

Paul Kjellberg  
Hartley House  
[pkjellberg@whittier.edu](mailto:pkjellberg@whittier.edu)  
Ext. 4280

Philosophy 300  
Whittier College, Ball LLC  
TTh 1:30-2:50, Fall 2014

## Chinese Philosophy

**Course description:** The Chinese philosophers we will be studying include the Confucians (Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi), the Daoists (or “Taoists,” Laozi and Zhuangzi), and a few other less famous but equally interesting thinkers (Mozi and Hanfeizi). This is the classical period of Chinese philosophy, also known as the Warring States, between the fall of the Western Zhou Dynasty in 771 BCE and the unification in 221 BCE by the Qin Dynasty (where we get our word “China”), before the arrival from India of Buddhism, which you can study in Philosophy 302.

No single philosopher, in my opinion, had The Answer; if they did, we’d all know it by now. As Zhuangzi says, “If right were really right, it would be so different from not-right that there would be no room for argument” (*Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, p. 224). It seems particularly unlikely that people from so long ago and far away would know the answers to our questions here and now. What makes this group of thinkers special, again in my opinion, is that together they raise questions and offer a set of perspectives that we can still use, like a complete palette of colors for an artist or kit of tools for a carpenter. Confucius described teaching as “reheating the past to feed the present” (Analects 2.11, *Readings* 6). My goal in this course is to help you enjoy and benefit from these philosophers as much as I have.

**Office hours:** My office hours are in Hartley House on Thursdays before class and by appointment.

**Books:** There is one book for the class, available in the bookstore. Other short readings will be available online. There are other good translations available and, if you particularly love, hate, or are confused by any individual thinker, I encourage you to compare them. But this version has the advantage of collecting them all in a single volume and it is useful for us to be on the same page. You will need to bring the book for in class work every meeting. Buying it is not much more expensive than renting it, especially compared to the amount of money you are spending to take this course, and it will help you to be able to mark it up with notes and underlining.

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, Second Edition, Ivanhoe and Van Norden, ed.s (Hackett, 2005).

**Grading:** In my experience, people learn better when they are thinking and working than when they are sitting passively, so this class is designed as a series of projects rather than lectures. As Xunzi says, “Without somber intention, no brilliant understanding can there be. Without determined effort, no glorious achievements will one see” (*Readings*, 258). This is particularly true with grading: you learn what is good work by doing it and thinking about it rather than waiting for someone else to tell you. So instead of two or three big projects handed in for grades, you have numerous small assignments and then choose which ones you think show your best work to develop and hand in for a bigger grade.

You will get points for attendance, on-line and in-class assignments, group work, and tests. Work can be turned in late (to keep you from giving up if you fall behind) but only for half credit (to keep you from falling behind in the first place). You more or less set your own grade by the amount of work you put in. My goal as much as possible is to step back and let you be in charge. As Laozi says, “The best teacher is but a shadowy presence to students . . . When their task is done and work complete, they say, ‘It happened naturally!’” (Readings 170-171).

**Goals:**

**Resources and Policies:**

Because of the mount of group work we do, it is important for everyone to be on time every day; otherwise the whole class suffers. Two latenesses count as an absence. You get as many free absences as I take. If you find yourself needing help in this course, there is a philosophy tutor available at [CAAS](#). Students desiring accommodations on the basis of physical, learning, or psychological disability for this class are to contact [Disability Services](#). Regarding academic honesty and plagiarism, this course abides by the definitions and policies regarding [academic honesty and plagiarism](#) set on the college website.

**Preliminary Schedule:** The final schedule is the one in the calendar section of the course moodle. This one is only tentative but any changes will only be minor.

	<p>Sept. 4: Introduction to Confucius 禮 lǐ, “rites” or “rituals” = traditions = education</p> <p>孔子 Kǒngzǐ, “Master Kong,” also known as 孔夫子 Kǒngfūzǐ, “Great Master Kong,” where we get the name “Confucius,” was China's 至聖先師 <i>zhìshèng xiānshī</i>, “great sage and first teacher.” What did he teach? 禮 lǐ “ritual” or “tradition,” the collection of what was known at the time. Rather than teaching a specific thing, we can think of him as the patron saint of study in general. Thus I would translate 禮 lǐ as “education.” What was special about Confucius, however, was his understanding of <i>the point of education</i>.</p> <p>Though you may not always see it in translation, we read Confucius through commentators, people over the years explaining what Confucius meant in</p>
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	<p>their times. Here are some examples: <a href="#">1</a>, <a href="#">2</a>, <a href="#">3</a>, and <a href="#">4</a>. The big characters are the original text. The small characters are the commenters explanations of what it means. Sometimes they are explaining the meaning of words, sometimes the old-fashioned grammar, sometimes the big-picture ideas. Usually there are many commentators, sometimes centuries apart, discussing what the Master meant. We will do the same in this class, working together in groups to bring the readings to life today.</p>
<p>Sept.9: Confucius  仁 rén, “benevolence” = kindness  Before class please</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Confucius, pages 1–44 in <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use my <a href="#">Confucius RNQ</a> if they are helpful.</li> <li>○ As you read, see if you can figure out <i>the point</i> of Confucian education. What is it all <i>for</i>?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Post to <a href="#">Our Analects</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pick one Analect to focus on. It can be one you love, or hate, that makes you laugh, or completely confuses you. (You can change later but sometimes the ones that make the least sense at first end up being the most informative.)</li> <li>○ Add your Analect as a new entry to <a href="#">Our Analects</a>. Write as much as you can but don't expect to finish it now. We are going to keep working on it over the next two weeks.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Sept. 11: Confucius  孝 xiào, “filial piety” = family values  德 dé, “virtue” = power, political force  Before class please</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the Preface, Comparative Romanization Table, Map, and Introduction (pp. vii–xviii) and the sections on Important Figures, Periods, Texts, and Terms (pp. 379-394); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You don't have to memorize this information but you should know the general outline and will need to know where to find the details for the midterm.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Read the entry on 仁 rén, “kindness,” in the <a href="#">Confucius glossary</a>.</li> <li>3. Review the whole <i>Analects</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find at least two separate passages that you think are somehow connected to your Analect.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Revise your <a href="#">Our Analects</a> entry</li> </ol>

