authors of <i>Daxue</i> and <i>Zhongyong</i> (continued). Moving towards Han dynasty. Readings: RL, ch. 4, 61-79; <i>Mencius</i> ; <i>The Great Learning</i> and <i>The Doctrine of the Mean</i> (continue); Xunzi (in Ivanhoe and Van Norden).
Week 8 (GS) 17 Oct.	Han dynasty Confucianism. <b>Textual analysis session 2.</b> Readings: RL, ch. 4.
Week 9 (PJD) 24 Oct.	Daoist influence on Confucianism. Xuanxue Confucianism. Readings: RL, ch. 5, 81-99.
Week 10 (PJD) 31 Oct.	The Buddhist challenge. Readings: RL, ch. 6, 101-113.
Week 11 (GS) 7 Nov.	Neo-Confucianism: the early thinkers. Readings: RL, ch. 7, 115-132; Liu; Kim (Qi and Zhang Zai).
Week 12 14 Nov.	No class.
Week 13 (GS) 21 Nov.	Neo-Confucianism: Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. <b>Textual analysis session 3.</b> Readings: RL, ch. 8; 133-153; Shun; Tien.

Week 14 (GS)

24 or 28 Nov.

Exporting Confucianism abroad and contemporary trends in China. **Moodle quiz 2 (30 Nov.)**.

Readings: RL, chs. 9 and 10, 155-188; Kim (Zhang Zai and Sō Kyōngdōk); Cheng; Li; Tang; Yu; Angle.