This course examines the two most influential figures in Chinese history and the disciples and schools that traced their origins to them. Class time will mainly be concerned with discussion of the texts attributed to Laozi (aka Lao Tzu) and Confucius (aka Kongzi), the conflicting interpretations of their teachings from ancient times to the present, and the proliferation of schools that claimed to transmit their original meanings. An eminent Chinese historian once said, “Every era has its own Confucius. There are many different Confucius[es] in any one era.” This adage, as we shall see, applies to both.

This course seeks to situate these two figures in history by reading key classical texts to understand their major teachings and examining how their followers interpreted those teachings. Because our primary sources are modern translations of classical Chinese texts, we also consider how the translators’ choices constitute a kind of interpretation. Class sessions devoted to discussion of primary texts, secondary sources.

ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS: I will make reasonable accommodations on assignment deadlines for a student who requires them because of a documented disability as allowed by the Dean of Student’s office. If you need such accommodations, please discuss them with me no later than the end of the second week of classes so that we can make necessary arrangements for the semester.

TEXTS FOR PURCHASE:
Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching, Robert Henricks (Columbia)
Lives of Confucius, Nylan and Wilson (Doubleday)
Daoism (The Norton Anthology of World Religions), James Robson, ed.
The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China, Sebastien Billioud and Joel Thoraval (Oxford)

Δ electronic reserve
• Blackboard
† JSTOR or other full text database
useful on-line resource:

I. INTRODUCTION: COURSE THEMES 1/19
Masters & disciples; schools & lineages; religion vs. philosophy; inclusive humanism vs. secular humanism; texts: early accretion & later interpretation/transmission; textuality & translation; historical contexts; the Dao 道; governing 治國; cultivation & self transcendence 修身

II. EARLY CHINA AND THE HUNDRED SCHOOLS/LINEAGES 1/21
Eastern Zhou (770-256 BCE); Spring & Autumn (770-486); Warring States (403-256)
“Daoism Lost and Found,” Daoism, 45-68
“Essential Points on the Six Lineages of Thought,” Daoism, 154-157

A. Lao Tzu (Laozi), Tao Te Ching (Dao de jing), and his early successors
1. Laozi: basic text & teachings 1/26
“The Scripture of the Way and its Virtue,” Daoism, 77-82, 85-96
2. Guodian/Bamboo Slips Version (ca. 300 BCE) 1/28
   “Laozi A-B,” Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching, Henricks, trans., 1-22, 28-110 (Compare with Daoism, 85-96)
3. Great One 2/2
   “Laozi C,” Lao Tzu’s Tao Te Ching, Henricks, trans., 111-129
4. Laozi’s early successors 2/4
   • “Autumn Floods,” Chuang-tzu: Basic Writings, Burton Watson, trans. (Columbia, 1964), 96-110
   • “Master of Huainan” & “Inward Training,” Daoism, 117-132

Précis #1 due 2/5

B. Confucius (Kongzi, 551-479 BCE) and the Analects
1. Confucius/Master Kong: basic text & teachings 2/9
   • The Formation of the Analects,” The Analects: Norton, 152-165
2. The Translated Analects 2/11
   • Confucian Analects, James Legge, trans. (Clarendon Press, 1892), 154-207
   • The Analects of Confucius, Arthur Waley, trans. (Everyman’s Library, 1938)

Assessing the Dao I 2/16
Students represent a textual tradition to debate the meaning of the Dao

C. The Masters’ Early Followers
1. Zengzi (Zeng Shen, 505-436 BCE), The Classic of Filial Piety 2/18
   • The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence, Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger Ames, trans.
     (Hawaii, 2009), 1-22; 105-118
   • The Sage and his Associates,” The Analects: Norton, 178-192
2. Mencius, Mengzi (371-289 BCE) 2/23
   • The Mencius, D.C. Lau trans., Bk. 1A-B, Bk. 2A, 6A, 7B
   • Mencius, Xunzi, and the Legacy of Confucius,” The Analects: Norton, 166-177
3. Xunzi (ca. 312-238 BCE) 2/25
   • “A Discussion of Heaven,” Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings, Burton Watson, trans. (Columbia,
     1964), 79-88
   • “A Discussion of Rites,” Hsün Tzu, Watson, trans., 89-111
   • Ori Tavor, “Xunzi’s Theory of Ritual Revisited: Reading Ritual as Corporal Technology,”
     Dao: Journal of Comparative Philosophy 12 (Sept. 2013) 3: 313-330

