

Humanities Seminar/ Fall 2018

The Future of China's Past: Traditional Lenses for Exploring China

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Course Description

China's rise may be the single most transformative event of the contemporary world. Many have called attention to the economic and political impact of China's rise, but what of China's cultural renaissance? What does it bode for the future? The reinvention of China's contemporary cultural identity is being shaped in terms of its past, but which past (or what combination of pasts) is being held up as the model—Communism, Confucianism, Legalism? And what role do religious traditions, Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) have in these models? This course looks at current engagements with models of China's past with an eye toward exploring the parameters and possibilities shaping China's future. It introduces the traditional lenses of Chinese thought—Confucianism, Legalism, Daoism, and Buddhism—and reflects on their potential relevance for contemporary China. In short, the course is structured around two aims: to introduce key aspects of China's traditions and traditional cultures through a reading of select primary source documents, and to look at ways in which these key aspects are contributing to contemporary debates in China over its future directions.

Bio: Professor Welter began his academic study of China over 40 years ago and has continued his explorations of China and East Asia's intellectual traditions ever since, earning a PhD with a focus on Chinese Buddhism in 1986. He is currently an executive member of the International Confucian Association and the lead investigator of a major research project investigating Hangzhou Buddhist culture.

Week Topics and Readings

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1	<p>The Return of the Native: Mao & Confucius in Tian'anmen Square The Fall and Rise of Confucius in Modern China</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Andrew Jacobs, "Confucius Statue Vanishes Near Tian'anmen Square," <i>New York Times</i> article (April 22, 2011). http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/23/world/asia/23confucius.html?_r=0"Xi Jinping Speech in Commemoration of the 2565th Anniversary of Confucius' Birth," <i>CHINA~US Focus Library</i> (September 24, 2014). http://library.chinausfocus.com/article-1534.htmlJin Kai, "The Chinese Communist Party's Confucian Revival," <i>The Diplomat</i> (September 30, 2014). http://thediplomat.com/2014/09/the-chinese-communist-partys-confucian-revival/ <p>9 pages total recommended</p>
2	<p>The Return of the Sage: The Contemporary Relevance of Confucius' Teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hebert Fingarette, <i>Confucius: The Secular as Sacred</i> (Waveland Press, 1998; originally published 1972) <p>36 pages total recommended</p>
3	<p>Popular Images of Confucius: Traditional Pictorial Depictions of the Life of Confucius</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Painting of the Sacred Saga of Confucius</i> (Anhui Province: Lujiang Chinese Culture Education Center, 2008) www.amtb.tw/wanxi/csg/cp001.html, pp. 8-50 (picture book, minimal text) • Julia K. Murray, “The Temple of Confucius and Pictorial Biographies of the Sage” <i>The Journal of Asian Studies</i>, Vol. 55, No. 2 (May, 1996), pp. 269-300: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2943360 (supplementary) <p>42 pages recommended; 32 pages supplementary</p>
4	<p>The Authoritarian Empire: The Role of Legalism & Militarism in China</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Legalism and Huang-Lao Thought,” http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Legalism.pdf • “Is ‘China’s Machiavelli’ Now Its Most Important Political Philosopher?” https://thediplomat.com/2015/01/is-chinas-machiavelli-now-its-most-important-political-philosopher/ , pp. 1-12 (13-29 supplementary) • “Xi Jinping and China’s Return to One-Man Rule” https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/xi-jinping-and-chinas-return-to-one-man-rule/ (5 pages) <p>17 pages recommended; 17 pages supplementary</p>
5	<p>The Cycle of Life: The Way of Returning to the Fundamental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laozi, <i>Daode jing</i> (The Way and Its Power/Virtue) (Robert Eno translation, 2010/2016) http://www.indiana.edu/~p374/Daodejing.pdf (41 pages) • Reading from <i>Zhuangzi/Chuang-tzu</i>, “The story of Cook Ding cutting up an ox,” substitute http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/zhuangzi_caring_for_life.pdf (2 pages) for the “Nourishing the Lord of Life” chapter of the <i>Zhuangzi</i> http://www2.isu.edu/~wolpjame/ting.pdf <p>43 pages recommended</p>
6	<p>Wisdom and Compassion in Mahayana Buddhism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heart Sutra</i> and the way of Mahayana wisdom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mitchell and Jacoby, eds., <i>Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience</i> (Oxford University Press, 2013), 121-122. • <i>Lotus Sutra</i> and the way of Mahayana compassion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Parable of the Burning House</i>, from ch. 3 of the <i>Lotus Sutra</i>; Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., <i>Sources of Chinese Tradition</i> (Columbia University Press, 2000), 448-450. <p>4 pages recommended</p>
7	<p>A New Look at Old Tradition: Reimagining East Asian Buddhism from Hangzhou</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welter, “A New Look at Old Tradition: Reimagining East Asian Buddhism from Hangzhou,” draft manuscript, 27 pages. <p>27 pages recommended</p>
8	<p>A Tale of Two Stūpas: The Revival of Buddhism in Contemporary China</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welter, “A Tale of Two Stūpas: The Revival of Buddhism in Contemporary China,” draft manuscript (presentation only, reading not available) http://time.com/4260593/china-buddhism-religion-religious-freedom/ https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2017/06/08/chinas-astounding-religious-revival/

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	<p> https://www.pri.org/stories/2015-05-14/chinas-atheist-communist-government-embracing-very-capitalist-form-buddhism http://factsanddetails.com/china/cat3/sub11/entry-5593.html http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/11/religion-china-buddhism-enjoys-a-revival/ </p> <p style="text-align: center;">32 pages total supplementary</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>One Belt, One Road: Contemporary China’s International Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Belt and Road Portal” https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn (reference only) • “The five main projects of the Belt and Road Initiative—A visual explainer,” <i>South China Morning Post</i> http://multimedia.scmp.com/news/china/article/One-Belt-One-Road/index.html (reference only) • “Behind China’s \$1 trillion dollar plan to shake up the economic order,” NY Times https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/13/business/china-railway-one-belt-one-road-1-trillion-plan.html (12 pages) <p style="text-align: center;">12 pages recommended</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>China Beyond Mao: Reflections on the Prospects for China’s Confucian Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ruiping Fan, “Introduction: The Rise of Authentic Confucianism,” 1-13; Jiang Qing, “From Mind Confucianism to Political Confucianism,” 17-32; and Ruiching Wang, “The Rise of Political Confucianism in Contemporary China,” 33-45, in Ruiping Fan, ed., <i>The Renaissance of Confucianism in China</i> (Springer, 2011) <p style="text-align: center;">45 pages recommended</p>