

Fulbright-Hays Seminar Abroad in China

Summer 2011

“Confucianism: There and Here, Then and Now: A Literature and Composition Unit”

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## I. Introduction

This project grew out of a lecture given in Chongqing by Dr. Yan Wenqiang to the 2011 Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad China delegation on Buddhism with Chinese characteristics as an introduction to Buddhism, Dr. Yan outlined the tenets and importance of Confucianism as a precursor in China to Buddhism, explaining its rise as a result of a lack of concern for the afterlife in Confucian thought; however, he also emphasized the permanence of Confucianism in Chinese society and how it still affects culture, not only in China, but around the world. This curriculum project is an exploration of Confucianism and its founder, as well as one of its seminal texts, *The Analects*, and how it pervades contemporary Chinese society and modern thought.

This project was written for a high school World Literature class, so emphasis is placed on the reading and interpretation of the text of *The Analects*, as well as synthesis and analysis of this text through composition. The course is arranged by regions of the world, and this project is included in the East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan) unit of the curriculum. In this course, students learn about the social, cultural, and historical aspects of regions throughout the world in connection with the literature. The vast amount of knowledge acquired during the Fulbright-Hays Seminar was very valuable; however, due to time constraints, this curriculum project contains only a small selection of the information gained in China. While this unit fits into a larger perspective of China and covers only Confucianism and its relation to literature in two weeks, students will receive a complete overview of Chinese history, culture, and literature by the end of the East Asian unit, which is six to eight weeks in length.

Students will already have a working knowledge of textual analysis and interpretation, as well as a basic grasp of essay writing and MLA formatting, which will be incorporated in this unit, upon beginning this course of study.

## II. Unit Overview

Day One: Lecture/PowerPoint Notes over Confucius, Confucianism, and *The Analects* (attached)

Day Two, Three, Four, and Five: Reading of *The Analects*. While it is suggested for a scholar to read only one Confucius saying per day and meditate on it for 24 hours, this course requires a faster-paced, condensed reading over the course of four days. The 20 books which compose *The Analects* will be assigned as 5 books per day for time's sake. The work is quite short, so this time schedule is very doable for high schoolers who read at a moderate pace. Students will keep a dialectical journal of pertinent sayings and personal responses to these sayings. (Appendix A-2)

Day Six: Using their journal about *The Analects*, students will compose a response essay to three Confucian sayings that are applicable to their own lives. (Appendix A-3)

Day Seven: Students will compose a synthesis essay outlining how Confucianism is present in modern Chinese society using articles obtained from the EBSCOhost database. (Appendix A-4)

Day Eight: Students will compose an analysis essay exploring traces of Confucian thought in modern American society. (Appendix A-5)

Day Nine: In-Class Group Discussion Questions (Appendix A-6)

### III. Essential Questions

Who was Confucius?

What is *The Analects*, and what role did/does it play in Chinese culture?

What are the basic tenets of Confucianism?

What are some famous Confucian sayings, and how do they relate to modern life?

How is Confucian thought reflected in modern Chinese society?

How has Confucianism shaped Chinese society historically?

What aspects of Confucianism can be found in modern American society?

These essential questions will be answered throughout the two-week course of study on Confucius, Confucianism, and *The Analects* through a variety of methods and modes including lecture, notes, class discussion, personal research, essay writing, oral presentations, and small group work.

## Appendix A-2

*The Analects* Dialectical Journal Assignment

For this assignment, you will read *The Analects* of Confucius and keep a dialectical journal of 20 of these sayings. There are 20 books in total contained within the volume, so you should find one saying per book which you find important, significant, or pertinent to the world around you.

A dialectical journal is a type of double-entry note-taking strategy that engages readers in a dialogue with the text. The purpose of this strategy is to explore and analyze ideas presented in the text. Typically, the left side of the journal is used for source material (for instance, direct quotations or paraphrased ideas), and parenthetical citations are provided at the end of the quotation or paraphrase. Parenthetical citations make it easier to reference the source material for discussions, projects, essays or other work. You will record the saying in this column with MLA parenthetical citations.

