

Chinese Political Thought I: Classical China (Spring 2022)

This is a draft syllabus and is subject to change

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Class: MWF 11:35am-12:45pm (TBD)
[Student Hours](#): MWF 1pm-2pm, TH 1-3pm

Department Mission Statement:

The mission of the Department of Politics and International Relations is to equip students with knowledge about politics and government, with methods for analyzing political actors and institutions, and with the ability to apply biblical and theological perspectives to public life.

i. Course Overview and Objectives

What is a “state” and what is “human nature”? Does one have an obligation or responsibility to the state and, conversely, do rulers owe anything to their people? How ought a state relate to individual or communal ethics or social custom, if at all? In this course, we will seriously consider—from a distinctly Christian perspective—how various pre-imperial (771-221 BCE) Chinese political thinkers like Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi, among others, have addressed these questions and the degree to which we find these arguments persuasive (or not) as they bear both on Christian faith/practice as well as on the world. Through dialogue and writing, students will *develop their ability to compare and critically (though charitably) assess* disparate articulations of the relationship between the state, individuals, and communities across the history of classical Chinese political thought. Further, students will *cultivate a nuanced view of classical Chinese political thought*—and the legacy it has had on the global church, particularly in Asia and the Asian diaspora—as well as *formulate their own political and philosophical opinions* on the varied, and often contradicting, conceptions of the relationship between political entities and the people they aspire to govern.

Moreover, this course aims to improve your ability to:

- **Understand** the history, culture, or social experience of at least one cultural group outside the Anglo/Anglo-American context (GP)
- **Analyze** the global context of at least one cultural group with reflection on one’s own context (GP)
- **Articulate** a Christian theological understanding of global differences/cultural diversity & unity (GP)
- **Interpret** significant primary philosophical texts subtly and critically, with sensitivity to their logical structure and role in a tradition of thought (PI)
- **Communicate** cogent arguments in defense of philosophical positions, including examining and responding to potential objections (PI)
- **Assess** the merits of varied answers to perennial philosophical questions, recognizing their implications for Christian faith and practice (PI)

ii. Required Texts

All texts are in translation. Prior exposure to classical Chinese or modern Mandarin is not required. Physical copies of the following readings will be available for purchase in the campus bookstore. If you have concerns obtaining these texts for whatever reason, please contact me. The expectation is that you will primarily engage with the substantive claims of the texts; the historical context provided in these volumes should be used to illuminate substantive arguments, not replace them.

- Confucius, *The Analects*, trans. Annping Chin (New York: Penguin, 2014)
- Mencius, *Mengzi*, trans. Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008)
- Xunzi, *Xunzi: The Complete Text*, trans. Eric L. Hutton (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014)

iii. Assignments, Grading, and Policies

Attendance and Participation

25 %

Regular class attendance, active discussion posting, and active in-class participation facilitate the successful comparison and assessment of the concepts, schools of thought, institutions, and figures encountered in this course. Thus, attendance, discussion posts, and participation in class are mandatory. Absences due to personal emergencies, illness, or other legitimate causes will be excused with advanced notice and proper documentation, where applicable. Good participation reflects quantity *and* quality of in- and out-of-class comments. Students are expected to come to class with texts readily available, having done the reading and having prepared for respectful and substantive discussion. Laptops are allowed only for course-related activities; other observed activities will result in a grade reduction. I am available for any student wishing to discuss methods for engaging more effectively in class discussion. Additionally, students must complete discussion posts that require them to select quotes that best exemplify various non-Western thinkers' conceptions of, and arguments concerning, politics and/or ethics (50-75 words) and to defend those choices against competing alternatives (less than 150 words), which then form the basis for in-class discussion. In composing their posts, students must be attuned to the historical, cultural, and social perspective of the authors under discussion. Discussion posts will be due via Schoology by midnight the day of class.

Class Attendance/Participation: 15%

Schoology Discussion Posts: 10%

Short Essays

30 %

The short analysis essays and reflection essay assignments serve as a written means for students to demonstrate their ability to compare aspects of an author's thought or to compare thinkers in the course on a given theme. They are also intended to help students develop their writing skills for the longer essay. There will be two short analysis and reflection essays this term, each worth 15% of your grade and due in weeks 4 and 10. The essay portion requires students to interpret significant primary philosophical texts subtly and critically, with sensitivity to (1) their logical structure, (2) their role in a tradition of thought, and (3) in light of the availability of sources to the thinker/China's long commentary tradition. The reflection portion requires students to reflect on how hospitality, patience, humility, and/or charity informed their assessment of the thinker in question. A prompt will be sent out the week before it is due. Essays should be 1000 words and the reflection for the second essay should be roughly 500 words. Both parts of the assignment should be doubled-spaced, 12pt font, normal margins and should answer the prompt(s). See below for the plagiarism policy and the late policy.

