

**Division of Humanities
Tentative Course Syllabus**

Course Code: HUMA 3800
Course Title: Guided Studies in Chinese Philosophical Classics
Course Offered in: Spring 2026
Course Instructor: Dr. Sai Lok NAM
TA: /

Course Description

The course is a guided study of selected Chinese philosophical classics, with emphasis on the hermeneutical issues associated with the texts. The related Chinese philosophers are introduced to the students, including Mencius, Xunzi, Laozi, Zhuangzi, Mozi, Gongsun Longzi and Wang Yang-ming. Topics include: “the basis of li (rites)”, “the rectification of names”, “the four beginnings”, “the four metaphors”, “evil nature”, “ineffable Dao”, “the butterfly’s dream”, “the fish’s happiness”, “white horse is not horse”, “the immutability of things”, “the impure nature of Buddhas”, “embracing the six qualities” and “the questions on Great Learning”.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to do the following:

1	Explain basic concepts in the selected Chinese philosophical classics
2	Examine hermeneutical implications of the selected Chinese philosophical classics
3	Reflect and formulate the argument and worldview of different philosophers
4	Evaluate the significance of traditional values in the context of modern life

Assessment and Grading

Students will be assessed using criterion-referencing and grades will not be assigned using a curve. Detailed rubrics are provided on Canvas outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

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Planned Assessment Tasks (Note: Assessment tasks may be adjusted based on initial course enrollment)

Assessment Task	Mapped ILOs	Contribution to Overall Course grade (%)
Term-end paper	CILO-1, CILO-2, CILO-3, CILO-4	40%
Group presentation	CILO-1, CILO-2, CILO-3	30%
ePortfolio	CILO-4	20%
Course participation	CILO-1, CILO-2	10%

Course Outline

Week	Topics
1	<i>Introduction</i>
2	<i>Conception of ren and li</i>
3	<i>Mencius on human nature</i>
4	<i>Xunzi on human nature</i>
5	<i>Conception of dao</i>
6	<i>Conception of wellbeing</i>
7	<i>Conception of inclusive care</i>
8	<i>Linguistic analysis of language</i>
9	<i>The theory of “objects do not move”</i>
10	<i>The concept of ālaya-vijñāna</i>
11	<i>The teaching of “sudden enlightenment”</i>
12	<i>Zhuxi on the investigation of things</i>
13	<i>Conception of conscience</i>

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Readings

A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (translated and compiled by Wing-tsit Chan)

Competencies

Students are expected to develop the following competencies upon completion of this course:

1. Lifelong learning
2. Application of critical thinking
3. Evaluation of information and sources
4. Collaboration

Course AI Policy

Students may use generative AI tools to assist with gathering information and improving the clarity and conciseness of their writing.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission.

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.