What types of source material do readers record in the left-hand column? Readers record source material that strikes them as interesting and/or material that develops the theme, plot, or characters in the story, labeled TEXT. In the right hand column, labeled RESPONSE, personally respond to the source material, analyze it, and evaluate its importance. **YOU ARE NOT JUST SUMMARIZING PLOT!** You are analyzing the passages from the text in order to explore meaning. You will record your analysis of the saying in this column in at least 75 words per entry.

Here's an example of what a dialectical journal should look like, using Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, which we've already read, as a sample.

<u>TEXT</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
<p>“The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb. . . .” (Lee 9).</p>	<p>It seems that the town is a little closed minded in viewing the Radleys since they don't go to church or do other things common in Maycomb. This seems to be a prejudice against their lifestyle since it seems that the town might not really know them and has become pretty superstitious about them. People often get suspicious about what they don't understand or what seems strange to them</p>

The finished journal should be typed or handwritten neatly, consist of 20 entries (one per book), and include parenthetical citations as well as a Work Cited page. Use easybib.com to create your bibliography. This is due when you finish *The Analects* on Day Five.

**Rubric for *The Analects* Dialectical Journal**

A (90-100 %)

- Detailed, meaningful passages, plot, and quotation selections.
- Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; avoids clichés, makes inferences.
- Contributes to the meaning of the text.
- Makes insightful personal connections and asks thought-provoking, insightful questions.
- Coverage of text is complete and thorough.
- Journal is neat, organized, and professional looking; student has followed directions in creation of journal.

B (80-89%)

- Less detailed, but good plot, and quote selections.
- Some intelligent commentary; addresses some thematic connection.
- Some personal connection; asks pertinent questions.
- Adequately addresses all parts of reading assignment.
- Journal is neat and readable; student has followed directions in the organization of journal.

C (70-79%)

- Few good details from the text.
- Most of the commentary is vague, unsupported, or plot summary/paraphrase.
- Some listing of literary elements; virtually no discussion on meaning.
- Limited personal connection; asks few or obvious questions.
- Addresses most of the reading assignment, but is not very long or thorough.
- Journal is relatively neat, but may be difficult to read.
- Student has not followed all directions for organization; no columns and no page numbers.

D or F (50-69%)

- No good details from the text.
- All notes are plot summary or paraphrase.
- Virtually no discussion on meaning.
- Limited personal connections, no good questions.
- Limited coverage of the text; too short.
- Did not follow directions in organizing journal; difficult to read or follow.
- No page numbers.

## Appendix A-3

*The Analects* Response Essay

Confucius intended to improve peoples' lives through his words. For this essay assignment, you will be taking his words and writing about their applicability to your life more than 2,500 years after they were first uttered.

Using your dialectical journal, choose three of the Confucian sayings you journaled about and how they apply modern society, and particularly, to your life. Use your journal entry to begin your discussion, but feel free to add and amend your thoughts on applying Confucius' words and ideas to your life.

Your finished essay will be 5 paragraphs long, follow the concrete detail-commentary-commentary structure, and will incorporate MLA formatting.

I've attached a paragraph outline model to help you organize your body paragraphs. Follow the subsequent outline to assist you in organizing your information.

Essay Outline

**Introduction:** Introduce Confucius and *The Analects*. Describe the purpose of the text and the aphorisms/sayings contained within (use your notes from the PowerPoint I gave you for help). Your thesis will be the last sentence of your introduction and should note that Confucius' sayings are still applicable to your life today.

**First Body Paragraph:** The topic sentence should be the first of three Confucian aphorisms with its citation. Your paragraph should, as the first concrete detail with commentary, explain what the quote means. The second concrete detail with commentary should explain why this is important to our modern society. The third concrete detail with commentary should explain how this is specifically relevant to your own life. Your concluding sentence will summarize the contents of the paragraph.

**Second Body Paragraph:** The topic sentence should be the second of three Confucian aphorisms with its citation. Your paragraph should, as the first concrete detail with commentary, explain what the quote means. The second concrete detail with commentary should explain why this is important to our modern society. The third concrete detail with commentary should explain how this is specifically relevant to your own life. Your concluding sentence will summarize the contents of the paragraph.