<p>3. Read the entry on 禮 lǐ “ritual/tradition/ education,” in the <a href="#">Confucius glossary</a>.</p> <p>4. Since as much as possible of the instructions and activities are online, bring your laptop if you have one.</p> <p>5. Finally, please take a few minutes to fill out these two surveys. You will not be graded on them but I will!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Introductory survey</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Reading comprehension quiz</a></li> </ul> <p>In class,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will discuss the connection between 禮 lǐ “ritual/tradition/ education and 仁 rén, “benevolence/kindness.”</li> <li>• In your Confucian groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Meet to get to know each other.</li> <li>○ Go around the circle reading your Analects aloud and making sense of them in terms of 仁 and 禮. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hint: Other people have said similar things, but why did <i>Confucius</i> say them? How do they fit into the project he set out for himself of educating for kindness?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ As you revise your commentary, use links to connect your Analect to other people's and to words in the glossary.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>1.12 Youzi said, “In using tradition,harmony</i></p>	<p>with connections to the historical context, 仁 rén, and your additional passages.</p> <p>In class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I will discuss 孝 xiào, “filial piety” (= family values) and 德 dé, “virtue” (= power or leadership)</li> <li>2. Confucian groups will discuss what light these concepts shed on your Analects</li> <li>3. We will discuss the Bibliography Assignment for Tuesday.</li> </ol> <p>8.8 <i>The Master said, “I am excited by literature, take my stand in tradition, and find completion in <a href="#">music</a>.”</i></p>
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<p><i>is the goal. This is what makes the <a href="#">Way</a> of the former kings so beautiful. If you stick rigidly to tradition in all matters, great and small, there will remain many things you cannot do. On the other hand, trying to achieve harmony without using tradition will not work either."</i></p>	
<p>Sept. 16: Confucius 君子 jūnzi, "graduate" Bibliography entry</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the entries of 孝 xiào and 德 dé in the <a href="#">Confucius glossary</a>.</li> <li>• Pick one of the Chapters and Articles on Confucius for your Bibliography entry. (Hint: The shortest one will seem long if it is not interesting to you and an interesting long will one will seem short. So choose wisely!)</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read it.</li> <li>2. Enter it into the <a href="#">Confucius Bibliography</a></li> </ol> <p>In class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I will introduce the concept of the 君子 jūnzi, gentleman (= graduate or alum).</li> <li>2. We will take turns presenting your Bibliography entries. People who do not go today will go first on Thursday. People who go both times will get extra credit.</li> </ol> <p>17.19 The Master sighed, "Would that I did not have to speak!" Zigong said, "If the Master did not speak, then how would we little ones receive guidance from you?" The Master replied, "What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the</p>	<p>Sept. 18: Confucius</p> <p>Before class please:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the 君子 jūnzi entry in the <a href="#">Confucius Bibliography</a>.</li> <li>2. Finish revising your Anelects to present in class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ People who didn't go Tuesday go first today.</li> <li>○ Make it as interesting as possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>17.19 The Master sighed, "Would that I did not have to speak!" Zigong said, "If the Master did not speak, then how would we little ones receive guidance from you?" The Master replied, "What does Heaven ever say? Yet the four seasons are put in motion by it, and the myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does ever Heaven say?"</p>

<p>myriad creatures receive their life from it. What does ever Heaven say?</p>	
<p>Sept. 23: Mozi 59-111 Mozi pp 59-90 兼愛 jiān ài, “Impartial caring” or “Universal love” Before class, please:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Mozi, pages 59-111 in <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i></li> <li>• Use my <a href="#">Mozi RNQ</a> if they are helpful.</li> </ul> <p>In class we will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Mozi</li> <li>• Compare and contrast him to Confucius</li> <li>• Discus the assignment for Thursday</li> </ul>	<p>Sept. 25: Mozi Key passage due Mozi pp 90-111 利害 lì hài, “benefits and harms” or “rewards and punishment.” Before class please,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter the <a href="#">Key Mozi Passage</a> which you think shows most convincingly why he is either right or wrong.</li> </ul> <p>In class you will present your passages and we will decide as a class whether we agree with Mozi or not.</p>
<p>Sept. 30: Laozi 161-203 道 dào, <a href="#">way</a> 無為 wú wèi, "non-action" or "Don't do anything!" 自然 zì rán, "natural," or "self-so." Before class please</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Laozi's <i>Daodejing</i> (pp. 161-203) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Note that we are skipping ahead a chapter!</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Start looking for a chapter that you want to transvert and discuss for <a href="#">Our</a></li> </ol>	<p>Oct. 2: Laozi Commentary 無 wú, "non-being," "emptiness" 樸 pǔ, "uncarved block," "raw material" Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post your chapter to <a href="#">Our Daodejing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Pick a Laozi reading</a> for next Tuesday.</li> </ul> <p>In class we will discuss</p> <p>無 wú, "non-being," "emptiness" 樸 pǔ, "uncarved block," "raw material"</p>

