

History of Chinese Philosophy

Fall 2026

Mid-Term Essay

Confucianism

Due Tuesday, October 13

All papers must be properly word processed or typed with 1" margins on the top, sides and bottom. Use double-spacing and no larger than 12pt font. Turn in by uploading to Lamakū as a pdf file. Use the following format to title your file: lastname Phil 301 #1. Do not use AI to do this assignment. I want to see evidence that you have read and thoughtfully reflected upon the relevant texts.

Write a 5-7 page paper on Confucianism. Explain how Confucianism may be regarded as a Humanism and then the crucial conception of the *junzi* (君子), and the virtues of *ren* (仁), *li* (禮), *yi* (義), *xiao* (孝), *shu* (恕), and *zhi* (知). What would wisdom consist of in Confucian philosophy? Then explain the difference between Mengzi and Xunzi in the development of Confucian philosophy. Which of these Confucian thinkers do you think is right about human nature? Finally, what are the key points in the rejection of Confucianism in the philosophy of Mozi, the founder of Mohism? What is meant by the important Mohist conception of *jian'ai* (兼愛)? To what extent do you think Confucian philosophy is relevant to us today?

You may also bring in to your reflection something from the films *Hero* and *Ju Dou*.

Rubric

1) Writing 20%

Grammar and spelling, composition and style. Your essay should be well organized. There should be an introduction, development of a theme, and a conclusion.

2) Philosophical Content 50%

The essay should reflect an adequate understanding of the texts. Your exposition of the text should include *at least two quotations* from the primary text material. All quotes should be properly marked within the text and must include a reference to the text cited.

3) Commentary 30%

Your own thoughtful reflections on the topic