



Guo Xi (1020-1090), “Early Spring”
What makes this landscape a statement of political philosophy?

PSCI 420:
Chinese Social and Political Thought
TR 2:00-3:20
LA 304

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Course Description

What does it mean to be good? To be human? To govern well? Chinese thinkers have been debating these questions for millennia. To understand their answers is essential to understanding China and East Asia past and present.

This course is a survey of Chinese social and political thought rooted in a close reading of sources in translation. We will trace the evolution of Chinese thought from the flowering of philosophy in the Axial Age, through periods of contestation and innovations, into the modern rejection of tradition in favor of Western ideologies, to the contemporary appropriation of ancient ideas. Our primary concerns will be politics, society, and law.

In the first half of the semester, we will build a foundational understanding of Chinese thought through the mid-nineteenth century. The second half will be spent considering that legacy and its interactions with foreign ideas in the modern era, including the emergence of distinctly Chinese forms of Marxism, liberalism, etc. We will pay close attention to how concepts changed over time and how thinkers put them to different purposes in their varying historical contexts. A major lesson will be that Chinese thought was and is far from monolithic, even within seemingly autocratic and intellectually repressed states.

Each time we meet, we will consider a new question in the historical context in which it arose in China. Class time will be divided between lectures on current scholarship and collaborative exercises in which we will engage closely with our primary texts. Be sure to read your primary

sources very closely, with a pen or pencil in hand so that you can take notes in the margins. When we discuss a text or idea in class, I will expect you to make direct reference to the sources to support what you say.

Besides the concrete knowledge outlined above, this course aims to develop students' skills in critical reading and written argument. One of the critical features of philosophical discourse is that each participant is engaged in some form of contestation with others. Chinese thought is not simply a mystical experience to be "felt," nor is it an inferior cousin of "Western" thought – rather, it is a discussion that has been going on for over two millennia. Your job is to read the primary texts, which have been translated expertly and consistently into English, very closely. Read to see who each speaker's opponents are, and read to test their arguments against your own. Then, in the papers and response essays, talk back. I will read your writing just as critically, and we will keep our discussion going on the page and in the classroom. The goal is not just to learn Chinese thought, but to sharpen your perception and self-expression in the process.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 甲. Define the arguments at the heart of each era of Chinese social and political thought and their major participants
- 乙. Understand and critically analyze the central concepts of Chinese social and political discourse and how they have been redefined over time
- 丙. Engage in spoken or written discourse about Chinese thought

Required Readings

All members of the class must purchase two books and **bring them to class for every meeting:**

P. J. Ivanhoe and Bryan van Norden, eds., *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005).

Justin Tiwald and Bryan van Norden, eds., *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy: Han to the 20th Century* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2014).

Further readings will be distributed as packets in PDF format through the course site. **You are required to print these packets out, read them thoroughly before class, and bring them to class.**

Note: The three books listed below are accessible and provide useful background. These and others are noted in the schedule as "Grad." Graduate students in the course are required to do these readings.

Peter Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
Wejen Chang, *In Search of the Way: Legal Philosophy of the Classic Chinese Thinkers*, (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2016).

NB: This book is exceptionally expensive. You may borrow my copy or use the one that the library is meant to put on reserve.

Timothy Cheek, *The Intellectual in Modern Chinese History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

Part I: Foundations of Chinese Thought

Week 1

24 Jan: Basics: 1. China in the Axial Age and 2. the Structure of the Classical Chinese Language

26 Jan: Ruism I: The Moral-Aesthetic Self

- *The Book of Documents* (online)
- Confucius: *Classical*, Ch. 1: 1.9-1.11, 2.1, 2.7-2.9, 2.12, 2.19, 2.21, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 3.12, 3.18, 3.19, 3.23, 3.24, 4.1-4.8, 4.13, 4.14, 4.16-4.21, 5.1, 5.4, 5.8-5.10, 5.12, 5.19, 5.26-5.28, 6.3, 6.7, 6.10-6.13, 6.18, 6.22, 6.27, 6.30, 7.1, 7.3, 7.4, 7.6, 7.12, 7.14, 7.18, 7.20, 7.28, 7.30, 7.32, 7.34, 7.35, 7.37, 7.38, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.13, 9.5, 9.6, 9.11, 9.12, 9.14, 9.18, 9.19, 9.24, 11.4, 11.8, 11.9, 11.12, 11.26, 12.1, 12.2, 12.7-12.9, 12.11, 12.13, 12.17-12.19, 12.22, 13.3-13.6, 13.12, 13.16, 13.18, 13.20, 13.24, 14.1, 14.12, 14.24, 14.27, 14.36, 14.38, 15.1, 15.2, 15.11, 15.18, 15.21, 15.24, 15.29, 15.37, 15.39, 16.13, 17.2, 17.9, 17.11, 17.21, 17.23, 17.25, 18.7, 18.8, 19.6, 19.11, 19.12

NB: Don't be scared! Each of these is a short passage.

