

## **Pre-Qin Confucianism**

M 10:00-12:00, Free University Berlin, January 11 to February 15 (6 meetings total), Seminar room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Habelschwerdter Allee 30

Bai, Tongdong ([baitongdong@gmail.com](mailto:baitongdong@gmail.com)) Office hours: by appointment

### **Suggested texts:**

- 1) Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1969. (SB)
- 2) Lau, D. C. (tr.) (2002) *Confucius: The Analects* (paperback bilingual edition). Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press. (A)
- 3) Lau, D. C. (tr.) (2003), *Mencius* (revised and bilingual edition). Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press. (M)

**Note:** be aware of the different romanizations through pinyin and Wade-Giles.

### **Course Description:**

This course will cover “classical” (pre-Qin) Confucianism. It is a good beginning to understand Chinese philosophy because pre-Qin Chinese philosophy is the root of Chinese philosophy, in which Chinese philosophers address the human problems directly, instead of addressing them indirectly through jargons of previous philosophers’. Thus, to understand the pre-Qin Chinese philosophy offers us immediacy and also a foundation to understand later developments. We will try to understand what problems the pre-Qin Confucians (an important school of philosophers among the “hundred schools” of pre-Qin thought) try to answer, what their answers are, whether the answers are coherent within one text and how these answers are related to each other, etc. Hopefully, we will discover that these philosophical texts, as philosophical texts, do address philosophical problems, that is, problems that transcend a particular people, a particular time, and a particular locale. Then, by comparing these philosophers’ answers to those by other philosophers (Chinese or non-Chinese), we can see the merits and problems of these answers, and this understanding will in turn help us to understand better the related philosophical problems, the problems that are still relevant to us today.

### **Grading (this won’t apply to this class, and I leave it here as an example of how I usually grade this kind of classes):**

1) Essays: Each essay (4 in total) should be no shorter than 3 pages and no longer than 5 pages; it should be double-spaced, printed, preferably double-sided, and stapled; and the font size should be no bigger than 12. Please submit a hardcopy in class (other than the last essay) and an electronic copy (Word version) to me. A late essay will only be accepted if the student asks for an extension and an approval is given by me before the deadline. You have the complete freedom to choose your own topic as long as it is covered in class and within the designated range of text (to be given before each assignment). In each essay, you will be expected to explain one *specific* point (e.g., why does Confucius claim “the wise enjoy water; the humane enjoy mountains” (6.21 of Analects)) that the philosopher(s) in question makes, try to point out possible difficulties and misunderstandings associated with this point, and try to make clarifications and defend this point as best as you can. The use of examples, primary text(s), and texts from relevant literature to challenge or support the point in question is encouraged. Grades will depend upon how clearly you explain and how carefully and deeply you examine this point. In other words, grades will depend on how much effort you have put into reading and thinking.

2) Presentations: Students will be divided into 2- or 3-person groups. At the beginning of each class, one group is asked to recapitulate the discussion of the previous class, and every student in this group is required to come up with one question about or one comment on anything that is discussed in the previous meeting. Each student also needs to be prepared to answer questions from the students and/or me. The whole presentation should not exceed 15 minutes.

3) Your participation in class discussions will affect your grades, although not in an explicitly quantitative way.

4) Any evidence of plagiarism will be handled according to university policy.

5) The final grade: A number grade will be given to each essay or presentation. Each essay is worth 23% of the final number grade, and the presentation is worth 8% of it. Then, the weighted average grade will be converted to a letter grade. A significant number of absences may affect your final grade. Moreover, Fudan has a policy that only allows up to 30% of students in one class to get an A-range grade (undergraduate and graduate students in this class will be considered separately), and if more than 30% of students get an A-range grade after the calculations, those whose grades are the lowest in this group will get a B+ instead. Here is the conversion table between number grades and letter grades:

Letter Grade	A	A-	B <sup>+</sup>	B	B-	C <sup>+</sup>	C	C-	D	F
Number Grade	90-100	85-89	82-84	78-81	75-77	71-74	66-70	62-65	60-61	59 and below

### Schedule:

**Note on the readings:** 1) The passage numbers in the form of “#. #” refer to passages from the *Analects*. If you don’t use Lau’s translation, most translations in the past three decades will have the same numbering system for the *Analects*. 2) The passage numbers in the form “#A.#” or “#B.#” refer to passages in the *Mencius*. If you don’t use Lau’s translation, most translations in the past three decades will have the same numbering system for the *Mencius*.

**Meetings 1 (01/11):** Introduction. Bai Tongdong’s paper, “‘Classical’ Chinese Thought as a Modern Political Philosophy”

**Meetings 2 (01/18):** Compassion as the new social glue. Bai Tongdong’s paper, “Nietzsche, Mencius, and the Nature of Compassion as a Modern Virtue”; and the following selected readings: 9.6, 17.21, 3.3, 18.6, 2A6, 6.30, 1B5, 1.2, “The Western Inscription” (from Supplement Materials), a passage from *Records of Instruction* (from Supplement Materials), 13.18, 7A35.

**Meeting 3 (01/25):** Compassion-based International Order. Bai Tongdong’s papers, “A Confucian New *Tianxia* Model” and “Humane Responsibility Overrides Sovereignty—On Mencius’s Just War Theory”; and the following selected readings: 16.1, 13.16, 1A5, 1A7, 1B13-15, 1B10, 3B5;

**Meeting 4 (02/01):** Compassion- and Duty-based Confucian Animal Rights. Bai Tongdong’s paper, “The Price of Serving Meat”; and the following selected readings: 7.27, 1A7, 1A4.

**Meeting 5 and 6 (02/08 and 02/15):** A Confucian Hybrid Regime. Bai Tongdong’s paper, “A Confucian Version of Hybrid Regime”; and the following selected readings: 15.39, 6B2, a passage from the *Xunzi* (from Supplement Materials), 17.2; 12.9, 5A5, 7B14, 1B7, 3A4, 1A7, 3A3, 12.11, 1B6, 1B8; 17.2, 17.3, 6.21, 15.8, 8.9, DOM12 (from Supplement Materials), 3A4.