**Third Body Paragraph:** The topic sentence should be the last of three Confucian aphorisms with its citation. Your paragraph should, as the first concrete detail with commentary, explain what the quote means. The second concrete detail with commentary should explain why this is important to our modern society. The third concrete detail with commentary should explain how

this is specifically relevant to your own life. Your concluding sentence will summarize the contents of the paragraph.

Conclusion: Re-state your thesis as your first sentence. Use one sentence each to review each of the body paragraphs in order. The last sentence should relay the modern applicability of Confucian aphorisms.

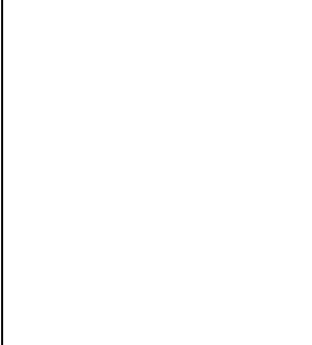
**DON'T FORGET: You will need to cite the aphorisms and include a Work Cited page, as well.**

Essay Rubric	Points
<p><b>THESIS and CONTENT (Development)</b>                      The essay has a thesis—a single, central point that is interesting, original, striking and substantial. The central idea is developed in the essay through well-chosen, appropriate, concrete details that show originality and freshness. Author shows rather than merely tells. Generalizations and assertions are defended. Arguments are logical. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>ORGANIZATION</b>                      The essay is organized and well structured (there is a beginning, a body, and a conclusion). The essay exhibits a clear strategy for persuasion and pattern of development (chronological order, spatial order, comparison/contrast, etc.). The organization works with the thesis so that the thesis and the organization contribute to serving the purpose of the essay. Essay does not digress from central point. Transitions help the paper flow smoothly. Introductory paragraph(s) is (are) interesting and appropriate. Concluding paragraph is satisfying. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>PARAGRAPHS</b>                      Paragraphs are organized, unified and coherent. Each supporting paragraph has a controlling idea expressed in a topic sentence. In supporting paragraphs, topic idea helps further the thesis. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>STYLE</b>                      Sentences are mature (contain a subject, verb, and proper modifiers with a variety of clauses and sophomore-level vocabulary) and parallel. Writer avoids modifier problems. Sentences show variety of pattern and are rhetorically effective. The essay is written in a style and tone appropriate to an educated audience topic and purpose. Words are appropriate and well chosen. Writer avoids jargon and sexist language. Writer speaks in an authentic voice. Paper is enjoyable and interesting. Citations are correct. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>GRAMMAR, SPELLING, MECHANICS</b>                      Subtract points for errors in grammar (comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, agreement, etc.), spelling, and mechanics (margins, format, etc.). (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>TOTAL</b></p>	

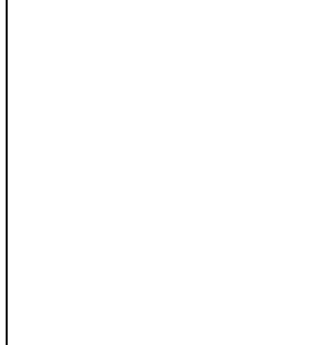
1. Topic Sentence



2. First Concrete Detail



5. Second Concrete Detail



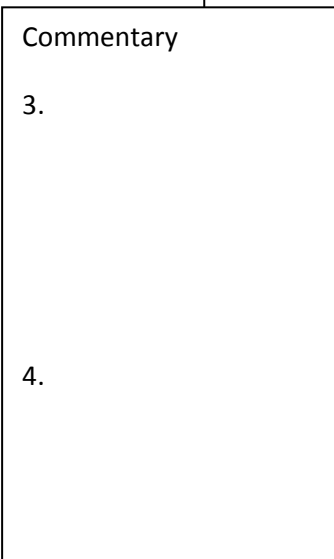
8. Third Concrete Detail



Commentary

3.

