

俯盡鑒於有形	Looking down, I exhaust my investigation because there are so many forms around me,
仰蔽視於所蓋	But when I look up, my vision is impeded by the cover of heaven.
游萬物而極思	So I wander among the myriad things and thereby take my thoughts to their limit;
故一言于天外	Then I can say a few words about what lay beyond heaven.

– Chenggong Sui 成公綏 (231-73)

Think for a moment about how we get knowledge. It can consist of direct experience itself. It can be taught to us through books and teachers. It can be intuited through meditation. It can be revealed to us through gods. Additionally as Chenggong Sui here argues, it can be extrapolated, and in his opinion when it comes to exploring the cosmos, extrapolation is indeed the only viable conduit. We first examine the little things near us, then deduce a pattern and finally extend that pattern to things far away.

Chenggong Sui sets forth both the message and the medium for this course on early Chinese cosmology. His *message* is the all-encompassing pattern that ties together the annual seasons, the bodily organs, the government bureaucracy, the circumpolar constellations. We will explore that pattern and see how – and more importantly, why – it fits together into a comprehensive and comprehensible system. His *medium* is extrapolation, is looking at the small and specializing at the near-at-hand until he can trace that pattern outward. As you will see, that's exactly what each of us will do in this course.

To me, cosmology is all about placing the self on the biggest map of time and space possible; it's about imagining the grand pattern outside the self and then relating the self to that pattern. It's not just drawing out the big map; it's the ultimate "You are here" sticker on that map. Hence we are studying early Chinese notions of time and space, but we also looking at the human ritualized reaction to those particular notions of time and space.

I. Readings

Required texts in the bookstore

- Birrell, Anne. *Chinese mythology: An introduction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Major, John S., Sarah A. Queen, Andrew Seth Meyer and Harold D. Roth. *The Huainanzi: A guide to the theory and practice of government in early Han China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010. **Please bite the bullet and buy this massive text – we'll be using it all semester, and it will provide the skeletal structure of this course.**
- Puett, Michael J. *To become a god: Cosmology, sacrifice, and self-divinization in early China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002.
- Veith, Ilza. *The Yellow Emperor's classic of internal medicine*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

E-reserves

There are also fourteen readings – articles, chapters, monographs and so forth – on e-reserves. **Please print them out, mark them up and bring them to conference** instead of just reading them on-line. (I and many others have noticed a marked difference in conference participation when texts are not subject to highlighting, underscoring and marginal comments.)

Ken's reserves

Additionally there are a few texts the bookstore was unable to acquire, but I managed to gather them on my own and will loan them to you during the semester. These include:

- Hawkes, David. *The songs of the south: An anthology of ancient Chinese poems by Qu Yuan and other poets*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1985.

- Lau, D.C. and Roger T. Ames. *Yuan Dao: Tracing Dao to its source*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1998. (I have a handful of copies if the bookstore runs out.)
- Needham, Joseph and Colin A. Ronan. *The shorter science & civilisation in China*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

