East Asian Studies 551
Technologies of Self in Early China

Syllabus, Fall 2020

Instructor: Robin D.S. Yates
Time: Tuesday 2.35-5.25 p.m.
Location: 688 Sherbrooke, Room 486 (unless decided otherwise)
Instructor’s Office: Room 265, 688 Sherbrooke
Office Hours: By appointment
Email: robin.yates@mcgill.ca

Course Description
Readings in translation on self-cultivation drawn from early Chinese (5th B.C.E. - ca. 1st century BCE) Confucian, Daoist, and Legalist philosophical texts, together with other texts retrieved by archaeologists, and their interpretations by modern scholars, will be analyzed in relation to the evolving construction of the “individual” in Chinese thought, society, politics, and ritual.

Methods of Instruction
Students will be expected to participate actively in the class and attend all sessions, whether the class is taught in person or remotely. After the first three sessions (i.e., the first three weeks of the course), which will be led by the instructor, students will be required to select two sessions for which they will be responsible. They will be responsible for assigning reading(s), presenting to the seminar the issues arising from those readings, and for leading the class discussion. These readings will be posted on myCourses. Students may choose from the required and/or recommended readings, selections from them, or other appropriate reading material chosen in consultation with the instructor.
It is strongly recommended that students discuss with the instructor the readings that they will choose to assign and the outline of the presentation prior to its delivery.
Further, readings that the presenter(s) assign(s) for all other members of the class should be given at least five days prior to the class meeting time. In other words, the readings for a Tuesday class should be decided upon no later than the Friday before the class: this will give the rest of the class sufficient time to read and think about the assigned material. Presenters will be expected to read widely in the literature of the topic of their choice and not limit themselves to the reading(s) that they assign. The discussion with the instructor may be done either in person and/or electronically.

Topics for the final research paper must be discussed with the instructor at least three weeks before the end of term and, ideally, be based upon one of the topics that they have presented in class.

Knowledge of the Chinese language is not required.
Learning Outcomes
Students will become familiar with some of the basic texts of the Chinese philosophical tradition and learn some of the basic concepts and ideas of Chinese philosophy relating to ethics, the nature of a moral life, and the techniques of self-cultivation from the period of its greatest florescence. Perhaps, they will also begin to learn how to apply them in their own lives. In addition, they will learn how to present their ideas orally in a clear and logical way, speak publically, lead discussions, and improve their writing skills.

Assessment Policy:

Grades will be based on:

30% class presentations of weekly readings (two presentations per student, 15% each); 10% class participation; 20% annotated bibliography for the final research paper; 10% presentation of research proposal; 30% final research paper.

The annotated bibliography should consist of a minimum one and a half-page outline of the topic of the research paper, its methodology and theoretical focus, followed by at least 10 items, with at least half a page on each item, explaining the main thesis of the book or article, a critique, and how the item will contribute to the main argument in the final research paper. Detailed instructions will be provided later in the term.

Policies on Academic Integrity:

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.” (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and Evaluation.)

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures” (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l’étudiant de l’Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue). »

« L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que
peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).»

“Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights” (The Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities is available here).

**Required Books:**


Shirley Chan, ed., *Dao Companion to the Excavated Guodian Bamboo Manuscripts* (e-book) (Cham, Switzerland, 2019)

**Recommended Book:**


**Recommended website to identify further relevant sources:** Bibliography of Asian Studies available through the McGill Libraries database page: http://bmc.lib.umich.edu/bas

**Recommended bibliography for recent studies on early China in Western languages:** Annual Bibliography in the e-journal *Early China*

**Description of how the course will be delivered remotely for those students not able to attend the seminar in person on campus is provided at the end of the syllabus.**
# Syllabus

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introduction to the Course and Background to Warring States China</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 08</td>
<td>No Reading</td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>“To Become a God”</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, Chs. 1 and 2, in <em>The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life</em></td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Approaches to Warring States Texts: Confucius as the Beginning</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, Ch. 3, “On Relationships: Confucius and As-If Rituals,” in <em>The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recommended: Herbert Fingarette, <em>Confucius: The Secular as Sacred</em></td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Confucian Ideas and Practice</th>
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<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>Readings:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mark Edward Lewis, <em>Writing and Authority in Early China</em>, ch. 4 “Writing the Self,” pp. 147-93</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, <em>Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong e-book</em></td>
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<td>Recommended:</td>
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<td>Andrew H. Plaks, <em>Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung: The Highest Order of Cultivation and On the Practice of the Mean</em></td>
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<th>Week 5</th>
<th>The Notion of the Individual in Early China</th>
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<td>Oct. 06</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
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**Week 6**  
**Early Daoist Mysticism: Reading the “Nei ye” (Inward Training) of *Guanzi***  
Oct. 13  
Reading:  
Harold D. Roth, *Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism*  
Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, “On Vitality: The Inward Training and Being Like a Spirit,” in *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life*