Précis #2 due 2/26

III. MEDIEVAL DAOISM
A. Celestial Masters Daoism 3/1
   Classical Daoism, Daoism, 159-183
   • The Xiang’er Commentary on the Laozi,” Daoism, 193-207
B. Ge Hong (283-343) 3/3
   • The Inner Chapters of the Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity,” Daoism, 223-239
C. Upper Clarity Daoism: Yang Xi (330-386) 3/8
   • The Marvelous Scripture,” Daoism, 292-304
D. Wondrous Scripture Daoism 3/10
Daoism, 167-168
“The Wondrous Scripture of the Upper Chapters of Limitless Salvation,” Daoism, 305-320
Chinese Hell Scrolls

Spring Break!!

D. Du Guangting (850-933) 3/29
Daoism, 359-366, 418-429, 432-434

E. Popularization and Vernacularization of Daoism 3/31
Daoism, 455-463, 557-571
Journeys, West and North, Daoism, 573-591

Précis #3 due 4/8

IV. Confucianism of Imperial China
A. Commentaries and the problem of meaning 4/5-7
• “Gods in the Analects”
† John Makeham, “The Earliest Extant Commentary on Lunyu” (T’oung Pao 83 (1997): 260-299
• The Doctrine of the Mean, Wing-tsit Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton, 1963), 95-114
Nylan and Wilson, Lives of Confucius, 101-137

B. The Imperial Cult of Confucius 4/12
Nylan and Wilson, Lives of Confucius, 138-164
The Autumnal Sacrifice to Confucius
† Wilson, “Sacrifice and the Imperial Cult of Confucius,” History of Religions (2002) 251-287

C. Song-Ming Revivalism 4/14-19

IV. Daoism Today 4/21-28
A. Daoism, 707-713, 727-739, 748-754
B. “Han Xin’s Revenge, a Daoist Mystery” (film), Patrice Fava, dir.

V. Confucianism Today 5/3-5
Billioud and Thoraval, The Sage and the People: The Confucian Revival in China

Précis #4 due 5/6
Course Requirements, etc.

Final course grade determined on the basis of the following:

- regular class participation: 20%
- discussion board posts: 20%
- Précis: 15% each (60%)

Attendance is mandatory; final grade is subject to reduction by one third of a grade for every three unexcused absences. Students are expected to read the assignments very carefully and participate in class discussions with unbridled enthusiasm.

Discussion board posts should be written in clear and grammatical prose, approximately 100 words unless otherwise specified, and respond to the posted question or topic (if provided) based on at least one specific example from the reading, which should be cited by page number (full citation of author, title, etc. not necessary).

Grading criteria for class participation: I wish I could read minds so that I could know what you’re thinking. Your grade, however, is based on your oral participation in the classroom.

- Excellent (A range): regular participation that demonstrates a thorough understanding of the readings by using concrete examples and clear evidence of critical insight into larger issues raised in the readings.
- Good-very good (B range): consistent participation that shows a sound grasp of the readings by using concrete examples with critical assessment of the sources.
- Satisfactory (C range): participation that shows an understanding of the readings.
- Poor (D range): infrequent or rare participation that suggests hasty or inattentive reading of the sources.
- Failing: mere physical presence or less in the classroom.

Précis: There are five writing assignments (précis) based on the sources listed in the syllabus. The use of any other sources not listed on the syllabus must be approved in advance. Web sources in the “.com” domain should be used with extreme caution.

Your analysis of the texts in these essays must be thoughtful and your prose cogent. Extensions granted for extraordinary circumstances only and requests made before 24 hours of the deadlines.