II. Requirements

- *Four exploratories*. The topics here are open (although must deal with the *Huainanzi* chapter that particular day) and are spaced out over the first nine weeks. Also, I will not make them due the day before, thereby giving you a little more time to prepare. (They will be due in class, and please bring **two** copies.) However, as I will not have had a chance to read them in advance, you will be called upon to lead us through an aspect of the reading that merits attention. Thus I strongly urge you to develop your exploratories in such a way that they foster good discourse among your colleagues. Think ahead to the conference itself and try to predict how your colleagues will respond. What can you do to encourage interesting discussions? What approaches have you seen work in other courses you have had? You might lead up to a good question you think we should all discuss, or you might have particular passages you want us to read aloud and ponder as a group. Yet on the days you are not giving an exploratory, never give into the temptation of paying less attention to the reading. Needless to say, it's easy to judge levels of preparation in a small group. (If you have never had me as an instructor before – lucky you – and have not suffered the joys of my "exploratories," my traditional explanatory handout is appended to the back of this syllabus. Don't worry – they're usually quite enjoyable assignments although a bit hard at first.)
- *Conference participation*. Active, informed participation in which the group as a whole develops new ideas and insights is expected. Note that the *whole* assignment must be read and pondered before conference. For a fuller idea of what I expect in conference, see the statement appended to the end of this syllabus.
- *Conference leadership*. Giving structure to our course, the *Huainanzi* is divided into two sections, the first eight chapters being the core and the next twelve chapters being supplementary areas of cosmological interest. We'll be studying the core in depth, adding additional books and readings where appropriate, and that will take us through the ninth week. From the tenth week onward, I'm handing the conference over to you, and each of you will have a chance to choose one of the supplementary topics that most interests you. Those topics range from the cosmologically aligned ruler to how military tactics take advantage of the cosmological pattern, from integrating popular rituals into a single cosmological structure to the history of sages who first uncovered the pattern of the universe. You will each be leading a conference, assigning extra readings, devising visual aids and developing unique pedagogical approaches to get across the point you think is vital to retain. (Please make use of me throughout your preparations because I can suggest readings, pedagogical strategies, questions to consider and so forth.)
- *Midterm examination or paper*. I am still weighing the pros and cons of this requirement, and I will let you know the outcome of the weighing in the not-too-distant future....
- *Final paper*. No length limits are set, although I would suggest following the paper template used for senior theses on the Reed website. Note that these papers are to be peer reviewed. That is, you will give your paper to one of your colleagues who will offer a critique (minimum one single-spaced page) to you and to me. You will then incorporate these comments (if you agree with them) and turn in the final paper by 15 December. Please include SASE if you want comments (even if you want them delivered to Reed).
- *Peer review comments*. As noted immediately above. Later in the course I will give you a handout of specific guidelines.

Note that some of these requirements need long-term thought and research, and they cannot be quickly accomplished the day before they are due. Please pace yourself and work on them gradually and carefully, and come see me if you are having any problems.

Standard policy on paper extensions and incompletes: *Only* for medical problems and extreme emergencies and *only then* accompanied by a note from Student Services. (They are aware of this requirement and support my policy.) As the deadlines are already indicated on the syllabus below, multiple-paper crisis does not count as an excuse. Late papers will still be considered, but the lateness will be taken into account and no comments will be

given.

III. Syllabus

As you will see immediately, we will be taking advantage of a recent upsurge in publications on early Chinese cosmology, particularly in using the only full-length translation of the *Huainanzi* (published 2010) as the superstructure for our course. We're studying cosmology on their terms, and sometimes we'll need to figure out just why they thought it necessary to include certain topics and exclude others. (If you have a particular interest in topics not covered here – mathematics, alchemy, gender, divination, art, music and so forth – just let me know. I have materials on numerous themes not covered in the *Huainanzi*, and we might be able to slip them in somewhere.)



Fuxi and Nüwa create the cosmos
Wu Liang shrine in Shandong (mid-2nd cen CE)

30 Aug	Introduction: Cosmic fracture points ala the <i>Yi jing</i> 's "Appended statements"	
1 Sep		• Birrell, <i>Chinese mythology</i> , chaps. 1-4. (Text)
3 Sep		• Birrell, <i>Chinese mythology</i> , chaps. 5-10. (Text)
6 Sep	Labor Day	
8 Sep		• Birrell, <i>Chinese mythology</i> , chaps. 11-16. (Text)
10 Sep		• Puett, <i>To become a god</i> , chaps. 1-2 (pp. 31-109 only). (Text)
13 Sep		• Sivin, "The myth of the naturalists." (E-reserves) • Brashier, "A hypothesis on how idea systems interact in China." (E-reserves)
15 Sep	An overview of the essentials	• <i>The Huainanzi</i> , introduction and chap 21. (Text)
17 Sep	1. Originating in the Way Exploratory group A	• <i>The Huainanzi</i> , chap. 1. (Text) • Puett, <i>To become a god</i> , chap. 7 (pp. 259-67 only). (Text) • Yates. "Dao the Origin." (E-reserves) • Brashier, "A poetic exposition on heaven and earth," pp. 1-8. (ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials)
20 Sep	2. Activating the genuine Exploratory group B	• <i>The Huainanzi</i> , chap. 2. (Text) • Graham, "The sorting which evens things out," from <i>Chuang-tzu: The</i>

