

## **Chinese Philosophy in Middle/High School Syllabus**

Instructor: Anna Zhou

Weekly Classes on Fridays, 8PM EST (or Saturday, 8 AM BJT) from 8/11/2023-9/8/2023

Class Duration: 1.5hr

### Course Description

This course is aimed towards young and talented scholars who are interested in philosophy, Chinese history, and Chinese culture. The class will be taught in English; however, some Chinese quotes will be included for better understanding. Students do not need to fluently speak Chinese, but a general understanding of Chinese would help. However, knowledge of Chinese is not required for this class.

Instead of focusing on rote memorization, this course will introduce the Pre-Qin and Axial Era in Chinese history by focusing on 6 figures and their works. These 90 minute courses will be divided in half—in the first half the tutor will teach basic history facts and analyze key quotes from the texts. In the other half the tutor will pose discussion questions for students to think about.

This course will demand some prerequisite knowledge of basic Chinese History. But don't worry, the course will include 2-3 guiding preview questions to help. Moreover, the tutor will assign 200-300 words of important quotes before class to facilitate more in-depth discussion. This preview homework should take around 15-30 minutes per week.

After lessons, each student is encouraged to turn in their reflection to the tutor. There is no word limit for this homework as it is just for developing your own critical thinking skills.

### Meeting Agenda

8/5 Meeting 1: “The Book of Songs” or “Shijing” (《诗经》)

- Zhou China introduction
- Love: the eternal theme
- Fundamental techniques in Chinese poems

8/12 Meeting 2: Confucius

- Spring and Autumn Time Period introduction
- The importance of rituals “Li”
- “Li” vs. Formalism

8/19 Meeting 3: Mengzi

- Mengzi's biography
- Theory of original goodness of human nature (“性善论”)
- The Benevolent Person is Invincible: how to govern a country wisely

8/26 Meeting 4: “The Zuo Zhuan”

- Context: chronicle of country Lu

- Language Style: Concise yet straightforward
- Narration Style: Flashback

9/2 Meeting 5: Zhuangzi

- Taoist
- Zhuangzi's life story
- Linguistic analysis

9/9 Meeting 6: Zhuangzi

- Purpose of life
- Limited perspective?
- How should people respond to death?