Foundations of Greek and Chinese Thought

Course: PHIL 110, FALL 2002.

Time & Location: MWF 8:30 - 9:45, Dewing 200.

Professor: Jim Behuniak

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Office & Phone: Forum House, Rm. 204. Tel. 337-7349.

Office Hours: Tues. 10:00 to 12:00 & Weds. 1:00 to 3:00, or by appt.

Required Texts:

The Trial and Death of Socrates, tr. Grube (Hackett Press)

The Republic, tr. Lee (Viking Press)

The Analects of Confucius, tr. Ames/Rosemont (Ballantine Press)

Tao Te Ching, tr. Feng (Grove Press)

PHIL 110 Reader (available in Bookstore)

Course Description:

In this course we examine the philosophical foundations of two of the most important civilizations in the planet's history: the classical Greek and the Chinese. The goal is to understand what "philosophical thinking" means in these two contexts and what relevance it holds for us at the dawn of the 21st century.

In pursuit of this goal we will engage in a careful reading of some of the most significant texts in World Literature: the Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, and Republic of Plato, and the Chinese texts, the Analects and the Daodejing.

Thematically, we will be interested in the following questions: What is the object of philosophical thinking for the Greeks and the Chinese? What is the nature and function of a philosophical education in these two traditions? What are the primary philosophical categories or notions that inform the respective social and political institutions in these two traditions? And in what ways do these traditions compare with, contrast with, or supplement one another?

After reading our primary texts, we will turn to some recent, secondary literature and deal topically
with contemporary issues that highlight certain divergences between the mainstream Chinese and Western traditions. We will focus on five topics: Self, Human Rights, Sexism, Democracy, and Religion. In this way, we will bring our understanding of philosophical foundations to bear on some of the most important issues of contemporary relations between China and the Western world.

**Course Goals:**

- to heighten awareness and appreciation of the philosophical foundations of various institutions.
- to increase sensitivity to cultural and societal diversity.
- to foster a sense of ownership of the classical heritage of human civilizations.
- to improve skills of critical reading, writing, and discussion.
- to generate an appreciation of the importance of education in both the Greek and the Chinese traditions - and by extension the importance of our own experience at Kalamazoo College.

**Expectations, Requirements, and Policies:**

Students will be expected to come to class having read the daily assignment and prepared to participate in discussions of that assignment.

To this end, a number of reading questions (sometimes one, sometimes several) will be distributed in class to correspond with the readings. These questions are designed to help you think through the material as you read and to facilitate your participation in class.

Attendance will be taken each day and participation noticed. Both will factor into your final grade. I reserve the right to increase or decrease grades by one-half letter grade on the basis of participation. As for attendance, failure to attend three classes will result in an automatic reduction of one-half letter grade. The fourth absence will result in an automatic reduction of a full letter grade.

Lateness to class will be frowned upon. So I reserve the right to adjust final grades by one-half letter grade (down) for repeated lateness and to adjust final grades one-half letter grade (up) for perfect, punctual attendance.

Absence or tardiness will be excused only in rare cases (this normally involves the student demonstrating the need for such through proper documentation).

Students will also be required to write four papers: three papers 3-5 pages in length and one paper 6-7 pages in length. Topics for the first three papers will be either specified or suggested, whereas the fourth, final paper (which should deal in some manner with one of the five topics we cover) will be developed in consultation with the professor.
All papers are due on the date specified in the course calendar and late papers will not be accepted (or, accepted under very rare circumstances, like those of excused absences — see above).

**ALSO,** I am committed to a classroom environment in which every student can perform at his or her best. If you have a physical or learning disability that might interfere with your performance, please see me as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made. All such disabilities should be registered with the Dean of Student’s Office.

**NOTE:** The goal of this course, and of education in general, is to further your ability to engage the new, to connect ideas, and to communicate what you feel and think in ways that make a genuine contribution. For this reason, plagiarism and improper collaboration on class assignments will be taken very seriously. On these matters, please consult Kalamazoo College's Honor System to which each of us is asked to abide. Do consult with me if there is any confusion in this area. In every case, instances of academic irresponsibility will be forwarded to the Student Development Office and will result in severe grade reduction.

**Course Calendar:**

F 9/27 *Trial and Death*, pp. 1-20.
M 9/30 *Trial and Death*, pp. 21-42.
W 10/2 *Trial and Death*, pp. 43-58.
F 10/4 *Republic*, pp. 1-55.
M 10/7 *Republic*, pp. 56-165. **PAPER #1 DUE**
W 10/9 *Republic*, catch up on reading.
M 10/14 *Republic*, catch up on reading.
W 10/16 "Divided Line" Handouts.
F 10/18 Finish *Republic*, 265-404.
M 10/21 *Analects*, pp. 1-7, 20-37, 45-65. **PAPER #2 DUE**
W 10/23 Read *Analects*
F 10/25 Read *Analects*
M 10/28 Read *Analects*
W 10/30 Read Analects

F 11/1 Read Analects

M 11/4 Read Tao Te Ching PAPER #3 DUE

W 11/6 Read Tao Te Ching

F 11/8 Read Tao Te Ching

M 11/11 Reader, Selection 1. Topic: SELF

W 11/13 Reader, Selection 2. Topic: SELF

F 11/15 Reader, Selection 3. Topic: HUMAN RIGHTS

M 11/18 Reader, Selection 4. Topic: HUMAN RIGHTS

W 11/20 Reader, Selection 5. Topic: SEXISM

F 11/22 Thanksgiving


F 11/29 Final Discussion

PAPER #4 IS DUE ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH by 5:00 pm.