<p><a href="#">Daodejing</a> on Thursday.</p> <p>In class we will discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 道 <i>dào</i>, way</li> <li>• 無為 <i>wú wéi</i>, "non-action" or "Don't do anything!"</li> <li>• 自然 <i>zì rán</i>, "natural," or "self-so."</li> <li>• Thursday's assignment.</li> </ul>	
<p>Oct. 7: Laozi Bibliography</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post to the <a href="#">Laozi Bibliography</a></li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People who read the same article will meet for fifteen minutes to discuss and prepare to . . .</li> <li>2. Split into groups of people who read different articles and</li> <li>3. Take turns presenting them.</li> </ol>	<p>Oct. 9: Commentary revision</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise and finalize your <a href="#">Our Daodejing</a> in light of what you (hopefully) have learned. Make them as interesting and applicable to today as possible. Feel free to transvert creatively.</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will present our chapters. People who didn't go last week should be ready to go first.</li> </ul>
<p>Oct. 14: Laozi commentaries / Study day</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start filling out the <a href="#">Midterm study sheet</a></li> </ul> <p>In class, you'll work in groups to complete the chart and think of new rows for comparison.</p>	<p>Oct. 16: Midterm</p> <p>Review everything we have read so far, including the informational material at the beginning and end of the book. You will need to know what the philosophers said, but more importantly you will need to have thought about how they relate to each other (their similarities and differences). Even more importantly than that, you will need to be able to</p>

	<p><i>explain</i> it, since I can only give you credit for what is on the page, not what is in your head. So practice putting your thoughts into words.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Midterm exam</a> will be available online during class time. You can take it anywhere you want but I will be in the classroom in case you have questions.</p>
<p>Oct. 21: Doctrine of the Mean</p> <p>Before class, please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read my <a href="#">Key Wang Bi passage</a>.</li> <li>• Read “<a href="#">The Doctrine of the Mean</a>” handout, with special attention to chapter 1 (p, 98, from "What Heaven . . ." to " . . . Will flourish"). Be patient; it takes a couple of minutes to come up.</li> <li>• Post a <a href="#">Key DoM passage</a>.</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups will transvert Chapter 1. Work on making it as meaningful and important as possible to us now.</li> </ul>	<p>Oct. 23: Great Learning</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read <a href="#">The Great Learning</a>, with special attention to The Text (pp. 86-87, from "The Way of learning . . ." to " . . . of great importance"). Be patient; it takes a couple of minutes to come up.</li> <li>• Post to <a href="#">Key GL Passage</a>.</li> <li>• Tag <a href="#">the Great Learning</a> wiki</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As pp. 84-85 explain, the first great neo-Confucianist Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi, 1130-1200) who "discovered" <a href="#">the Great Learning</a> (i.e. plucked it out of obscurity and made it famous) said that the steps had gotten out of order, so he rearranged them to put the investigation of things first. This is the order in which we read them now. The second great neo-Confucianist, Wang Yangming (1472-1539) disagreed, saying that the original order, with sincerity of the will first, was correct. In groups you will decide what difference it makes and who you think is right.</li> </ul>