- *Grad: Chang, "Lun-yu"*

Week 2

31 Jan: Mohism and Yangism

- Mozi: *Classical*, Ch. 2, 61-94
- Yang Zhu: *Classical*, 369-374
- **Quiz:** reading Chinese names
- *Grad: Chang, "Mozi"*

2 Feb: Laozi

- Laozi, *Classical*, Ch. 4: "Chapters" 1-6, 8-13, 17-19, 21-22, 24-25, 28-32, 34-43, 46-48, 51-52, 54-62, 65-66, 68-71, 74-81.
- *Grad: Chang, "Laozi"*

Week 3

7 Feb: Legalism I

- Book of Lord Shang (online)
- *Grad*: Chang, “Shang-jun-shu”

9 Feb: Ruism II: Human Nature Is Good

- The Doctrine of the Mean (online)
- Mengzi/Mencius: *Classical*, Ch. 3: 1A1, 1A3, 1A5, 1A7, 1B6, 2A6, 3A3, 3A5, 3B2, 4A17, 4B19, 6A1, 6A2, 6A4, 6A5, 6A6, 6A15
- *Grad*: Chang, “Mengzi”

10 Feb: **Midterm paper topic due by 5:00 PM**

Week 4

14 Feb: Ruism III: Human Nature Is Evil

- The Great Learning (online)
- Xunzi: *Classical*, Ch. 6
First read: 256-261 Chapter One, 262-263 “To lead others...,” 298-306 Chapter Twenty-Three
Then read: 269-285
- *Grad*: Chang, “Xunzi”

16 Feb: Legalism II

- Han Feizi: *Classical*, Ch. 7: Chapters 5, 6, 7, 43, 49
- Li Si (online)
- *Grad*: Chang, “Han-fei-zi”

Week 5

21 Feb: Criticism

- Han Feizi, Chapter 50
- Zhuangzi: *Classical*, Ch. 5: 224-243

23 Feb: Syncretism

- Shizi (online)
- *Grad*: Karen Turner, “War, Punishment, and the Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of the State” in *HJAS* 53:2 (December 1993), 285-324.

Part II: The Neo-Confucian Turn

Week 6

28 Feb: Han Syncretism

- Dong Zhongshu: *Later*, 10-14
- Wang Fu: *Later*, 22-26
- “Great Appendix”: *Later*, 42-52
- Ban Zhao: *Later*, 55-62
- Liu Xiang: *Later*, 63-67
- Huiyuan: *Later*, 75-79
- *Grad*: from Sarah Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: the Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn Annals*.

2 Mar: The Song Reform Debate

- Cheng Hao, Wang Anshi, Su Shi, and Sima Guang (SCT 609-624) (online)
- *Grad*: Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, Chs. 2-4

Week 7

7 Mar: Neo-Confucian Revolution

- Han Yu: *Later*, 130-133
- Zhu Xi: *Later*, 177-183, 184-194
“The Way of the Family” 292-296
- Cheng Yi, 290-292
- **Review “The Great Learning!”**
- *Grad*: Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, Chs. 5-7

9 Mar: Ming-Qing Statecraft Thought

- Huang Zongxi: *Later*, 315-318
and: *Waiting for the Dawn* (online, SCT 6-17)
- Wang Fuzhi (online, SCT 26-35)
- Zhang Xuecheng, *Later*, 337-351
- *Grad*: from Black, *Man and Nature in the Philosophical Thought of Wang Fu-chih*.