**Week 7**  
**Readings in the *Laozi***  
Oct. 20  
Reading:  
Michael Lafargue, *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching*, Ch. 3 “Self-Cultivation,” 53-85  

**Week 8**  
**Readings in Excavated Manuscripts (1): the Guodian and Mawangdui *Laozi***  
Oct. 27  
Readings:  
Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China*  
Robert G. Henricks, *Laozi’s Tao Te Ching*

**Week 9**  
**Readings in Excavated Manuscripts (2): The *Xing zi ming chu* and Emotions (qing)**  
Nov. 03  
Readings:  
Chad Hansen, “Qing (Emotions) in Pre-Buddhist Chinese Thought,” in *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy*, ed. Joel Marks and Roger T. Ames, 181-211  
Erica Fox Brindley, “Music and ‘Seeking One’s Heart-mind’ in the ‘Xing Zi Ming Chu’,” *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 5.2 (Sum 2006): 247-55

**Week 10**  
**Self in the Zhuangzi***  
Nov. 10  
Readings:
Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, “On Spontaneity: Zhuangzi and a World of Transformation,” in *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life*


Harold D. Roth, “Bimodal Mystical Experience in the “Qiwulun” Chapter of the *Zhuangzi*,” in *Hiding the World in the World*, ed. Scott Cook

“From “Merging the Body with the Mind” to “Wandering to Unitary Qi”: A Discussion of Zhuangzi’s Realm of the True Man and Its Corporeal Basis,” in *Hiding the World in the World*, ed. Scott Cook


**Recommended:**


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**Week 11**

**Controlling the Self in the *Xunzi* and the “Legalist” Thought of the *Hanfeizi***

**Nov. 17**

Readings:

Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, Ch. 8, “On Humanity: Xunzi and Putting Pattern on the World,” *The Path: What Chinese Philosophers Can Teach Us about the Good Life*

Paul R. Goldin, “Han Fei’s Doctrine of Self-Interest” and “Li Si, Chancellor of the Universe,” in *After Confucius*, pp. 58-75


**Recommended:**


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**Week 12**

**Women and Personhood in Early Chinese Literature, Thought, and Technical Texts***

**Nov. 24**

Readings:

Paul R. Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* (selections)

Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China* (selections)

**Recommended:**

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Li-Hsiang L. Rosenlee, *Confucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation*

**Annotated Bibliography due**

**Week 13**
Dec. 01 Presentations of Student Research

**Final Papers Due:** 4.00 p.m., December 8, electronically or, if allowed, by hard copy at Room 265, 688 Sherbrooke Street West
Remote Delivery for students not able to attend in person on campus:

If the students cannot attend the seminar in person, I will ensure that they can participate in the following ways:

1. When they are due to present class materials and lead the discussion, I will communicate with them either by Zoom and/or email and ask them to prepare an outline and power-point of their presentation;

2. I will discuss with them and, where necessary, suggest changes to and corrections of this outline and power-point;

3. I will upload the power-point to myCourses ahead of class time so that all students can download and watch the ppt during the class;

4. I will ask the students to use Zoom (preferably, or other remote delivery system if Zoom is not available) to make their presentations;

5. I will ask the presenting student to prepare a series of questions for discussion and post them prior to the class; I will ask them to include these questions in their ppts.

6. I will ask all students in the class to prepare written responses to these questions and I will post these responses in the Chat function;

7. If students, including the presenter, cannot attend the class in person, I will use Zoom in myCourses and have the discussion remotely;

8. Although the course concerns early Chinese philosophy and thus should be considered non-political, I will NOT record the discussions, as the discussions in the class may raise issues that are deemed politically sensitive (such as issues related to freedom, political independence, autocracy, etc.). I want students to be free to learn from each other and express themselves freely in class without fear of possible retribution. I will consult IT Services to ensure that, if possible, the technology is present in myCourses and Zoom that will prevent or at least restrict students from recording and downloading class discussions.

Note:
Should Montreal be ordered to go to a full lockdown during the course of the term, I will go to a full remote delivery of the seminar.