Course Description:

This seminar course is an in-depth investigation into Confucianism in pre-Ch’in China. Its primary objective is to guide students to an original and genuine understanding of the Confucian teachings formulated in their formative years.

For such an understanding to be achieved, what is requisite will be a thorough survey of the thought of Confucius, the founder of the School that bears his name, and those of Mencius and Hsün Tzu, the two towering figures in the Warring States Period who, both coincidentally and unequivocally, proclaimed themselves defenders of the Confucian faith, despite the divergence of their philosophical inclinations.

The thoughts of these three eminent masters had jointly, and yet each distinctively, constructed the basic philosophical and spiritual frameworks within which Confucians of all the subsequent ages were to perceive the world and position themselves.

In investigating their thoughts, special attention will be given to the following questions:

1. From where did they derive their source of inspiration and to what did they aspire? How did they relate themselves to the cultural legacy inherited from the ancient past? What was the core of that legacy?
2. What were the historical backgrounds that gave rise to their thoughts? What epochs they were the so-called “Spring and Autumn” and the “Warring State” periods? What were considered to be the most severe and pressing problems of their times? What blueprints had they put forward as solutions to these problems and how distinct they were from those of their contemporaries, including the Taoists, the Mohists and the Legalists?

3. What sociopolitical backgrounds did they come from? How did they define their identity? What specific missions, on both the individual and communal levels, did they assign to themselves? How did they see their failure to secure the patronage from the wealthy and the powerful and look upon themselves when they could not even fulfill their self-designated missions?

4. Despite the adversities they faced, what made them so perseverant and enthusiastic toward their missions? Why disillusionment and failure could have never defeated them, nor in the slightest disrupted their serenity, equanimity and joyfulness? What actually was their ultimate concern? How did they see human destiny?

5. What were their perceptions of the relationship between transcendence and immanence? What were their philosophical anthropology and psychology, that is, the ways they saw human nature and the heart/mind? What self-cultivation and educational programs did they advocate? What spiritual practices and/or intellectual endeavors were being proposed?

6. As exemplars, what enduring impacts had their words and deeds had on subsequent generations? Will their legacies have anything significant to do with people nowadays?

Interpretations of Confucianism have always been varied. In order to attain an authentic understanding of it, reading the texts that record its teachings, both intensively and extensively, is absolutely a “must”. Students taking this course should, thus, be prepared for devoting much of their time and efforts to tackling the relevant primary sources so as to decipher the messages behind.

While textual analysis, namely philological investigation and philosophical explication, will be the basic methodology employed in this course, such contextual approaches as placing early Confucianism against its economic, socio-political, religious, cultural and historical backgrounds will also be adopted, so as to enable the students to foster a more comprehensive and reliable understanding of the subject matters involved.
# Schedule for Lectures and Students’ Presentations:

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<td>Feb 8</td>
<td>Introduction: Subject Matters, Significance, and Methodology Backgrounds: Cultural Legacy, Sociopolitical Upheaval and the Rise of the <em>Shih</em></td>
<td>Professor</td>
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<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>The <em>Shih</em> as the Cultural Vanguard: Identity and Character</td>
<td>Professor</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Confucius</td>
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<td>Presentations on Comparisons Concluding Remarks</td>
<td>Students Professor</td>
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Grading Scheme:

1. Attendance (10%):
   Attendance will be counted right after the add-drop period. 1 % will be deducted every time when students are found absent without any reasonable excuse.
   Students attending lectures through Zoom should always turn on their videos, otherwise they will only receive 0.5% per lecture even though Zoom records their attendance.
   Students who need to take leave should send apology to the professor in advance, so far as it is possible. They may only be absent from class with good reason and necessary document, such as a certificate issued by a medical doctor, has to be produced afterwards.

2. Participation in class (15%):
   Students should show enthusiasm towards the course and are required to have studied the teaching materials, especially the primary sources quoted in the PPT, before coming to class.
   To ensure their active participation in classroom discussions, every lecture, a few of them will be randomly selected, at various times, to either read the texts and explain them, answer questions, give comments, or offer their thoughts or reflections on subjects or materials that have just been lectured on and discussed about.
   Students being selected are to give their responses. Those who fail to do so will have their participation score (1%) for that lecture forfeited.
   On the other hand, those taking the initiative to raise good questions, provide sensible answers, or contribute meaningfully toward classroom discussions will be rewarded with 1% each time they participate, to a maximum of 5%.

3. Presentation (30%):
   In consultation with the instructor, students are to select an area of interest to them to present in class.
   To ensure that they have four weeks to prepare for their presentation, students should have their subject decided at the end of the first lecture on February 8 and their specific topic no later than two weeks preceding their presentation.
   Likewise, to enable their fellow classmates to have the time to study the presentation materials beforehand, students should have them submitted to the professor by the Saturday before their presentation.
Any delay in submitting topic or presentation materials will affect the final scores of their presentation, with a deduction of 1% per day.
The presentation should have a clear focus. Its arguments should be solidly grounded, systematically organized and logically presented.
The presentation should last for 20 minutes, so that there will be time for discussion and feedback.

4. Final Paper (45%):
The paper should be approximately 6000 words in length. It should demonstrate not only a firm mastery of the relevant primary sources, but also a good understanding of the related secondary sources.
To write a good paper, one should choose a precise research topic, study all the relevant primary sources, write a literature review on the representative scholarly works, state one’s own position, and argue for it solidly and convincingly on the ground of the sources available.
The paper is due two weeks after all the classes are over, that is, May 17, 2023. A penalty of 5% per day will be applied to late submission without reasonable excuse.

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

After taking the course, students will:

1. Gain an overview of Classical Confucianism, discovering how pre-Ch’in Confucian thinkers made sense of the universe in which they lived, how they positioned themselves both as individuals and as members of the society, and what ideals were they committed to, on both personal and societal levels.
2. Familiarize themselves with the primary sources fundamental to the study of Classical Confucianism.
3. Strengthen their ability to present their points of view and comment on that of the others in front of an audience.
4. Learn how to think critically when conducting their research on the subject they choose and to write professionally when delivering their findings.

**References:**

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2. 錢穆，《四書釋義》，修訂重版（臺北：學生書局，1978）。
3. 荊門市博物館主編，《郭店楚墓竹簡》（北京:文物出版社，1998第1版，1997）。
4. 劉寶楠，《論語正義》。
5. 河北省文物研究所定州漢墓竹簡整理小組，《定州漢墓竹簡：論語》（北京：文物出版社，1997）。
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11. 焦循，《孟子正義》。
12. 王先謙，《荀子集解》。
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14. 胡適，《說儒》，《胡適文存》，一集（台北：遠東書局，1961），頁254-61。
15. 余英時，《古代知識階層的興起與發展》，《中國知識階層史論——古代篇》（台北：聯經出版社，1980），頁1-92。
16. 陳榮捷，《初期儒家》，《史語所集刊》，47.4（1976），頁1-76。
17. 王國維，《論孔子學說所以適應於秦漢以來的社會的緣故》，傅孟真先生遺著論輯委員會編，《傅孟真先生集》（台北：臺灣大學，1952），第一冊。
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22. 陳來，《古代宗教與倫理——儒家思想的根源》（北京：生活、讀書、新知三聯書店，1996）。
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59. The several volumes of *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy, Dao Companion to the Analects*, and *Dao Companion to the Philosophy of Xunzi*, published in recent years, contain dozens of interesting and stimulating articles on Classical Confucianism.

N.B.: Among the above listed, the most essential ones have already been placed on reserve in the University’s Library for easy access.