		<i>inner chapters. (E-reserves)</i>
22 Sep		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puett, <i>To become a god</i>, chaps. 2-3 (pp. 109-44 only). (Text) • Roth, Harold. <i>Original Tao: Inward training and the foundations of Taoist mysticism</i>. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. (BL 1900.N45 R67 1999) • Ronan, “Human law and the laws of nature.” (E-reserves or Ken’s reserves)
24 Sep	3. Celestial patterns Exploratory group A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 3. (Text) • Brashier, “A poetic exposition on heaven and earth,” pp. 8-12. (ATLA)
27 Sep		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun and Jacob, <i>The Chinese sky during the Han</i>, chaps. 5-6. (E-reserves) • Needham Research Institute, <i>The power to predict</i>. (DVD)
29 Sep	4. Terrestrial forms Exploratory group B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 4. (Text) • Birrell, “The classic of the southern mountains,” from <i>The classic of mountains and seas</i>. (E-reserves) • Waltham, “Tribute to Yu,” from <i>Shu ching</i>. (E-reserves) • Brashier, “A poetic exposition on heaven and earth,” pp. 12-18. (JSTOR)
1 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puett, <i>To become a god</i>, chap. 5. (Text) • Brashier, <i>Ancestral memory in early China</i>, section 29. (Handout) • Hawkes, “Yuan you,” from <i>The songs of the South</i>. (Ken’s reserves)
4 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawkes, “Li sao,” “Jiu tan,” “Zhao hun” and “Da zhao,” from <i>The songs of the South</i>. (Ken’s reserves)

6 Oct	5. Seasonal rules Exploratory group A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 5. (Text) • Ling and Cook, “Translation of the Chu silk manuscript.” (E-reserves) • Hsu, “Ordinances for the four peoples.” (E-reserves)
8 Oct	6. Surveying obscurities Exploratory group B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 6. (Text) • Brashier, “A poetic exposition on heaven and earth,” pp. 18-25. (ATLA) • Puett, <i>To become a god</i>, chaps. 4 and 7 (pp. 268-70 only). (Text)
11 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham. <i>Yin-yang and the nature of correlative thinking</i>. (E-reserves)
13 Oct	7. Quintessential spirit Exploratory group A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 7. (Text) • Puett, <i>To become a god</i>, chap. 7 (pp. 270-86 only). (Text) • Unschuld, <i>Huang Di nei jing su wen</i>, “Epilogue: Toward a comparative historical anthropology of medical thought.” (E-reserves)
15 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veith, <i>The Yellow Emperor’s classic of internal medicine</i>, introduction. (Text)
FALL BREAK		
25 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veith, <i>The Yellow Emperor’s classic of internal medicine</i>, books 1-5. (Text)
27 Oct		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Veith, <i>The Yellow Emperor’s classic of internal medicine</i>, books 6-9. (Text)
29 Oct	8. The basic warp Exploratory group B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 8. (Text) • Puett, <i>To become a god</i>, chap. 6. (Text)
1 Nov		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puett, <i>To become a god</i>, chap. 8. (Text) • Watson, “The treatise on the Feng and Shan sacrifices,” in <i>Records of the Grand Historian</i> vol. 2, pp. 3-52. (Library reserves under Hum 230)
3 Nov	Preparation/rollover days	

5 Nov

Preparation/rollover days



Celestial thearch sitting in the Big Dipper (Wu Liang shrine in Shandong [mid-2nd cen CE])

