

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Division of Humanities

Fall 2026

HUMA 1811 – History of Chinese Philosophy [CA][C]

3 Credits

Tuesday / Thursday, 13:30–14:50

LG5202

Instructor:

Chi-keung Chan (ckc@ust.hk), office hours by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Imi Pui Yin LO (ipylo@connect.ust.hk)

Course Description

This course introduces students to major mainstream philosophical schools in the History of Chinese Philosophy, spanning classical, medieval, and contemporary periods. In addition to acquiring knowledge of historical ideas, students are encouraged to critically reflect on the philosophical issues and apply these ideas to contemporary society and life.

*The medium of instruction for this course is Cantonese. Proficiency in Chinese is required.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

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

ILO 1: Textual Analysis: Critically interpret foundational primary texts and secondary literature in Chinese philosophy using contextual and modern analytical frameworks.

ILO 2: Historical Knowledge: Demonstrate a structured knowledge of core philosophical traditions, key debates, and historical shifts from the Pre-Qin period to contemporary New Confucianism.

ILO 3: Philosophical Reflection: Formulate independent, well-reasoned philosophical reflections on universal existential, moral, and social questions, evaluating arguments with logical rigor.

ILO 4: Interdisciplinary Application: Translate abstract historical theories into practical frameworks applicable to contemporary society, individual life, and the students' own academic disciplines.

Grading

This course will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve.

Course Schedule & Outline

Week	Date	Lecture Topic	Notes
Week 1	Sep 1 / Sep 3	Introduction to Chinese Philosophy	
Week 2	Sep 8 / Sep 10	Confucius: Humanity (仁 <i>Ren</i>) and Ritual (禮 <i>Li</i>)	
Week 3	Sep 15 / Sep 17	Mencius and Xunzi: Human Nature (性 <i>Xing</i>)	
Week 4	Sep 22 / Sep 24	Laozi: Non-being (無 <i>Wu</i>) and Spontaneity (自然 <i>Ziran</i>)	
Week 5	Sep 29 / Oct 1	Zhuangzi: Wandering at Ease (逍遙遊 <i>xiaoyaoyou</i>) and Equalizing All Things (齊物 <i>qiwu</i>)	Oct 1: National Day (No Class)
Week 6	Oct 6 / Oct 8	<i>The Study of Human Abilities</i> (《人物志》 <i>Renwu Zhi</i>)	
Week 7	Oct 13 / Oct 15	Neo-Daoism: 玄學 <i>Xuanxue</i> (Profound Learning) in the Wei-Jin Period	Oct 15: Mid-Term Quiz
Week 8	Oct 20 / Oct 22	Madhyamaka: The Doctrine of Universal Emptiness (空性 <i>Sunyata</i>)	
Week 9	Oct 27 / Oct 29	Tathāgatagarbha: Buddha-Nature (佛性 <i>Fo Xing</i>)	
Week 10	Nov 3 / Nov 5	Zhu Xi's Moral Metaphysics	
Week 11	Nov 10 / Nov 12	Wang Yangming: The Mind is Principle (心即理 <i>Xin Ji Li</i>)	
Week 12	Nov 17 / Nov 19	Group Presentations I/ Contemporary New Confucianism: Returning to the Root and Beginning Anew I	Graded Assessment
Week 13	Nov 24 / Nov 26	Group Presentations II/ Contemporary New Confucianism: Returning to the Root and Beginning Anew II	Graded Assessment

Reference

No textbook is required. The readings provided below are for reference only. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor or the teaching assistant for additional reading materials tailored to their learning needs or topics of interest.

1. 勞思光：《新編中國哲學史》（共四冊），臺北：三民書局，1984年。
2. 楊國榮，溫帶維：《通識中國哲學》，香港：中華書局香港有限公司，2012年。
3. 牟宗三：《中國哲學十九講》，臺北：臺灣學生書局，1983年。
4. 牟宗三：《中國哲學的特質》，臺北：臺灣學生書局，1974年。
5. 唐君毅：《中國哲學原論——導論篇》，臺北：臺灣學生書局，1984年。
6. 唐君毅：《中國哲學原論——原性篇》，臺北：臺灣學生書局，1984年。
7. 唐君毅：《中國哲學原論——原教篇》，臺北：臺灣學生書局，1994年。
8. 唐君毅：《中國哲學原論——原道篇》（共三卷），臺北：臺灣學生書局，1984年。

9. 劉紀璐：《中國哲學導論：從古代哲學至中國佛學》，臺北：聯經出版社，2021年。
10. 劉紀璐：《宋明理學：形而上學、心靈與道德》，臺北：聯經出版社，2021年。
11. 鄭宗義：《從宋明理學到當代新儒家》，香港：香港中文大學出版社，2024年。

