

The Modern Creation of Pre-Modern Philosophers: Mozi, Mengzi, and Yang Zhu

Philosophy is a house with many rooms. One current way to philosophize about early Chinese masters is by reconstructing the views or theories that they may have held. A variant of this approach is to use as much as possible the master's own terms or concepts from that period. Yet another approach to early Chinese masters could be to reflect upon the various possible interpretations and their implications. Valuable though they are, these approaches will not be explored.

The approach of this seminar is inspired by the awareness that our interpretation of texts is inevitably colored by a multitude of historically contingent frameworks that are hardly visible to ourselves. The philosophical exercise lies then in trying to identify some spots of these frameworks. This may lead to a double result: on the side of the interpreter, the background assumptions might lose some of their rigidity; on the side of the interpreted texts, alternative constructions of the early Chinese masters' thought may emerge. This approach thus tries to look into two directions: at the old material and at our current selves.

The three masters on which the seminar focuses are Mozi, Mencius, and Yang Zhu. While rereading the early texts associated with them, we also pay specific attention to the modern (late Qing and Republican) framework that has shaped their current portrayal. Some knowledge of classical Chinese is presupposed for this seminar. Those students wishing to participate in a (strictly optional, not-for-credit) reading group of Republican texts in conjunction with the seminar should contact me within the first week of the term.

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Requirements: Reading the material before the seminar, active participation in the seminar, and one research paper of 6,000-7,000 words on the portrayal of Yang Zhu in a particular historical epoch or textual source.

Readings: Published and unpublished papers on Mozi, Mencius, and Yang Zhu.

Session One (21 October, 2.30-5.30): Methodology: theory and praxis

- 1a “Fasting the mind; Sitting in Oblivion. Methodological Reflection on the Study of Chinese Philosophy.” (forthcoming)
- 1b “The Gradual Growth of the Mohist Core Philosophy: Tracing Fixed Formulations in the *Mozi*,” *Monumenta Serica* 64.1 (2016), 1-22.

Session Two (28 October, 2.30-5.30): Modern portrayals of Mozi

- 2a “The Modern Formation of Early Mohism: Sun Yirang’s *Exposing and Correcting the Mozi*,” *T’oung Pao* 101-1-3 (2015), 208-238.
- 2b “The Modern Frame of Early Mohism: A System of The Ten Key Terms” (unfinished paper)

Session Three (4 November, 2.30-5.30): Yang Zhu and the others

- 3a “Heavy and Light Body Parts: The Weighing Metaphor in Early Chinese Dialogues.” *Early China* 38.3 (2015), 55-77.
- 3b “Unfounded and Unfollowed: Mencius’ Portrayal of Yang Zhu and Mo Di.” In Carine Defoort and Roger T. Ames eds., *Having a Word with Angus Graham: On the First Quarter Century of his Immortality*. New York: SUNY Press (forthcoming).

Session Four (11 November, 2.30-5.30): Mozi, Mencius, and *jian ai*

- 4a “Mohism and *jian ai*.” *Oxford Handbook on Early China*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (forthcoming).
- 4b “Unraveling the Connections Between *Mozi* and *Mencius*.” *Dao Companion on Mencius*, (forthcoming).