8 Nov	9. The ruler's techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 9. (Text) ·
10 Nov	10. Profound precepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 10. (Text) ·
12 Nov	11. Integrating customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 11. (Text) ·
15 Nov	12. Responses of the Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 12. (Text) ·
17 Nov	13. Boundless discourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 13. (Text) ·
19 Nov	14. Sayings explained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 14. (Text) ·
22 Nov	15. An overview of the military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 15. (Text) ·
24 Nov	19. Cultivating effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 19. (Text) ·
26 Nov	Thanksgiving	
29 Nov	20. The exalted lineage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Huainanzi</i>, chap. 20. (Text) ·
1 Dec	(21. Structures of the cosmos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Forke, <i>Lun-heng: Philosophical essays of Wang Ch'ung</i>, pp. 64-143. (E-reserves)

3 Dec	(22. Physical phenomena of the cosmos)	· Forke, <i>Lun-heng: Philosophical essays of Wang Ch'ung</i> , pp. 250-312. (E-reserves)
6 Dec	(23. Misunderstandings about the cosmos)	· Forke, <i>Lun-heng: Philosophical essays of Wang Ch'ung</i> , pp. 313-373. (E-reserves)
8 Dec	Outroduction: "You are here."	
15 Dec (noon)	Final papers dues	

IV. Consciousness of conference technique

Much of our educational system seems designed to discourage any attempt at finding things out for oneself, but makes learning things others have found out, or think they have, the major goal.

– Anne Roe, 1953.

At times it is useful to step back and discuss conference dynamics, to lay bare the bones of conference communication. Why? Because some Reed conferences succeed; others do not. After each conference, I ask myself how it went and why it progressed in that fashion. If just one conference goes badly or only so-so, a small storm cloud forms over my head for the rest of the day. Many students with whom I have discussed conference strategies tell me that most Reed conferences don't achieve that sensation of educational nirvana, that usually students do not leave the room punching the air in intellectual excitement. I agree. A conference is a much riskier educational tool than a lecture, and this tool requires a sharpness of materials, of the conferees and of the conference leader. It can fail if there is a dullness in any of the three. Yet whereas lectures merely impart information (with a "sage on the stage"), conferences train us how to think about and interact with that information (with a "guide on the side"). So when it *does* work....

The content of what you say in conference obviously counts most of all, so how do you determine in advance whether you've got something worthwhile to say? The answer is simple if you don't just quickly read the assigned materials and leave it unanalyzed. So how do you analyze it? A colleague and friend at Harvard, Michael Puett, writes, "the goal of the analyst should be to reconstruct the debate within which such claims were made and to explicate why the claims were made and what their implications were at the time." A religious or philosophical idea doesn't get written down if everyone already buys it; it's written down because it's news. As new, we can speculate on what was old, on what stimulated this reaction. **Think of these texts as arguments and not descriptions**, and as arguments, your job is to play the detective, looking for contextual clues and speculating on implications. I will give you plenty of historical background, and if you look at these texts as arguments, you will get a truer picture.

In addition to content, there are certain conference dynamics that can serve as a catalyst to fully developed content. I look for the following five features when evaluating a conference:

1. Divide the allotted time by the number of conference participants. That resulting time should equal the leader's ideal speaking limits. (I talk too much in conference. Yet when I say this to some students, they sometimes tell me that instructors should feel free to talk more because the students are here to acquire that expertise in the field. So the amount one speaks is a judgment call, but regardless, verbal monopolies never work.)
2. Watch the non-verbal dynamism. Are the students leaning forward, engaging in eye contact and gesturing to drive home a point such that *understanding* is in fact taking on a physical dimension? Or are they silently sitting back in their chairs staring at anything other than another human being? As a conference leader or participant, it's a physical message you should always keep in mind. Leaning forward and engaging eye contact is not mere appearance; it indeed helps to keep one focused if tired.
3. Determine whether the discourse is being directed through one person (usually the conference leader) or is non-point specific. If you diagram the flow of discussion and it looks like a wagon wheel with the conference leader in the middle, the conference has, in my opinion, failed. If you diagram the flow and it looks like a jumbled, all-inclusive net, the conference is more likely to have succeeded.
4. Determine whether a new idea has been achieved. By the end of the conference, was an idea created that was new to everyone, including the conference leader? Did several people contribute a Lego to build a new thought that the conferees would not have been able to construct on their own? This evaluation is trickier because sometimes a conference may not have gone well on first glance but a new idea evolved nonetheless. The leader must be sure to highlight that evolution at conference end.
5. Watch for simple politeness. "Politeness" means giving each other an opportunity to speak, rescuing a colleague hanging out on a limb, asking useful questions as well as complimenting a new idea, a well-said phrase, a funny joke.

