



DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

KI2104 Re-readings: Chinese Traditions of Thought and Philosophy, 7.5 credits

Om-läsningar: kinesiska tanketraditioner och filosofi, 7,5 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Languages and Literatures on 2017-05-26 and was last revised on 2021-10-12 to be valid from 2022-01-17, spring semester of 2022.

Field of education: Arts 100%

Department: Department of Languages and Literatures

Position in the educational system

The course is offered as a freestanding course.

The course can be part of the following programme: 1) Master's Programme in Language and Intercultural Communication (H2SIK)

Main field of studies

Chinese

Specialization

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

For admission to the course, a Bachelor's degree is required or the equivalent thereof and language proficiency corresponding to English 6.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- give an outline of the history of the Chinese tradition of ideas from 2000 B.C to 200 A.D;
- give an outline of the corpus of classical Chinese texts (the 6th to 3rd centuries B.C), its origin in ritual and historiographic texts and development towards more fictional genres;
- give an outline of the theory of the Axial Age, i.e. how China and Greece at the same time, but independently of one another, developed systems of thought with strong thematic similarities;

Competence and skills

- demonstrate the ability to think in an interdisciplinary way with regard to comparative philosophy, aesthetics and literature in the Chinese tradition of ideas;
- discuss and analyse how in the Western tradition of ideas one should understand and interpret concepts and texts from a tradition of ideas (the Chinese) that does not share a vocabulary, or grammar, with Indo-European languages;

Judgement and approach

- see how a certain tradition or culture consists of a number of discourses that are not seldom contradictory but are kept together by general ideologies (such as Platonism, Confucianism, Taoism).

Course content

The course is based on the polemic and polarisation between Taoism and Confucianism that emerges in the 5th century B.C and which in different varieties recurs in all prominent Chinese thinkers down to beginning of the Common Era. The course deals with how Taoism in its earliest incarnation is formulated as a critique of the Confucian belief in the ability of language to categorise and conceptualise the world and how this belief in and distrust of language constitutes the hub around which all discussions of ritualism (*li*), ethics and tradition take place.

The course is strongly centred on texts, and deals with close readings of a selection of the extensive corpus of Chinese texts from the 13th century B.C onwards. The course deals with the structure of Chinese written language. As idiom and message are so intimately intertwined, it is not possible to study classical Chinese thinking without a basic understanding of Chinese notation and the grammar of Classical Chinese. In this respect, the course constitutes, in the true sense of the word, a post-colonial complement to the history of Western philosophy, literature and aesthetics.

The course also places strong emphasis on the question whether, and if so how, a non-European system of thoughts such as the Chinese can be represented in a Western philosophic discourse, and whether Chinese concepts such as *li* and *shi* can in an adequate way be translated as ritualism and poetry. To what extent do these intercultural translations convey the gist of their Chinese equivalents, and, conversely, to what extent is the uniqueness of these concepts (*li* and *shi*) obscured and misrepresented? In other words, to what extent is it possible for a modern Westerner to understand a tradition of ideas of a completely different period of time, culture and geographic place?

Form of teaching

The teaching consists of lectures and seminars.

The course literature is in English and Swedish.

Language of instruction: Chinese and Swedish

Assessment

Examination takes place through take-home examination in the form of a written assignment, oral presentations and other presentations.

A student who has failed a course item is eligible for a retake exam/assignment. In connection with written assignments, supplementary assignments may be offered in order for the student to achieve a Pass grade. Such a supplementary assignment should be done within the stipulated time (normally five working days after the result has been posted). Otherwise a Fail grade will be reported.

A student who has completed an exam/assignment with a passing grade is not eligible for a retake for the purpose of receiving a higher grade. Nor may a student withdraw a test/assignment once it has been submitted for the purpose of avoiding receiving a grade for the work.

If a student, who has been failed twice on the same course component being examined, wishes to change examiner before the next examination, a written application shall be sent to the department responsible for the course, and shall be granted, unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6, Section 22, Higher Education Ordinance).

If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg regarding study support for students with disabilities, the examiner may decide, in the case where this is compatible with the learning outcomes for the course, and provided no unreasonable resources are required, to give the student an adjusted examination or an alternative form of examination.

In case the course has been discontinued or undergone any larger changes the student is guaranteed access to at least three additional examination sessions (including regular examination sessions) within the time of at least one year. The same applies to placements and professional placements (VFU), although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U). For a Pass with distinction on the whole course, this grade must have been awarded the written assignment.

Course evaluation

The students are given the opportunity to make a written evaluation of the course. The results of the evaluation are published digitally.

Additional information

Good reading skills in English are an advantage.

Equality aspects should be taken into consideration in content, literature, teaching and evaluation.