10 Mar: **Midterm paper draft due by 5:00 PM**

Week 8

14 Mar: Conservative Reformism (readings online)

- Chen Hongmou
“On Universal Education” (SCT 160-161)
“On Governance by Local Elites” (SCT 167)
- Wei Yuan, “Preface” (SCT 207-209)
- Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, “On Sending Young Men Abroad to Study” (SCT 240-241)
- Zhang Zhidong, “Exhortation to Learn” (SCT 244-249)
- *Grad*: Cheek, ch 1

16 Mar Radical Reformism (readings online)

- Yan Fu, “On Strength” (SCT 256-259)
- Kang Youwei, (SCT 267-272)
- Liang Qichao, (SCT 288-297)

17 Mar: **Midterm paper due by 5:00 PM**

Part III: Modernisms

Week 9

28 Mar: Nationalism and New Culture (readings online)

- Hu Hanmin, (SCT 316-319)
- Sun Yat-sen, (SCT 320-329)
- Jiang Tingfu, “Revolution and Absolutism” (SCT 334-335)
- Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu, (SCT 336, 356-363)
- Chiang Kai-shek, “Nationalism and Traditionalism” (SCT, 337-346)
- *Grad*: Cheek, Ch. 2

30 Mar: Roots of Chinese Marxism (readings online)

- Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, Preface and Part A
- Liang Shuming, “Chinese Civilization” (SCT 379-381)
- Li Dazhao, “The Victory of Bolshevism” (SCT 404-405)

- *Grad*: Meisner, *Li Ta-Chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism*.

Week 10

4 Apr: Radical Feminism (readings online)

- He-Yin Zhen
- Han Yi (SCT 394-395)
- *Grad*: Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*.

6 Apr: Chinese Marxism

(readings online)

- Mao Zedong, "Report on an Investigation of the Hunan Peasant Movement," "The Question of Land Redistribution," "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," "The Mass Line" (SCT 406-418)
- Liu Shaoqi, "How to Be a Good Communist" (SCT 427-431)

Week 11

11 Apr: Emergence of Maoism (readings online)

- Mao Zedong, "The Rectification Campaign," "On Art and Literature" (SCT 432-433, 441-444)
- Ding Ling, "Thoughts on March 8, 1942" (SCT 446-449)
- *Grad*: Cheek, Ch. 3

13 Apr: Maoism After 1949 (readings online)

- Mao Zedong, "Leaning to One Side," "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (SCT 452-453, 459-464)
- Wu Han, "Hai Rui Scolds the Emperor" (SCT 471-473)
- "The Sixteen Points" (SCT 474-476)
- *Grad*: Cheek, Ch. 4

14 Apr: **Final paper topic due by 5:00 PM**

Part IV: The Search for New Foundations

Week 12

18 Apr: The Reform Era (readings online)

- Yu Qiuli, “The Relationship Between Politics and Economics” (SCT 491)
- Deng Xiaoping, “Uphold the Four Basic Principles,” “Build Socialism With Chinese Characteristics” (SCT 492, 507-509)
- Li Chang, “Building Socialist Spiritual Civilization” (SCT 493)
- Publication statement from *Beijing Spring* magazine (SCT 496)
- **SCT, Ch. 37**
- ***The Search for Modern China, a Documentary Collection, Ch. 25***
- *Grad*: Cheek, Ch. 5

20 Apr: The Rule of Law Debate (readings online)

- Yuanyuan Shen, “Conceptions and Receptions of Legality” in Turner et al., eds., *The Limits of the Rule of Law in China*
- Jerome Cohen, “China’s Legal Reform at the Crossroads”
- Elisabeth Perry, “Chinese Conceptions of ‘Rights’”

Week 13

25 Apr: Chinese Democracy (readings online)

- Fang Lizhi, “Democracy, Reform, and Modernization,” “Reform and Intellectuals,” “The Social Responsibility of Today’s Intellectuals” (SCT 512-517)
- Rong Jian, “Does China Need an Authoritarian Political System in the Course of Modernization?” (SCT 522)
- Explanation of Fang Lizhi’s errors and Deng Xiaoping’s Explanation of the Tian’anmen Crackdown (from *The Search for Modern China, a Documentary Collection, Ch. 26*)

27 Apr: New Confucianism, New Nationalism (readings online)

- Mou Zongsan, “The Principles of Authority and Governance” (in *Readings in Later Chinese Philosophy*)
- “China Can Say No” (*SMC*)
- “Charter 08” (*SMC*)
- Feng Youlan, “China: an Ancient Nation with a New Mission” (SCT 561-563)
- *Grad*: Cheek, Ch. 6

28 Apr: **Final paper draft due by 5:00 PM**

Week 14

1 May: The Harmonious Society and its Detractors (readings online)

- From He Weifang, *In the Name of Justice*
- Feminist Five documents
- *Grad*: Cheek, Conclusion

3 May: Whither China? (readings online)

- Bell and Jiang, “A Confucian Constitution in China”
- Umbrella Movement documents

Your Feedback

You will have three chances to send me **anonymous feedback** regarding the course so far. Surveys will be posted on the course site. I will take your feedback into consideration when planning and adjusting the course schedule and our class meetings. (See the schedule above.)