If you ever feel a conference only went so-so, then instead of simply moving on to the next one, I would urge you, too, to evaluate the

conference using your own criteria and figuring out how you (and I) can make the next one a more meaningful experience.

Preparation is not just reading the assigned pages; it's reading and then thinking through something in that reading, developing a thought and getting it ready to communicate to someone else.

In the end, as long as you are prepared and feel passionate about your work, you should do well, and if passion ever fails, grim determination counts for something.

V. The exploratory

Sometimes conferences sing. Yet just when I would like them to sing opera, they might merely hum a bit of country-western. After my first year of teaching at Reed, I reflected upon my conference performance and toyed with various ideas as to how to induce more of the ecstatic arias and lively crescendos, and I came up with something I call an "exploratory."

Simply put, an exploratory is a one-page, single-spaced piece in which you highlight one thought-provoking issue that caught your attention in the materials we are considering. This brief analysis must show thorough reading and must show *your own* thoughtful extension –

- Your own informed, *constructive* criticism of the author;
- Your own developed, thoughtful question (perhaps even inspired by readings from other classes) that raises interesting issues when seen in the light of the author's text;
- Your own application of theory and method to the primary source;
- Your own personal conjecture as to how this data can be made useful; or (best of all)
- Your own autonomous problem that you devised using the data under discussion.

I am not here looking for polished prose or copious (or any) footnotes – save all that for our formal papers. (I do not return exploratories with comments unless a special request is made.) Exploratories are not full, open-heart surgeries performed on the text. Instead, exploratories tend to be somewhat informal but focused probes on one particular aspect in which you yourself can interact with the text and can enter into the conversation.

What is *not* an exploratory? It is not merely a topic supported by evidence from the book, nor is it a descriptive piece on someone else's ideas, nor is it a general book report in which you can wander to and fro without direction. Bringing in outside materials is allowed, but the exploratory is not a forum for ideas outside that day's expressed focus. (Such pieces cannot be used in our conference discussions.) It is instead a *problematique*, an issue with attitude.

The best advice that I can give here is simply to encourage you to consider *why* I am requesting these exploratories from you: I want to see what ignites your interest in the text *so they can help set the conference agenda*. Thus late exploratories are of no use. (Being handed a late exploratory is like being handed your salad after you've eaten dessert and are already leaving the restaurant.) I usually base roughly a third to half my conferences on exploratories, and I will use them to draw you in, parry your perspective against that of another, and build up the discussion based on your views. Exploratories help me turn the conference to issues that directly interest you. They often lead us off on important tangents, and they often return us to the core of the problem under discussion. So if you are struggling with finding "something to say," simply recall why I ask for these exploratories in the first place. Is there something in the text you think worthy of conference time? Do you have an idea you want to take this opportunity to explore? Here is your chance to draw our attention to it. Your perspectives are important, and if you have them crystallized on paper in advance, they will be easier to articulate in conference.

Since I began using exploratories, most students have responded very favorably. Students like the fact that it is a different form of writing, a bit more informal and more frequent, somewhat akin to thinking aloud. It forces one not just to read a text but to be looking for something in that text, to engage that text actively. And it increases the likelihood that everyone leaves the conference singing Puccini.