

PHIL 400: ZHUANGZI

Instructor: Rose Novick
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Pronouns: she/her

Class time: MW 3:30-5:20pm
Class location: SAV 130
Office hours: WF 2:25-3:25pm

1. Course description

This seminar will be devoted to a close reading of the proto-Daoist text *Zhuangzi*, which dates to Warring States China. We may read other texts (primary and secondary) to help us understand the context of the *Zhuangzi*.

2. Required course texts

- Ziporyn (trans), [*Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings*](#), (Hackett Publishing)
- Novick (trans), *Zhuangzi: The Inner Chapters* (uploaded to Canvas)

3. Further reading

For general background on Warring States Chinese philosophy:

- A.C. Graham (1989), [*Disputers of the Tao*](#) (Open Court)
- Tao Jiang (2021), [*Origins of Moral-Political Philosophy in Early China*](#) (Oxford UP)

Other translations of the *Zhuangzi* (in order of how much I like them):

- Graham (1986), [*Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters*](#) (Hackett)
- Ziporyn (2020), [*Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*](#) (Hackett)
- Tricker (2022), [*The Cicada and the Bird*](#) (Self-Published)
- Merton (1965), [*The Way of Chuang-Tzu*](#) (New Directions)
- Watson (1968), [*The Complete Works of Chuang-Tzu*](#) (Columbia UP)
- Mair (1994), [*Wandering on the Way*](#) (Bantam)

For interpretations of the *Zhuangzi*:

- Wu (1990), [*The Butterfly as Companion*](#) (SUNY)
- Moeller & D'Ambrosio (2017), [*Genuine Pretending*](#) (Columbia UP)
- Kohn (2014), [*Zhuangzi: Text and Context*](#) (U Hawai'i Press)
- Kjellberg & Ivanhoe (eds.) (1996), [*Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics...*](#) (SUNY)
- Mair (ed.) (1983/2010), [*Experimental Essays on Zhuangzi*](#) (U Hawai'i Press)
- Ames (ed.) (1998), [*Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*](#) (SUNY)

The Original Chinese text can be found at <https://ctext.org/zhuangzi>.

4. Grading system

Your grade is determined by your final paper. All other assignments are preparatory for the final paper, and do not receive individual grades. Part of your final grade concerns the *process* of writing your paper, as displayed on the interim assignments, assessed holistically.

5. Assignment breakdown

Discussion. The bulk of this course will involve reading the *Zhuangzi* aloud together and puzzling through its passages one by one. This requires in-person attendance and participation in discussion. I will *not* be lecturing, outside of an introductory lecture at the start of the course.

Journal. As you read the *Zhuangzi* (and other texts as assigned or on your own), keep a journal developing thoughts. This can take almost any form you please, so long as it shows significant engagement with the text. New entries due weekly.

Chapter 34. The *Zhuangzi* was initially an “open text”, with contributions from many authors across decades. Midway through the term, we will all write our own contributions to the *Zhuangzi*, forming a collective “Chapter 34” that expresses our understanding.

Commentary. Following examples from Brook Ziporyn’s selection of commentaries in his *Zhuangzi* translation, write your own commentary on an assigned passage from our collective Chapter 34.

Paper prep. Miscellaneous scaffolding assignments directly tied to the final paper: three meetings with me, topic proposal, rough outline, bibliography, detailed outline.

Final paper. Write on any topic related to the *Zhuangzi*. Paper must on some level be argumentative; otherwise you have free choice of topic and style. At least 4500 words (appr. 15 pages, with standard formatting). No maximum—write what you need to establish your claims.

6. Further grading-related policies

Disability and accommodation policy. I intend this course to be accessible to all students. This means, minimally, that I grant all accommodations required by the Disability Resources Center. However, some students need accommodations not formally certified by that office. If any aspect of the class poses a hardship, please talk to me, and we can work together to develop an individualized plan for you to fulfill the course requirements.

Extension policy. I grant all extension requests, no questions asked. If you need one, just ask. There are no late penalties in this course. I would like to read and evaluate your best work, not work rushed to meet a semi-arbitrary deadline. Note, however, that part of your grade concerns how you develop a project over the course of the term, so turning in all assignments last minute *will* reflect in your grade.

7. Reading schedule

Date	Topic	Required Readings <i>due on date listed</i>	Assignments <i>due dates on Canvas</i>
Week 1 Mar 25-29	Introduction and Background	<i>Zhuangzi</i> (Z), ch. 33 <i>Zhuangzi</i> (N), Autocommentary	Journal
Week 2 Apr 1-5	<i>Zhuangzi</i> close read	<i>Zhuangzi</i> (Z), ch. 1 <i>Zhuangzi</i> (N), ch. 1	Journal
Week 3 Apr 8-12		<i>Zhuangzi</i> (TBD)	Journal
Week 4 Apr 15-19		<i>Zhuangzi</i> (TBD)	Journal Meeting with Rose Chapter 34
Week 5 Apr 22-26		<i>Zhuangzi</i> (TBD)	Journal Commentary
Week 6 Apr 29 – May 3		<i>Zhuangzi</i> (TBD)	Journal Meeting with Rose Paper proposal
Week 7 May 6-10		<i>Zhuangzi</i> (TBD)	Journal Rough Outline
Week 8 May 13-17		TBD	TBD
Week 9 May 20-24	TBD	TBD	Journal
Week 10 May 27-31	<i>NO CLASS MONDAY – MEMORIAL DAY</i>		Detailed outline Meeting with Rose
	TBD	TBD	
Week 11 EXAMS	<i>NO FINAL EXAM</i>		FINAL PAPER DUE FRI, JUN 7

8. Further course policies

Course etiquette. Philosophy is a social endeavor, and much of our class time will be devoted to discussion. You are encouraged to disagree with each other, but must do so respectfully. We will collectively determine a set of classroom discussion norms early in the term.

ChatGPT (&c). In the first week of class, we will discuss the ways in which ChatGPT (and related services) might legitimately and illegitimately be used in the course, and we will jointly develop a set of rules about how it will be

Group work. Group work is permitted for all assignments in this course, so long as *the final product you turn in is your own work*. In other words, you may discuss assignments with your peers, you may compare your work and give each other feedback, and so forth. However, you must write up the final assignment yourself; failure to do so is one form of plagiarism.

Plagiarism. You are expected to turn in work reflective of your own effort. I encourage you to discuss assignments with other students, but what you turn in must ultimately be your own work. You must also cite any sources that inform your work. We will talk more about expectations for this in class, and I will work with students to correct minor violations. Major violations (such as purchasing essays online) will be reported to the school's university office.

Religious accommodation. Students are entitled to reasonable accommodation for religious holidays. Accommodation requests must be made through the Office of the University Registrar Religious Accommodations [request process](#) within the ***first two weeks*** of the term.