Office Hours

I am always open to meeting with you during office hours. It helps to send me an email to schedule 15 or 30 minutes of time beforehand. If you have a scheduling conflict and cannot make it to office hours, we can find another time to meet.

Evaluation

1. Weekly Responses (25 pts)

Every week, you must submit a short response to the primary source readings. These are to be posted in the Response Forum on the Moodle site. Submit your response on **either Tuesday or Thursday by 10:00 AM**. It must be on the readings for that day, but it may reflect on the other readings for the week, as well.

A good response consists of an observation and a question. Each week, you will have discussion questions to guide your reading. It may help you to answer one of these in your response.

You should not summarize the reading in your response. Instead, reflect on an idea in the reading that you found confusing, compelling, or disagreeable. You should ask questions of the reading and argue with or against it. This will help prepare both you and me to participate in class discussion.

2. Midterm Paper (20 pts)

The midterm paper (1,500-2,000 words) will consist of an original argument concerning Chinese thought as we will study it through Week 7. Your argument must draw mainly on our primary source materials. You may use outside readings *with my prior approval*.

In order to write this paper, begin with a question, for example, “How did the early Legalists influence later Confucian ideas of government?” or “What would Xunzi have thought of statecraft scholars’ ideas of education?” Submit this question as your topic.

The paper itself should present an answer either to this question or to another question that comes up in the course of your research. One week before the paper is due, you will submit a draft to me. I will promptly return the draft to you with comments, with the expectation that you will revise the paper further.

Write concisely.

3. Final Paper (30 pts)

The final paper (2,000-2,500 words) will consist of an original argument concerning Chinese thought as we will study it in Weeks 8-14, but it will also build on what we study in the first half of the semester. This paper must also be based on our readings. You may use outside readings *with my prior approval*.

Here are some ideas for final papers: 1. Look at another Chinese thinker we have not considered. 2. Track the evolution of a concept, such as “benevolence,” through the history of Chinese thought.

Here are some examples of productive questions: 1. “When modern thinkers and politicians have appropriated ‘Confucius,’ have they accurately represented his ideas?” 2. “How can we best understand the idea of ‘law’ in modern Chinese thought?”

4. Active Participation (1 pt per meeting = 25 pts)

Active participation means adding your voice to a productive discussion.

My criteria for good participation are these: excellent participation means listening to your classmates and engaging with what they say – either through substantive disagreement or by significantly building on it. To be able to do so, you must **come to class prepared**, both in the sense of having done your homework and in the sense of being ready to discuss. We will frequently break into small groups, in which your participation is even more important. An excellent class participant does the work.

Perhaps most importantly, **excellent participation means asking questions**. Good questions may certainly begin with, “I’m so confused. What does it mean when it says...” The first step to

wisdom is acknowledging what you don't know.

It will benefit you to print out **copies of your readings, take notes by hand on these physical copies, and then bring them to class.**

5. *Option for extra credit:* Ambitious undergraduates may choose to read the texts labeled *Grad* on the syllabus. Preparing these and attending and actively participating in the graduate discussion section will yield an additional 3 pts on each occasion.

For graduate students taking the course, there are four additional requirements:

1. Complete secondary readings marked “*Grad*” in the course schedule. This is an additional reading load of approximately 50 pages/meeting.
2. Write a midterm paper of 2,500-3,000 words. This must draw both on primary and secondary sources.
3. Write a final paper of 3,000-3,500 words. This must draw both on primary and secondary sources.
4. Attend a weekly graduate discussion section at a time and place to be arranged with the instructor.

Policy on Late Work

For every 24 hours an assignment is late, its grade will fall by one letter grade, ex. A to A-, B+ to B, C- to D+, etc.

Policy on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code:

(http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php).

Do not plagiarize. Plagiarism is defined as “Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own.” When I ask you a question, it may be tempting to look up the answer online, copy it, and alter a few words to make it sound like your own thoughts. If you do so, you will betray your own education. I am invested in you as a student – I want you to learn this material, and to become a better thinker. Because plagiarism harms your development, I will discourage it: in the first instance of plagiarism, the assignment in question will receive a grade of 0 with no chance for revision. In the second instance, we will pursue the matter through established university disciplinary procedures.

Statement on Accommodations

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or at (406) 243-2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide and appropriate modification.