	(Hint: Pay particular attention to chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 89-90).
<p>Oct. 28: Mengzi 115-157 Mencius pp 115-137 人性善 <i>rén xíng shān</i>, “human nature is good”</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Mencius, pp. 115-157</li> <li>• As you read, look for passages that explain how Mengzi updates Confucius to respond to Mohism and Daoism</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet in groups</li> <li>• Compare Mengzi to the philosophers that went before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Where does he agree with their ideas? Where does he disagree? Where is he saying something new?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Here's a good one not included in your translation:</p> <p>7B26 Those fleeing from Mo inevitably turn to Yang [<i>For our purposes, you can think of Yang as being like Laozi.</i>], and those fleeing from Yang inevitably turn to us, the scholars. As they turn, they should simply be received. Today those who dispute with the followers of Mo and Yang do so as if they were pursuing a stray pig. As soon as they have gotten it into the sty they proceed to tie its legs.</p>	<p>Oct. 30 Mengzi: Key passage</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-read Mencius and select a passage you think explains what he means when he says that people are good by nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ "Good" in what <a href="#">way</a>?</li> <li>◦ What does "by nature" mean?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enter your selection into <a href="#">Key Mencius Passages</a> or two for extra credit.</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups, discuss the passages that you think reveal what Mencius means that people are good by nature</li> <li>• Individually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ What facts about life or about the world do you think show that Mencius is right or wrong?</li> <li>◦ What exactly do those facts prove?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• As a class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Are people good by nature?</li> <li>◦ What can we do with this fact? Mencius turned his theory into a teaching technique, leading people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>toward goodness like water downhill, as he tries to with King Xuan in 1A7. I think that people are by nature smart but that school too often, and lecture in particular, "tugs at the sprouts" like the Farmer of Song (2A2), which is why I leave you guys alone so much to think for yourselves. Am I right about that? What is human nature like? And how can we harness it to help people learn?</p>
<p>Nov. 4: Zhuangzi 207-250</p> <p>何以知 <i>hé yǐ zhī</i>, "How should I know?"</p> <p>忘言 <i>wàng yán</i>, "Forget language"</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Zhuangzi, pp. 207-250</li> <li>• As you read, look for passages that seem to respond to philosophers that came before, particularly Mengzi. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Although Zhuangzi lived a little after Mencius, it is interesting that he does not mention him by name. Some scholars say that he was just being polite. But Zhuangzi doesn't seem that interested in being polite and he mentions plenty of other people by name. This leads other scholars to conclude that, though Mencius came before him, Zhuangzi was not familiar with his ideas. But I think there is one dead</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Nov. 6: Zhuangzi Key passage due</p> <p>Zhuangzi seems to be trying to confuse us. Re-read him and find the most confusing passage you can and post it to <a href="#">Key Zhuangzi Passages</a>.</p> <p>In class we will see if we can figure out why he does this.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">give-a-away that, whether or not Zhuangzi read the same text of Mencius we have, he certainly had Mencian ideas in his sights. See if you can find it!</p> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet in groups</li> <li>• Compare Zhuangzi to the philosophers that went before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Where does he agree with their ideas? Where does he disagree? Where is he saying something new?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>I may be a little late. If so, break into groups on your own. Pick the weirdest Zhuangzi stories you can find and try to answer the question, "Why is he telling this story?" It's not too hard with the sort of weird ones. Use them as springboards into the <i>really</i> weird ones. Each group try to identify what you think is the weirdest story of all, by which I mean the one for which you can find no possible reason why he is telling it. Then we'll get back together as a class and other groups will see if they can find a reason. Try to foil them!</p>	
<p>Nov. 11: Xunzi 255-307 人性惡 <i>rén xíng è</i>, "human nature is bad"</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Xunzi, pp. 255-307</li> <li>• As you read, look for passages that respond to philosophers that came before, particularly Mencius and Zhuangzi.</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet in groups</li> </ul>	<p>Nov. 13: Xunzi Key passage due</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-read Xunzi and select a passage you think explains what he means when he says that people are bad by nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ "Good" in what <a href="#">way</a>?</li> <li>◦ What does "by nature" mean?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enter your selection into <a href="#">Key</a></li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare Xunzi to the philosophers that went before <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Where does he agree with their ideas? Where does he disagree? Where is he saying something new?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We will discuss his famous slogan, 人性惡 <i>rén xíng è</i>, “human nature is bad.”</li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">Xunzi Passages</a> or two for extra credit.</p> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups, discuss the passages that you think reveal what Xunzi means that people are bad by nature</li> <li>• As a class we will discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ how his theory of the badness of human nature is a response to Mencius and Zhuangzi</li> <li>◦ whether or not we think it is true.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Nov. 18: Hanfeizi 311-359</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Xunzi, pp. 311-359</li> <li>• Hanfeizi was Xunzi's student but obviously he was not a Confucian. As you read, try to sort out the relationship between them.</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups will discuss Hanfeizi's relationship with Xunzi.</li> </ul>	<p>Nov. 20: Hanfeizi Key passage due</p> <p>Han Feizi was Xunzi's student but he succeeded in doing what no Confucian had done--indeed, what no other Chinese philosopher had done! His ideas were adopted by the state of Qin and led it to victory over all of China. So the question for today is: How did Han Feizi do it?</p> <p>Before class please</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read Hanfeizi (pp. 335-59)</li> <li>• select and enter into <a href="#">Key Hanfeizi passages</a> the quotation that you think unlocks the key to Hanfeizi's success.</li> </ul> <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups will discuss the keys to Hanfeizi's success</li> <li>• The class will discuss whether</li> </ul>

	Hanfeizi is right.
<p>Nov. 25: Study day</p> <p>To prepare for the Final Test next week, finish filling in the <a href="#">Final test study chart</a> (just like the midterm study chart but bigger, and final). To get you started I left terms from the first half of the course in the left-hand column.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the last four philosophers on the right have to say about these old topics?</li> <li>• What new topics do you need to add below to fill the chart out. (Hint: There is at least one important term that was central to the discussion in the second half of the course but was absent from the first half.)</li> <li>• Try to identify and articulate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the distinguishing features that set each thinker apart,</li> <li>○ what they borrowed from thinkers that came before,</li> <li>○ what they changed, and</li> <li>○ what they rejected</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Wherever possible, find a quotation illustrating what you are talking about.</li> </ul>	<p>Nov. 27: THANKSGIVING</p>
<p>Dec. 2: Final test</p> <p>Online test, just like the midterm but with different questions. I give tests partly to see what you know but more to make you study. In this case, the purpose of this test is to make you stop and review the big picture, all the parts and how they fit together, as preparation for your <a href="#">final paper</a></p>	<p>Dec. 4: Commentary/Key passage round-up. Explain to employer what you learned from Chinese Philosophy</p> <p>Before class, please</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out two quick assessment surveys. These are for me to measure the general progress in your philosophical abilities and attitudes as a result of this</li> </ol>