Short Essay 1: 10%

Short Essay 2 & Reflection Essay: 20%

Long Essay

45 %

The long essay is intended to give students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to critically, yet charitably, assess course readings. The longer essay requires students both to (1) assess the merits of a thinker's perspective on a perennial question related to government, society, ethics, or war and to (2) assess how a course thinker's views on their chosen topic may or may not align with a biblical view of the topic, given cultural similarities and/or differences. This will involve substantial analysis of textual evidence for one's argument as well as engagement with contending evidence from multiple texts in the course. Assignments should be 2000 words (double-spaced, 12pt font, normal margins) and should answer the prompt. The long essay will be due during week 15. It must be original work from the student; plagiarism is not tolerated under any circumstance and will result in failure on the assignment and possibly failure in the course or further College sanctions. If students are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, they should consult the Student Handbook and Community Covenant. A one-page prospectus with a thesis paragraph and potential supporting evidence (with citations) will be due with your final essay. Students will bring their prospectuses to class and review each other's developing arguments before the essays are due. I will provide essay prompts a week in advance of the prospectus class. Also, I will provide a sheet for the prospectus review. Students must answer all parts of the

prospectus review sheet and give their responses to their partner. Final drafts of papers must be uploaded to Schoology the day they are due with the prospectus review comments included at the end of the paper. I will not read drafts of papers, but I am willing to discuss essay ideas. Late assignments will be reduced by one-third a letter grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B) for every day past the due date and will no longer be accepted after three days.

Long Essay Prospectus: 10%

Long Essay w/ Feedback Sheet: 35%

iv. General Policies and Information

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Wheaton College's campus with the College. Confidential resources available to students include Confidential Advisors, the Counseling Center, Student Health Services, and the Chaplain's Office. More information on these resources and College Policies is available at www.wheaton.edu/sexualassaultresponse.

COVID-Safe Classrooms

In accordance with the Wheaton College Face Covering Policy and *COVID Safe, Thunder Strong Commitment* signed by each student and faculty member, CDC-approved face coverings and social distancing are required while attending class. Failure to comply with wearing a face covering, wearing the required wristband, or social distancing will result in dismissal from the class session and an unexcused absence. Multiple violations can lead to dismissal from the class. If a student falls ill, they ought to notify me immediately and quarantine. Such students will still need to complete quizzes, discussion posts, and exams on time (remotely), to the best of their ability. If students become too ill to work, grading will be adjusted accordingly.

Inclusive Language

As per the faculty rules, I expect students to use gender inclusive language for human beings.

Learning and Accessibility Services

Wheaton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented learning differences, physical or mental health conditions that qualify for accommodations under the ADA. Any student needing academic adjustments is requested to contact the Learning and Accessibility Services Office as early in the semester as possible. To contact LAS, please email las@wheaton.edu or call 630.752.5615. If you already have an accommodation letter, I am available to discuss how to implement the accommodation.

Writing Center

Writing Center: The Writing Center is a free resource that equips undergraduate and graduate students across the disciplines to develop effective writing skills and processes. This academic year, the Writing Center is offering [online appointments only](#). Learn more about online consultations for [undergraduates](#) and [graduate students](#), and [make an appointment](#).

v. Tips for Success

In my experience, students who follow these tips tend to do well. I encourage you to heed them.

- *Finish the reading at least 24 hours before it is due.* For example, finish Wednesday's class reading by Tuesday morning. This will require time management, but it allows more time for reflection.

- *Take notes as you read, in the text.* This will allow you to track your reactions to the readings and think (ahead of class) about intriguing or puzzling passages.

- *Come to office hours.* I do not bite. I am invested in you succeeding in this course.
- *Talk with your peers about the readings outside of class.* It helps you process and vocalize your views on the text(s) in preparation for class discussion.
- *Map out the “A-L-E” (Argument-Logic-Evidence) of the text before, during, and after class.* Your reproduction of the “A-L-E” of class texts helps enrich both our class discussion and your written assignments.
- [For any writing assignment] *Outline your argument—section by section, paragraph by paragraph.* If you cannot justify why a section or paragraph should be included in the writing assignment, do not include it.

vi. Reading Schedule

Assignments listed under each day are *due for that day*.