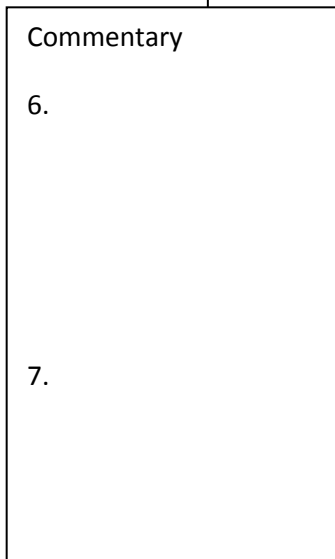
4.



Commentary

6.

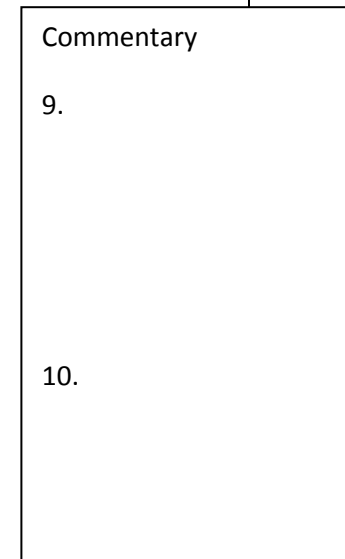
7.



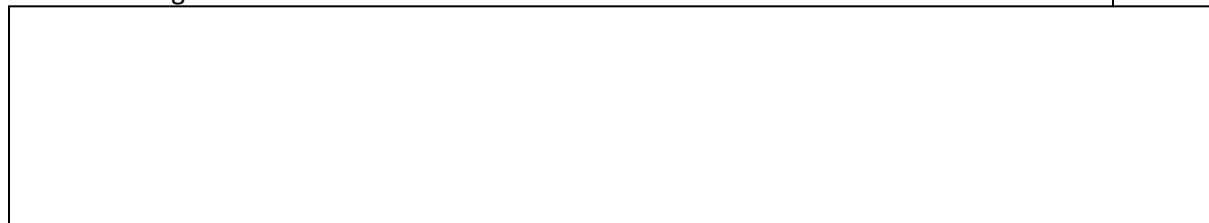
Commentary

9.

10.



11. Concluding Sentence



You are now familiar with the basic tenets and organization of Confucian thought. Now, we need to take your knowledge a step further by exploring not just the history of Confucianism, but the modern applications of this ancient ethical system.

You will use EBSCOhost to find 3 articles about contemporary life in China in which you notice some aspect of Confucian thought. It could be in government, education, religion, family life, international relations, or any other aspect of culture we have studied up to this point. Be sure to pick only one topic but three different articles. You are only writing a five-paragraph essay, and if you pick more than one aspect of culture, your topic will be too broad.

After reading the articles and noting how Confucianism shows up in modern Chinese society, write a synthesis essay making connections between the articles and contemporary society.

What is a synthesis essay?

According to The College Board, the main purpose of a synthesis essay is to make insightful connections. Those connections can show the relationship(s) between parts of a work or even between two or more works. It is your job to explain why those relationships are important. In order to write a successful synthesis essay, you must gather research on your chosen topic, discover meaningful connections throughout your research, and develop a unique and interesting argument or perspective.

A synthesis is not a summary. A synthesis is an opportunity to create new knowledge out of already existing knowledge, i.e., other sources. You combine, “synthesize,” the information in your sources to develop an argument or a unique perspective on a topic. Your thesis statement becomes a one-sentence claim that presents your perspective and identifies the new knowledge that you will create.

### Before writing your synthesis

A. Narrow a broad or general topic to a specific topic:

In a short essay, completely covering a large topic is impossible, so picking a specific, focused topic is important. For example, the broad topic of global warming would need to be narrowed down to something more specific, like the effects of automobile exhaust on an ecosystem.

