

OLLI: CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Syllabus

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This Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) course on Chinese philosophy will meet on three consecutive Thursdays, in the evening from 6pm to 8pm, in the Madrone Room at the Humboldt County Office of Education in Eureka, 901 Myrtle Avenue (in the Burre Center). On the first Thursday, there will be a brief overview of the course, and a lecture and discussion on Taoism. The main focus of this first class will be on the “metaphysical” implications of Taoism, and how Taoism challenged the traditional Chinese concept of Tao, or the Way of the World. The second class will focus on the “ethics” of Confucius, especially in light of the writings of the *Analects*, and the last class will focus on the “religion” or spiritual philosophy of Chinese Buddhism. All three of these traditional Chinese philosophies – Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism – are traditional Chinese religions too. So while the focus will be on the predominant contribution of each philosophy/religion to Chinese thought, their overlap will also be made clear. The method for this course is *philosophical* – rational analysis of the main principles of these philosophies (a) in themselves, (b) in contrast with each other, (c) in contrast with some ideas from mainstream Western philosophical and religious traditions, and (d) in contrast with the “philosophy” of China today. The main goal is to provide students with a most general understanding of these Chinese philosophies so they can be made sense of in the more “global” context that we find ourselves in today.

TEXTS

Three packets will be provided (free of charge) by the instructor, on Taoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism, respectively.

REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance.

IMPORTANT NOTE

If you can, please consult my webpage at www.humboldt.edu/~mib1 for numerous resources for studying Chinese philosophy. Among other things, these resources include readings from the public domain and PowerPoint presentations. If you need any help finding these resources, please email or call me (information above).