	[Pages of Reading]
<u>Week One</u>	
M (1/10): Goldin, <i>The Art of Chinese Philosophy</i> (ch. 2)	[~23]
<i>Recommended:</i> Goldin, <i>The Art of Chinese Philosophy</i> (introduction, ch. 1)	
Complete Pre-Assessment Surveys	
W (1/12): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Books 1-2	[~24]
F (1/14): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Books 3-4	[~33]
<u>Week Two</u>	
M (1/17): NO CLASS (MLK DAY)	
W (1/19): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Books 5-6	[~39]
F (1/21): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Books 7-8	[~32]
<u>Week Three</u>	
M (1/24): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Books 9-10	[~32]
W (1/26): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Books 11-12	[~36]
F (1/28): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Book 13	[~22]
<u>Week Four</u>	
M (1/31): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Book 14	[~29]
W (2/2): Confucius, <i>Analects</i> Book 15	[~30]
Ivanhoe & Van Norden, <i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i> pp. 47-54	
SHORT ESSAY 1 PROMPTS OUT	
F (2/4): Goldin, <i>The Art of Chinese Philosophy</i> (ch. 3)	[~25]
<u>Week Five</u>	
M (2/7): Mozi, <i>The Mozi</i> “Universal Love” I-II-III	[~35]
W (2/9): Mozi, <i>The Mozi</i> “Condemning Offensive Warfare” I-II-III	[~32]
F (2/11): Mozi, <i>The Mozi</i> “Against the Confucians II”	[~21]
SHORT ESSAY 1 (ON CONFUCIUS) DUE BEFORE CLASS	
<u>Week Six</u>	

M (2/14): Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy* (ch. 4) [~27]

W (2/16): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 1 (A&B) [~32]

F (2/18): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 2 (A&B) [~30]

Week Seven

M (2/21): **NO CLASS (PRESIDENT'S DAY)**

W (2/23): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 3 (A&B) [~25]

F (2/25): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 4 (A&B) [~28]

Week Eight

M (2/28): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 5 (A&B) [~28]

W (3/2): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 6 (A&B) [~29]

F (3/4): Mencius, *Mengzi* Book 7 (A&B) [~29]

SHORT ESSAY 2 PROMPTS OUT

Week Nine

M (3/7): **NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

W (3/9): **NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

F (3/11): **NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

Week Ten

M (3/14): Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy* (ch. 6) [~24]

W (3/16): Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi* Chapters 1-2 [~19]

F (3/18): Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi* Chapters 3-7 [~34]

****SHORT ESSAY 2 (ON MOZI/MENGZI) DUE IN CLASS****

Week Eleven

M (3/21): Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi* Chapters 8-10, 14, 17 [~19]

W (3/23): Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi* Chapters 19-20, 22 [~16]

F (3/25): Goldin, *The Art of Chinese Philosophy* (ch. 8) [~32]

Week Twelve

M (3/28): Xunzi, *Xunzi* Chapters 1-4 [~31]

W (3/30): Xunzi, *Xunzi* Chapters 5-8 [~36]

F (4/1): Xunzi, *Xunzi* Chapters 9-10 [~31]

Week Thirteen

M (4/4): Xunzi, *Xunzi* Chapter 11 [~18]

W (4/6): Xunzi, <i>Xunzi</i> Chapters 12-14	[~29]
F (4/8): Xunzi, <i>Xunzi</i> Chapters 15-16 LONG ESSAY PROMPTS OUT	[~31]
<u>Week Fourteen</u>	
M (4/11): Xunzi, <i>Xunzi</i> Chapters 17-18	[~27]
W (4/13): Xunzi, <i>Xunzi</i> Chapters 19-20, 23 ESSAY PROSPECTUS PEER-REVIEW SESSION	[~34]
F (4/15): NO CLASS (GOOD FRIDAY)	
<u>Week Fifteen</u>	
M (4/18): Goldin, <i>The Art of Chinese Philosophy</i> (ch. 9)	[~28]
W (4/20): Han Feizi, <i>Han Feizi</i> “Introduction”, “The Way of the Ruler”, “On Having Standards”	[~28]
F (4/22): Han Feizi, <i>Han Feizi</i> “The Two Handles”, “Wielding Power”, “The Eight Villainies” FINAL ESSAY+PROSPECTUS SHEET DUE	[~20]
<u>Week Sixteen</u>	
M (4/25): Han Feizi, <i>Han Feizi</i> “The Ten Faults”	[~24]
W (4/27): Han Feizi, <i>Han Feizi</i> “The Difficulties of Persuasion”, “Mr. He”, “Precautions Within the Palace”, “Facing South”	[~22]
F (4/29): Han Feizi, <i>Han Feizi</i> “The Five Vermin”, “Eminence in Learning” Post-Assessment Survey	[~34]