	<p>particular course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <a href="#">Department Assessment</a></li><li>○ <a href="#">Reading Comprehension Concluding quiz</a></li></ul> <p>2. Prepare for the following in-class exercise:</p> <p>Imagine you're at a job interview. The man looks at your resume, takes his cigar out of his mouth, and says, "I see you took a class in Chinese philosophy. That must have been a waste of time! Tell me one thing you learned in that class that would be valuable to you in this job. You have five minutes."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decide what job you are applying for.</li><li>• Prepare one quotation from one of the philosophers to talk about. Feel free to start with one of your assignments from earlier in the semester.</li><li>• You don't have to agree with them; you may have learned something important from the fact that they are wrong.</li><li>• Each person gets five minutes, going in a completely random order. So be ready!</li></ul>
<p>Exam: Wed. 3:30-5:30 Final compare and contrast argumentative paper due</p> <p>Find a point of disagreement between any of the two philosophers. Using quotations, explain what each thought, who you think is right and why, and what difference it makes. Feel free to build off of things you wrote earlier in the semester.</p> <p>1000-2000 words, due at 3:30 pm.</p>	

Here's how I would plan to break it down:

- Spend 300-500 words explaining each philosopher. Use the key passage format: a quotation from the text, a transversion into plain English, and a discussion.
- Spend 300-500 words explaining who you think is right and why. This is where you have to give arguments and explain your own thinking. It's not enough just to agree with one of the philosophers; you have to explain WHY. Your reasons for agreeing are in your head. Just make sure they get down on the paper.
- Spend a couple hundred words explaining what difference this makes, why it matters. You want to make sure your readers walk away feeling that they just learned something important.
- For more help, consult [General advice on writing papers](#) and [Cicero's Talking Points](#).

## Reading notes and questions for Confucius

- 1.1 “*Analects*” is the translation the *Lunyu*, “Selected Teachings,” of *Kongzi*, “Master Kong” (551-479 BC). He is also called *Kongfuzi*, “Great Master Kong,” which is where we get the name “Confucius.” The *Analects* are arranged by book and chapter, so *Analect* 4.1 is book four, chapter one. “The Master” always refers to Confucius. The other characters that appear, like Youzi in the next *Analect*, are usually students. The word *junzi*, “gentleman,” originally referred to members of a particular social class: gentlemen as opposed to peasant farmers. But Confucius uses the word differently, to refer not to rich people but to good people, much as we would say that someone is “a real gentleman” if they are decent and honest. While Confucius was thinking primarily of men, there is no reason to think that his ideas should not apply to women, as well.
- 1.2 *Xiao*, “filial piety,” means respect for parents and family. As Confucius sees it, our relationships to others make us who we are. The family is where we first learn to care about other people and so is the “root” of all other relationships. This is the reason for the importance of family in Asian societies influenced by Confucius. (Compare *Analect* 13.8.) *Ren* is one of the most important ideas in Confucius. The textbook translates it as “good” but, for the purposes of this course, I want to use the word “kind,” instead. Let me explain why. *Ren* is related to a visually similar word, also pronounced *ren*, which means “human.” So being kind to other people means recognizing that we are all human beings. For Confucius, who lived in a time of political chaos, being kind meant thinking of yourself not as a citizen of this or that country but as a member of the human race. The *dao*, “Way,” for Confucius is the way to do this. The whole society in Confucius time was run by kings and lords. All jobs were government jobs and Confucius’s students were training to be political advisors. So when Confucius talks about how to behave, he usually phrases it in terms of how to behave as a person in charge. Confucius’ political theory is that the most effective way to lead people is by kindness rather than by, for instance, bribery or threats. What connection does he see between the way you treat your family and your ability to do a good job at work?
- 1.3 In light of what he means by “kindness,” why is Confucius suspicious about people who speak well. See if you can find other places where Confucius expresses suspicion about speaking too well. Compare, for instance, 17.19.
- 1.6 Kindness, for Confucius, is not just caring about other people but taking care of them. It is not just a way you feel but a way you act. You need knowledge to know how to take care of people well. *Wen*, “culture,” and *li*, “ritual,” teach us how the world works and show us how to be kind. Rituals for Confucius were the things you studied. So, instead of “ritual,” it will be better for us to translate this word as “traditions.” If you think about it, everything that you learn is a tradition in the sense of being handed down from previous generations. Traditions teach us how to live together and even how to speak. What is language but the tradition of using different words for different things? Traditions make it possible for us to live

together as the human family. Consequently, for Confucius, they are the Way. This is the reason for the importance of tradition in Asian societies influenced by Confucius. Along with culture and tradition, Confucius frequently talks about poetry, literature, and music. Poetry and literature teach us the language and enable us to communicate (13.5). Music symbolizes the healthy society, in which each person plays their own part and they all combine to form something beautiful (3.3). Culture and tradition teach us how to do this, and that is the purpose of education for Confucius: to learn how to be kind.