What is a précis?

A concise or abridged statement or view.

“An expository style of writing, analogous in structure to an essay but which contains a summary of another piece of text. In essence, the entire content summarizes all the main ideas, arguments and abstractions within the text into a shorter passage a fraction of its original length, in order to provide insight into the original author’s thesis. The writer of the précis is careful to avoid copying any direct wording from the original text in order to avoid academic plagiarism, except in short passage quotations where necessary.”

A précis should

provide a complete, accurate summary of the reading under consideration. This is your first and most important duty. Make clear the author’s thesis, author’s structure/organization, the building blocks of the author’s argument, and the kinds of sources used to sustain the argument.

offer a critical evaluation the reading(s) under consideration. How effective are the sources and the use of evidence for the specific argument being made? How compelling is the thesis/argument? What questions remain or are opened by the scholarship?

address how the reading(s) relate to a larger body of scholarship. As the term goes on, it will easier to meet this criterion.

The art of writing a successful précis lies in the author’s skill to identify a critical angle on the assigned reading(s). This angle enables the writer to convey the essence of the work through a critical summary. Look through the Journal of Asian Studies or The American Historical Review for book reviews. A good scholarly book review is a great model for the précis you will write for the course.
Each précis should be submitted to us *electronically by 9AM* on the due day. Please note that many classes have you read more than one author. Although you may decide to prioritize one author over others, each précis must provide a critical summary (discussion of argument, organization, evidence) of each reading assigned for that class session. Your précis should be presented in a standard 12-point font, double-spaced and use standard margins. Please name your précis file <LASTNAME#.docx>. Also be sure that your name appears on the first page of each of your précis and, heck, why not give it a title?

**Grading criteria:** A “fair” (i.e., C-range) essay is *coherently written,* mostly *documented,* and descriptive of the source’s contents. A “good” (i.e., B-range) essay is *clearly written,* properly *documented,* *logically sound,* and presents an interesting and convincing *interpretation* of the sources. An “excellent” (i.e., A-range) essay presents a *compelling argument* for a thoughtful and imaginative *interpretation* of the sources based on a thorough reading and re-reading of the sources and careful reflection upon the problems raised. A *compelling argument* meets three criteria: (1) a clear formulation of a *problem,* (2) *analysis* of the texts under scrutiny, and (3) a scrupulous *use and citation* of supporting *evidence* from the texts (i.e. “documentation,” see below). A *thoughtful interpretation* requires digging beneath the surface meaning of the texts to a subtler understanding of their connections to broader contexts. A “prose” grade of C– (i.e., less than “satisfactory”) is assigned to grammatically correct but informal and stylistically weak writing; and D+ or below for repeated infractions of basic rules of writing, depending upon frequency and egregiousness of such errors.

**N.B.** Present an *argument* based on your own *interpretation* of the sources. Document your claims. Develop your ideas fully. Your most important points should be *clearly stated,* *explicated,* and *documented.* When you quote a passage from the sources, provide enough information so that your reader does not need to consult the source for further clarification.

A thorough understanding of a text requires reading, reflection, and re-reading. A well written paper requires editing, self-critique, and re-writing.

Don’t simply summarize the content of your sources. Don’t assume that any major point you want to make is self-evident. In using evidence to support your argument, don’t assume that the facts speak for themselves.

**Documentation:** You must cite all sources of information used, *even if you don’t quote a source directly.* Cite relevant pages when you refer to specific passage in the text. Cite exact page numbers of any source from which you quote directly, although it is rarely necessary to cite the same source more than once in the same paragraph. Use proper citation forms (i.e., footnotes, end notes, in-text parenthetical notes) as described in the *Hamilton College Style Sheet.* Be consistent in the citation format used.

If you do not cite the sources from which you derive information, or on which you base your description of an event, or interpretation of an idea, etc., the implication is that the idea is your own, or that it is based on your own primary research. Failure to cite such sources is *plagiarism.*