

HUMA 5800 (HMMA 5007) Fundamentals of Chinese Philosophy

Division of Humanities

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Fall 2026 Thursday 12:00 noon-2:50 pm

Lecturer: Professor Simon Wong

Office Hours: Thursday 3:00 pm-6:00 pm; Room 3354

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Course Description:

This course is designed to guide students to in-depth research into Chinese philosophy. Through a selection and discussion of the works of some representative thinkers in different historical periods of China, some of the important issues in Chinese philosophy will be explored.

Tentative Schedule of Seminars:

Weeks 1 Introduction

- 2 Pre-Ch'in period: Mencius-*The Book of Mencius*, Book 6, part 1.
- 3 Pre-Ch'in period: Chuang Tzu- "The Equality of Things" in *The Book of Chuang Tzu*.
- 4 Western Han period: Tung Chung-shu- "The Profound Examination of Names and Appellations" in *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals*.
- 5 Eastern Han period: Wang Ch'ung- "On Original Nature," "On Spontaneity" and "A Treatise on Death" in *The Balanced Inquiries*.
- 6 Wei-Chin period: Wang Pi- Commentary on the *Lao Tzu*.
- 7 Wei-Chin period: Kuo Hsiang- Commentary on the *Chuang Tzu*.
- 8 Sui period: Chi-tsang-*Profound Meaning of the Three Treatises*;
- 9 Tang period: Fa-tsang- "Treatise on the Golden Lion".
- 10 Tang period: Hui-neng- *The Platform Scripture*.
- 11 Sung period: Chu Hsi- Records of conversations and writings.
- 12 Ming period: Wang Yang-ming- "Inquiry on the Great Learning" and *Instructions for Practical Living*.
- 13 Ch'ing period: Tai Chen- *Commentary on the Meanings of Terms in the Book of Mencius*.
- 14 Modern period: Hsiung Shih-li- *The New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only* and *An Inquiry on Confucianism*.

Course Evaluation:

End-of-term paper	70%
Presentation	20%
Attendance	10%

Intended Learning Outcomes:

After taking the course, students will:

1. Gain an overview of Chinese philosophy, discovering how Chinese philosophers make sense of the universe in which they live, how they position themselves both as individuals and as members of the society, and what ideals are they committed to, on both personal and societal levels.
2. Familiarize themselves with both the primary and secondary sources fundamental

- to the study of Chinese philosophy.
3. Strengthen their ability to present their points of view and comment on those of others in front of an audience.
 4. Learn how to think critically when conducting their research on the subjects they choose and to write professionally when delivering their findings.

Final Grade Descriptors:

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive grasp of subject matter, expertise in problem-solving, and significant creativity in thinking. Exhibits a high capacity for scholarship and collaboration, going beyond core requirements to achieve learning goals.
B	Good Performance	Shows good knowledge and understanding of the main subject matter, competence in problem-solving, and the ability to analyze and evaluate issues. Displays high motivation to learn and the ability to work effectively with others.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of core subject matter, competence in dealing with familiar problems, and some capacity for analysis and critical thinking. Shows persistence and effort to achieve broadly defined learning goals.
D	Marginal Pass	Has threshold knowledge of core subject matter, potential to achieve key professional skills, and the ability to make basic judgments. Benefits from the course and has the potential to develop in the discipline.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of the subject matter and lacks the necessary problem-solving skills. Shows limited ability to think critically or analytically and exhibits minimal effort towards achieving learning goals. Does not meet the threshold requirements for professional practice or development in the discipline.

Course AI Policy:

Generative AI is permitted as a tool to help you develop **your own** essay (e.g. finding and evaluating sources of information or brainstorming). You are **NOT** allowed to compose your essay, in part or in whole, with GenAI (both direct copy or paraphrase) or cite GenAI as an author.

Basic Texts:

陳榮捷編著. 中國哲學文獻選編 (上下冊). 台北: 巨流圖書公司, 1993 & 1995.

陈荣捷编著. 中国哲学文献选编. 南京: 江苏教育出版社, 2006.

Wing-tsit Chan. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.