Assessments

Assessment Task	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)	Due date	Explanation
Participation	10%	Weekly	Students are required to attend weekly sessions, engage attentively with lectures, and actively participate in group discussions and other learning activities.
Mid-Term Quiz	20%	October 15	The quiz will consist of True/False and Multiple-Choice (MC) questions. Further details regarding the format and scope will be announced in due course.
Group Project	30%	November 17, 24	Students will work in groups to explore a topic relevant to the course content. Each group is required to deliver a presentation at the end of the semester and submit a short collaborative essay (2,000 words). Detailed guidelines will be announced in due course.
Final Exam	40%	December 7-19	A comprehensive examination consisting of True/False and long-form/essay questions, designed to evaluate overall understanding and analytical skills.

* Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within two weeks of the due date.

Mapping of Course ILOs to Assessment Tasks

Assessed Task	Mapped ILOs	Explanation
Participation	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4	This task assesses students' ability to actively engage with lecture content, assigned readings, and open-ended questions. Through in-class discussions, students are expected to critically analyze core historical concepts (ILO 1, ILO 2), reflect deeply on philosophical issues with their peers (ILO 3), and articulate the relevance of ancient theories to contemporary living (ILO 4).
Mid-term Quiz	ILO 1, ILO 2	This quiz is designed to evaluate students' fundamental understanding and accurate grasp of the philosophical concepts, primary texts, and historical frameworks introduced in the first half of the course (ILO 1, ILO 2). It ensures students possess a

		solid baseline knowledge before moving on to advanced applications.
Group Project	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 4	Through collaborative research, this task assesses students' capacity to explore significant debates within the history of Chinese philosophy (ILO 2) and critically interpret relevant literature (ILO 1). Furthermore, groups are encouraged to bridge theory and practice by linking abstract frameworks to contemporary world problems and their respective academic disciplines (ILO 4).
Final Exam	ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 3, ILO 4	This comprehensive exam evaluates students' mastery over the full spectrum of the course outcomes. It tests their accurate recall and structured knowledge of philosophical traditions (ILO 1, ILO 2), alongside their higher-order thinking skills to formulate independent, logically rigorous arguments regarding the contemporary significance of these ancient wisdoms (ILO 3, ILO 4).

Final Grade Descriptors

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive and nuanced grasp of primary texts and historical traditions in Chinese philosophy. Exhibits exceptional logical rigor in philosophical reflection and significant originality in synthesizing arguments. Displays high capacity for scholarly collaboration and goes beyond core requirements to bridge abstract ancient frameworks with contemporary issues and diverse academic disciplines.
B	Good Performance	Shows solid knowledge and thorough understanding of major philosophical debates and historical shifts. Competent in interpreting textual evidence and capable of analyzing and evaluating philosophical arguments with logical clarity. Displays high motivation to engage in peer discussions and effectively applies philosophical insights to modern contexts.
C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate knowledge of core philosophical concepts and historical traditions from the Pre-Qin period to New Confucianism. Demonstrates basic competence in reading primary texts and some capacity for critical thinking and independent reflection. Shows sufficient effort to fulfill learning goals and participate in collaborative tasks.
D	Marginal Pass	Demonstrates a superficial understanding of foundational Chinese philosophical concepts but lacks depth in historical and textual analysis. Demonstrates a limited ability to formulate

		structured philosophical arguments or make nuanced analytical judgments. Barely meets the minimum requirements for class participation and independent work.
F	Fail	Demonstrates insufficient understanding of core philosophical texts and historical traditions. Lacks the necessary skills for basic textual analysis, critical reflection, or logical reasoning. Exhibits minimal effort toward achieving learning goals and fails to meet the baseline requirements for academic progression in the discipline.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include strengths and areas for improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback including marks should consult the instructor within five working days after the feedback is received.

Late Submissions

A penalty of 10 points (out of 100) will be deducted per day for any late written assignment. No late work will be accepted without a penalty unless an extension has been granted by the instructor in advance due to documented medical or extenuating circumstances.

Make-up Quizzes/Exams

Make-up quizzes or exams will only be accommodated for students who are unable to attend due to documented medical emergencies or compelling and unavoidable reasons. Valid supporting proof must be provided in all cases.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

Course AI Policy

Students are welcome to use generative AI to explore topics, refine concepts, and polish their writing. However, the core arguments of all assignments should be original, and students remain fully accountable for the quality, accuracy, and integrity of their submitted work.