- 1.12 In his own time, Chinese society was run badly. Confucius looked back to former kings like Yao and Shun as examples of how to use tradition to make society function harmoniously. (See 3.25) Harmony is the creation of unity within differences. There is a story in the *Book of History* about a king who says “Look how harmonious my ministers are!” A guest says, “They are all ‘yes-men.’ That’s conformity, not harmony. Conformity is like trying to mix water with water to make soup.” See 13.23. What would it mean to “try to achieve harmony without using tradition”? Give an example.
- 2.1 “Leading by virtue” means leading people by example rather than by force or bribery. Confucius thinks not only that kindness is the best way to lead, but that kind people inspire kindness in others. What is Confucius’s point in comparing the rule of virtue with the North Star? Do you agree?
- 2.9 For more about Yan Hui., see 5.7, 5.26, 6.3, 6.11, 9.11, 11.9, and 12.1. What could Yan Hui have done outside of class to show how much he’d learned? What would you expect people to be able to do outside of a philosophy class to show how much they had learned in it? See if you can find specific teachings of Confucius and specific places where Yen Hui exemplifies them.
- 2.11: What does this mean? What does Confucius think it takes to be a good teacher?
- 2.12 Why does Confucius think it is important to be well-rounded? Explain how education, tradition, politics, and kindness fit together.
- 2.15 What does this mean? Relate it to what the student is learning. Compare 1.12, 15.31.
- 2.21 The *Book of History* was a collection of documents including poems like this one describing great leaders. See 2.1 and 12.18. What does it mean to say that “Being a filial son and good brother is already taking part in government”?
- 3.1 In the state of Lu, where Confucius lived, the Ji clan was seizing control from the duke of Lu, who had been put in power by the Zhou king. Having eight rows of dancers was a right of the duke. So the Ji clan having eight rows of dancers was like a state governor putting the presidential flag on his limousine or gang members carrying police badges. Confucius saw it as a symptom of his society falling apart.
- 3.11 The Great Sacrifice was a traditional sacrifice made by the king to the most ancient ancestors, who are the parents of all people. Why does Confucius think the Great

- Sacrifice is so important? Why does he think someone who understood the Great Sacrifice would know the whole world?
- 3.14 Compare 2.23.
- 4.2 Confucius is not against profit, though he does think it is a mistake to sacrifice your relationships with other people in order to achieve success. See 1.2, 4.5, and 4.12. He thinks there is a difference between wise people, who understand the value kindness in theory, and kind people, who really *feel* it. See 6.23 and 13.8.
- 4.14 Compare 1.1.
- 4.15 Why does Confucius say this? Compare 4.4, 15.24. The Chinese character *shu*, “sympathize,” combines the characters *ru*, “compare,” and *xin*, “heart/mind,” (Ancient Chinese has only one word for “heart” and “mind.”) So “sympathizing” involves comparing minds: putting yourself in their place.
- 4.17 Why does Confucius say this?
- 5.10 Confucius’s student Zaiwo was a good talker, but he used that ability to make excuses for himself. See 1.3 and 17.21.
- 5.21 What do you think Confucius means?
- 6.3 Yan Hui seems to have been an example of someone who didn’t blame other people for not appreciating him but worked hard to become better. See 1.1 and 4.14.
- 6.7 See 3.1.
- 6.12 See 11.22.
- 6.17 Confucius is frustrated that people nod at what he says without actually doing it.
- 6.23 See 4.2.
- 7.16 See 4.2.
- 7.16: What does Confucius mean by ‘wealth and status acquired the wrong way’? What would be wrong about it, for Confucius? See 4.1.
- 7.20 See 5.28.
- 7.22 See 4.17.
- 8.13: What does he mean, “In a country that follows the Way, you should be ashamed to be poor. In a country that abandons the Way, you should be ashamed to be rich”? Do you agree? What kind of society would make it a shame to be rich?
- 11.22 For Ranyou, see 6.12. For another example of Confucius saying different things to different students, see 12.1 and 12.2. In light of what he says here, why does

Confucius give different answers to the same question in 12.1 and 12.2? What does it tell you about Yan Hui, and Zhong Gong?

12.1 Confucius's point in this last sentence is that a kind person inspires others by example. (See 2.21.) Still, the way to become kind is not by trying to impress other people but by looking within. (Compare 6.3.)

12.2 See 4.15 and 11.22.

12.11: Find as many examples as you can of leading by example.

12.18 See 2.21.

13.3 See 12.11. Confucius's point is not so much that words have to be correct, but that people's actions have to live up to them. Once people get in the habit of not meaning what they say, everything falls apart.

13.5 See 1.6, 1.12, 2.15, and 15.31.

13.8: Why does Confucius say that parents and children should cover up for each other? Consider 1.2. Do you agree? What would he say about the Unabomber's brother?

13.18 Ideally, people take the love that they learn in the family and apply it to people outside the family. But if there is a conflict between family and society, family has to come first, since that is where love comes from in the first place. See 1.2.

14.24 See 1.1, 6.3, 12.1, and 14.30.

15.5: Who is Shun? Where else is he mentioned?

15.24 See 4.15.

15.24: If all you need to do is sympathize, then why does Confucius put so much emphasis on study?

15.31 Compare 2.15.

17.10 See 16.13.

17.19 Compare 6.17.

17.21: Is there a way for education to be about more than just talking? (After all, we grade you on what you *say* in class, on tests, and in papers.) How? If not, is that a problem?

19.7 Explain the connection Confucius sees between education and kindness? Does he think you need to study to be kind? Does he think studying makes you kind automatically? Do you agree?

