Philosophy 5700-001/6700-001: Advanced Political Philosophy
Political Science 5960-001/6960-085: Political Philosophy—East & West

Core Course Information
(This is not a syllabus. The official syllabus will be made available by the first day of class.)

Class Time and Location: M, W 1:25 PM - 2:45 PM, GC 3680

Instructors: Mark Button Eric Hutton
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(E-mail is usually the best way to reach us)

Course website: Canvas

Course Description:

This is a team-taught interdisciplinary course in comparative political philosophy. The primary aim of this course is to put “Eastern” and “Western” political and moral philosophy in critical conversation. This course is dedicated to developing cross-cultural competency in relation to the foundations of the political, ethical, and cultural traditions of China and the West. We have designed this course because we believe that cross-cultural dialogue and comparative philosophical understanding are not “luxuries” of intellectual sophistication but essential prerequisites of sound ethical judgment and wise cosmopolitan citizenship in a world of heightened global interdependency.

By integrating the disciplinary tools and distinct intellectual orientations of philosophy and political science this course will simultaneously keep one eye on the nuances of historical and cultural context within religious and philosophical argumentation, and one eye on the contemporary political, legal, and ethical consequences of these diverse philosophical sources. Our central approach will feature the comparative examination of foundational texts in the philosophical and cultural traditions of China and the West. Drawing on diverse readings from the genres of poetry, history, philosophy, and law, the students in this class will consider how the Asian and Western traditions share commonalities and how important differences developed early on in their respective historical trajectories. Students will also explore significant differences and robust disagreements internal to these broad intellectual traditions.

Pre-requisite: None, but prior courses in philosophy or political science are highly recommended.

Expected Learning Outcomes: By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Participate in cross-cultural dialogue in an informed and critical manner.
- Interpret texts in a manner that is sensitive to historical and cultural contexts.
- Demonstrate the ability to engage in nuanced and rigorous cross-cultural comparisons in written work and oral presentations.
- Utilize examples from historical sources to support or critique claims that are made today about the Chinese and Western traditions.
The following books are required for the course.


All other required readings will be available electronically.

Course Requirements:

A) Students are expected to finish each assigned reading before the class meeting on that assignment. Students are also expected to bring the assigned reading to class with them.

B) Participation: students are expected to participate in discussion in class. For in-class discussion, raising thoughtful questions, responding insightfully to remarks by other students, answering questions from the instructor, and reading aloud (when asked by the instructor) will all count towards fulfilling this requirement. Students who are absent from class are still responsible for knowing what was said both during lecture and discussion, so if you miss class, be sure to get notes from a classmate.

C) Short papers: Three papers of 700–1000 words (roughly 2–3 pages) will be due on 9/10, 9/26, and 11/14. Students will be required to submit the papers to Turnitin.com and to submit a hardcopy.

D) Midterm paper, due 10/26: For undergraduates, a paper of 1400–2000 words (roughly 4–6 pages) will be due on the day indicated. Students will be required to submit the paper to Turnitin.com and to submit a hardcopy. For graduate students, the paper must be in the range of 3000–3500 words (roughly 10–12 pages).

E) Final Paper, due 12/12: For undergraduates, a paper of 1400–2000 words (roughly 4–6 pages) will be due on the day indicated. Students will be required to submit the paper to Turnitin.com and to submit a hardcopy. For graduate students, the paper must be in the range of 3000–3500 words (roughly 10–12 pages).

Grading:

Participation in discussions, 10%; short papers, 25% total; midterm paper, 30%; final paper, 35%.