Confucianism

1. Why do you think that the Period of Warring States coincided with the Period of a Hundred Philosophers?
2. What were some of the issues the philosophers of this period faced?
3. What appears to be the primary aim of East Asian thought? Describe some of the attributes and differences in interpreting this aim between Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism.
4. What is philosophically significant about Kon Zhongni’s upbringing and early work in the government?
5. What was the “golden age” and why did Confucius think it was so remarkable?
6. What was Confucius’ overriding concern?
7. What is ren? What does zhong and shu have to do with ren?
8. What is li? Include in your explanation, the three aspects of li.
9. What is the relationship between li and ren?
10. Explain the concept of xiao.
11. Explain the concept of yi.
12. How do ren, li, xiao and yi relate to each other?
13. What is zheng ming?
14. Explain the relationship between the ruler, the family and the development of the junzi.
15. Explain why Confucius thought friendship was important. Refer specifically to Book XVI, #4&5.
16. What was the job of the king? Explain the concept of government by virtue.
17. Explain Confucius’ concept of the junzi. How is this sort of person to be found?
18. What is the primary job of education according to Confucius?
19. Explain the function and importance of the family for Confucianism.
20. Why wouldn’t Confucius share American’s obsession with individual liberty and autonomy?
21. Explain some of the challenges to Confucianism presented by the Daoists, the Mohists and the Legalists.
22. What was the principle concern of Mengzi and Xunzi?
23. On what points did Mengzi agree with Confucius and on what points did he disagree?
24. What reasons did Mengzi give to support the innate goodness of humans? Where did he postulate that evil originated?
25. On what points did Xunzi disagree with Mengzi? How can humans become good?
26. How did Dong Zhongshu adapt Confucianism to become the dominant philosophy of the Han dynasty?
27. Explain the relationship between “The Way of Heaven” and, “The Way of Human” according to Dong Zhongshu. What was his advice to Emperor Wu?
Daoism
1. What is the Daoist goal?
2. Explain why the Daoists emphasized the perfection of nature over the rigidity of the human social structure in Confucianism.
3. Who was Laozi?
4. Who wrote the *Daodejing*?
5. Explain the historical context of the period of warring states and how it affected the development of Daoism.
6. What is the Daoists’ view of human nature?
7. Why won’t moral rules regulating competition and conflict establish peace and happiness according to the Daoists?
8. Explain the Daoist use of *yin* and *yang*.
9. Explain *wu wei*. Include in your explanation, some of its principle images (water, valley, female, the uncarved block.)
10. Explain *ziran*. How would following *ziran* lead to happiness.
11. What does *wuwei* and *ziran* have to do with government?
12. What is the *Dao*?
13. Explain the three aspects of the *Dao*: “the way of ultimate reality,” “the way of nature,” and “the way of human.”
14. Why can’t we know “the way of ultimate reality?”
15. Explain *de*.
16. How should a ruler govern the people according to Laozi?
17. Who was Zhuangzi? Who probably wrote the text by the same name?
18. On what five points did Zhuangzi disagree with Confucius?
19. Explain Zhuangzi’s concept of the true sage. Why did Zhuangzi reject Confucius’ concept of the *junzi* as the ideal human?
20. Explain Zhuangzi’s concept of the instrumental mind. How does this mind prevent self-transformation?
21. Why did Zhuangzi reject the idea of conventional knowledge? Explain all four arguments.
22. What point of view should we adopt according to Zhuangzi?
23. How is the Taoist notion of reality like the picture of reality emerging in modern physics? (*The Tao of Physics*, Fritjof Capra)
24. Explain the relationship between Pooh in Winnie the Pooh and the Daoist concept of *P’u*. (*The Tao of Pooh*, Benjamin Hoff)

Neo-Confucianism
1. What was it about Buddhism that threatened the Confucian influence on Chinese society?
2. What was the goal of Neo-Confucianism?
3. Explain the contributions of Han Yu and his student, Li Ao to the development of Neo-Confucianism.
4. How does Zhou Dunyi reinterpret the concepts of *yin* and *yang*?
5. What is the “Great Ultimate (*Taiji*)?” How does it relate to the *Dao* of Daoism and Confucianism?
6. How is the material world produced according to Zhou Dunyi? Explain the role of yin and yang.

7. What is the position of humans in the hierarchy of order for Zhou Dunyi?

8. How did Zhou Dunyi link moral order to metaphysical order?

9. Explain the relationship between qi and li according to the Ch’eng brothers.

10. What is the role of ren according to the Ch’eng brothers?

11. Explain the various aspects that describe the central concern of philosophy for both Confucians and Neo-Confucians.

12. How does Zhu Xi resolve the problem of innate human goodness and the rise of evil? What is the relationship between qi, li and the Great Ultimate?

13. What were Lu Xiangshan’s critiques of the arguments of Cheng-Zhu Confucianism?

14. Explain Wang Yangming’s two principles?

15. Why does the wisdom of the sage consist in loving the people according to Wang Yangming?

16. What did Dai Zhen regard as the most proper focus of the philosopher?