## **Our Analects**

We will collaborate on our own shared commentary here. Each person pick one Analect to focus on. To do so, select the Add Entry tab below and follow the instructions. This page shows a short version of each entry. To see the full version of each one, click on the little magnifying glass below it. I've given one example.

### **New entry**

**YOUR ANALECT:** Type in the number of your Analect here, with a decimal point between the book and the chapter. Since moodle reads these as regular decimals, if you leave a zero before a single digit chapter, the computer will put them in order. For example, Book four, chapter one would be "4.01."

**ORIGINAL TEXT:** Type in the Analect as it appears in the reading here.

**YOUR TRANSVERSION:** Restate your Analect in your own words. Modernize the language. Update the characters. Use your imagination to reheat the old to know the new.

**DISCUSSION:** Explain your transversion here. Why did you pick this Analect? What does it mean? Are there any particular terms or background information we should understand? Tie in the related passages. Compare your transversion to the other translations. Why did you change it the way you did? This is the meat of your posting, where you show us what you can do. So give yourself all the space you need.

## Confucius glossary

Term: 禮 *lǐ*

Examples: 3.3. See Discussion for more.

Translations: Rites, rituals.  
Tradition.  
Education.

Discussion: 禮 *lǐ* is usually translated as “rites” or “rituals,” but I would suggest “traditions” or even “education,” for reasons that will become clear. First of all, let’s think about traditions. When we think of traditions, we usually think of things like dyeing eggs on Easter. Or in my family we eat *lutefisk*, at Christmas, a kind of salted fish from Sweden. What is a tradition? A tradition is something that is handed down. It’s not like an instinct, that you’re born with. A tradition is something you have to learn. As Confucius says in Analect 7.20, “*I wasn’t born knowing. But I love the past and look for knowledge there.*”

If we think about traditions this way, as the things that are handed down, you’ll realize there’s a lot more to it than just Easter eggs and *lutefisk*. For example, literature. What is literature but stories that are handed down generation to generation, except by a whole culture instead of a single family. History, of course, is just stuff that has been passed down. How about math? Does math count as a tradition? How many of you figured out math on your own and how many of you learned it out of a book that someone had written? Math is also something that’s handed down to us. And science. Although theoretically someone could start over from scratch and figure it all out over again, the beauty of civilization is that we don’t have to do that. We can learn from other people’s experiences and start from there. So if you think of tradition in this way, as the things that are handed down and things you have to study to know, you’ll realize that almost everything we know is tradition. And that is also why it makes sense to translate *lǐ* as “education,” since tradition is what people are educated in.

Sometimes Confucius uses the word *lǐ* in a narrow sense. For example in 3.3 he contrasts ritual with music, saying, “A man who is not Good—what has he to do with ritual? A man who is not Good—what has he to do with music?” In this case, ritual and music are two things he thinks good people should study. In other cases he uses it in a broad sense, to include all the different things that you study. In 8.2 he says, ““If you are

respectful but lack ritual you will become exasperating; if you are careful but lack ritual you will become timid; if you are courageous but lack ritual you will become unruly; and if you are upright but lack ritual you will become inflexible.” He means that good motivations are not enough if you lack the education to follow through on them. When I translate *li* as “tradition” and “education,” I mean it in this broad sense of including all the things that we have to learn in order to know how to live.

It is important to note, too, that Confucius thought this education had to be well-rounded. In 2.12 he says mysteriously, “The gentleman is no vessel.” By “gentleman,” he means an educated person. By “vessel,” he is referring to the sacrificial vessels on the family altar, each one of which had its special function. So what he means by “The gentleman is no vessel” is that he is not a tool that has only one specific use. The educated person is well-rounded. We see that in 9.2: “A villager from Daxiang remarked sarcastically, ‘How great is Confucius! He is so broadly learned, and yet has failed to make a name for himself in any particular endeavor.’ When the Master was told of this, he said to his disciples, ‘What art, then, should I take up? Charioteering? Archery? I think I shall take up charioteering.’” The commentators all agree that Confucius is being ironic here; he wouldn’t limit himself to one specific skill. Did you know that back in the old days, you didn’t have to pick a major but could graduate with a degree in “General Studies”? In fact, Whittier was one of the last colleges in the country to require the major. Confucius would have liked that. But the point is that we can think of Confucius’ education as being in many ways like our modern, well-rounded liberal arts.

So that’s **what tradition is**, pretty much everything we know. Now let’s think about a second question, which is **how traditions work**. Different kinds of traditions operate in different ways. Let me just point out two. Some traditions work simply because they are shared. So, for example, driving on the right hand side of the road is a tradition that pretty much the whole world follows, except for England. There is no particular reason to drive on the right hand side of the road rather than the left, but there are good reasons to have everyone doing the same thing. So it works because it is shared; everyone does it that way.

In addition to being shared, some traditions also work because they are right or true. For example, you have an infection, so you go to the doctor. And the doctor gives you some penicillin. This is what doctors do when people come to them with infections: they give them penicillin. But the doctors don’t do this just because it is a custom, like giving lollipops to kids. It’s a custom because it’s right, because it makes people better. That’s why they do it. And, if they decided it wasn’t making people better, they’d stop doing it. So there’s more going on here than simply the fact that the custom is shared; it’s shared because it is true.

Okay, so what are traditions? Traditions are the things we know. How do they work? They work in various ways, sometimes just by being shared, other times also by being right or true. Let me then ask a final question: **what do traditions do?** The answer to this is that traditions **make society possible**. This is true on several levels. On a **practical, physical level**, we are able to live here in Los Angeles because, over the course of the years, people have figured out how to get enough food and water in and enough sewage out that however-many millions of people can live here. Also, we have a set of laws that have been worked out over the centuries that everyone agrees to and follows more or less. We could not live here at all, much less as peacefully as we do, if we did not have these traditions to guide us. In Analect 1.12, Confucius says, “If you try to aim at harmony without using tradition, it will not work.”

Tradition also makes it possible for us to be together on another, more **spiritual level**. Physically we are able to be together in this room because we have traditions that told us how to build it, that got us all here at the same time, etc. But being together with other people in body is very different from being together with them in mind. You can feel lonelier in a crowd than you ever could by yourself. What makes it possible for people to be together spiritually? Well, for one thing, language. This is a table. That is a chair. Why? That’s just what we call them. It’s a tradition. But this tradition makes communication possible. And the better we master **language**, the better we can communicate. In 16.13 and 17.10, Confucius tells his son, Boyu, to study literature to increase his vocabulary so that he can understand others and express himself. To be a person and not to study literature, he says in 17.10, is like standing with your face to the wall. Traditions bring people together. Not just traditions like Thanksgiving and Easter, but traditions like math, and economics, and history. And the better we understand those traditions, the better we are able to be together with others, not just physically, but in our minds. Confucius saw education as the glue that holds people together, and that’s why he was a teacher.

## Key Mozi Passage

Do you agree or disagree with Mozi? Pick a key passage from the reading that you think shows why he is either totally right or totally wrong. Your entry should include:

1. The key passage: Copy it from the text. If it is too long, you may use . . . ellipses.
2. Your transversion: Restate what it says in your own words. This should be about the same length as the original passage.
3. A discussion: Explain why you think this proves Mozi is either right or wrong (depending on what you think). It should be 250-500 words.

## Pick a Laozi reading

Choose among the [Laozi readings and bibliography entries](#). There are five different readings so three people can sign up for each one. First come, first served!

- Taoism in Translation
  - Two Aspects of Early Daoism
  - Daodejing Chapter 1 commentary
  - The Origin of Wuwei
  - Daodejing Chapter 38 commentary (Full)
- 

## Laozi bibliography

[Pick a Laozi reading](#). Then do three things, just like with Confucius:

1. Write a book report, 500-600 words, summarizing what the author said in your own words, like in a transversion except you are making it shorter rather than keeping it the same length.
2. Write a book review, 400-500 words, saying what you think about it. It is tempting to slide back and forth between what they say and what you think, but that just confuses things. So work hard to keep them separate.
3. Write a one- or two-sentence blurb "selling" the article to your readers.

### Phil 300 Midterm Study Sheet

Prepare for the midterm by filling in this chart.

	Confucius	Mozi	Laozi
道 <i>dào</i> “way”			

德 <i>dé</i> “power” “leadership”			
兼愛 <i>jiān ài</i> , “Impartial caring” “Universal love”			
利害 <i>lì hài</i> , “benefits and harms” “reward / punishment”			
樸 <i>pú</i> , “un-hewn wood” “simplicity”			
仁 <i>rén</i> “benevolence” “kindness”			
無 <i>wú</i> , “non-being” “lack”			
無為 <i>wú wèi</i> “non-action” “don’t do”			
孝 <i>xiào</i> “filial piety” “family values”			
自然 <i>zì rán</i> “natural” “spontaneous”			

Each of these terms is special to at least one of the philosophers. Figure out which one and find the best quotation you can showing what they mean by it. If more than one philosopher uses the term, find examples from each of them showing whether they use the term in the same way or differently. That’s the easy part. The hard part is then to fill in the blanks with quotations showing how the other philosophers would have responded to what the first philosopher said! For example, find a passage showing how Mozi would have responded to the Confucian idea of leadership by *dé* (for example, in Analect 13.18). Then see if you can think of any other points of comparison to add as new rows.

## Key Wang Bi passage

<p><b>Key Passage</b>, pg. 0</p> <p>The sage [Confucius] embodied non-being. Non-being cannot be made the subject of teaching, and so his words necessarily concerned being. Laozi and Zhuangzi never got away from being, and so always taught that in which they were inadequate.<a href="#">[1]</a></p> <hr/> <p><a href="#">[1]</a> <u>Shishuo Xinyu</u> 1 b 11.</p>	<p><b>Transversion</b></p> <p>Confucius lived the Way. This is not something that it is possible to talk about, so he talked instead about other things. The reason Laozi was able to talk about it was because he hadn't achieved it himself.</p>
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## Discussion

Remember Wang Bi? He was the famous interpreter of Laozi who played the throw-the-arrow-in-the-vase game and died young. He was one of the first people to say that the Daodejing was not about politics but about the philosophy of non-being. No one's ever read it the same way since!

Interestingly, though, although he is famous for his reading of Laozi, Wang Bi thought Confucius was the greatest sage and the best example of Daoist principles in action. So he did not see Daoism and Confucianism as incompatible; rather, he saw Daoism as the proper way to go about approaching Confucianism.

This week we will look at a couple of readings that lie somewhere between Daoism and Confucianism. See if you can figure out which is closer to either end of the spectrum.