You will not be able to write about all aspects of Chinese culture, so you will need to narrow it down to one of the following topics or another of your choice: government, education, religion, family life, international relations, or any other aspect of culture we have studied up to this point

2. Develop a working thesis statement:

A working thesis statement should include a rough idea of your topic and the important point you want to make about that topic. Writing this statement at the top of a rough draft or outline and

looking at it often can help you remain focused throughout the essay. However, the thesis statement that you begin with is not set in stone. If you find that your essay shifts topic slightly, you can change your thesis in later drafts so that it matches your new focus.

Namely, how does Confucian thought show up in an aspect of modern Chinese society?

3. Decide how you will use your sources:

After completing your research and gathering sources, you may have a large or overwhelming amount of information. However, the purpose of a synthesis essay is to use only the most important parts of your research, the information that will best support your claim. At this point, you must decide which sources, and/or which parts of those sources, you will use.

You will use three sources for this.

4. Organize your research:

Now, decide the order in which you will present your evidence, the various arguments you will employ, and how you will convince your readers (“AP Central”). This is a reference to the website where I got this information (listed on the Works Cited).

#### Writing your synthesis

Follow the detail-commentary-commentary structure. Source information goes in the detail position with your commentary in the commentary spots. Make sure you cite as appropriate in MLA format.

#### Accessing EBSCOhost

EBSCOhost is an academic database that holds an abundance of professionally peer-reviewed articles and journals which serve as great sources for essays and personal research. In the future, stay away from Google searches and rely on databases like EBSCO to assist you in finding reputable source material to incorporate in your writing.

From a school computer, type “Destiny” in the search box of Internet Explorer. From here, choose EBSCOhost and Academic Search Premiere Elite, then Student Research Center. On this page, expand your search to include all sources, and search for Contemporary Chinese Culture.

Print out three articles with citations at the top to incorporate into your synthesis essay.

Essay Rubric	Points
<p><b>THESIS and CONTENT (Development)</b>            The essay has a thesis—a single, central point that is interesting, original, striking and substantial. The central idea is developed in the essay through well-chosen, appropriate, concrete details that show originality and freshness. Thesis is the last sentence of the introduction. Author shows rather than merely tells. Generalizations and assertions are defended. Arguments are logical. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>ORGANIZATION</b>            The essay is organized and well structured (there is a beginning, a body, and a conclusion). The essay exhibits a clear strategy for persuasion and pattern of development (chronological order, spatial order, comparison/contrast, etc.). The organization works with the thesis so that the thesis and the organization contribute to serving the purpose of the essay. Essay does not digress from central point. Transitions help the paper flow smoothly. Introductory paragraph is interesting and appropriate. Concluding paragraph is satisfying. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>PARAGRAPHS</b>            Paragraphs are organized, unified and coherent. Each supporting paragraph has a controlling idea expressed in a topic sentence. In supporting paragraphs, topic idea helps further the thesis. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>STYLE</b>            Sentences are mature (contain a subject, verb, and proper modifiers with a variety of clauses and sophomore-level vocabulary) and parallel. Writer avoids modifier problems. Sentences show variety of pattern and are rhetorically effective. The essay is written in a style and tone appropriate to the audience, topic and purpose. Words are appropriate and well chosen. Writer avoids jargon and sexist language. Writer speaks in an authentic voice. Paper is enjoyable and interesting. Citations are correct. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>GRAMMAR, SPELLING, MECHANICS</b>            Subtract points for errors in grammar (comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, agreement, etc.), spelling, and mechanics (margins, format, etc.). (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>TOTAL</b></p>	

## Appendix A-5

## Traces of History: Confucian Thought in Modern American Society

So far, you have written a response essay and a synthesis essay. It's now time to practice another mode of writing: analysis.

What is an analysis essay?

An analysis should be an essay where you:

1. Identify and explain the thesis. Include this information in your opening paragraph. Make a smooth transition to the next paragraph.
2. Show and support this thesis. This is the longest part of your analysis. There is not just one way to organize these paragraphs, but a good suggestion is to give the main supporting points and how they are supported in some logical order, perhaps even giving each main point its own paragraph. So, you could have three to four paragraphs in this section. Be sure that you are showing how the thesis was supported.
3. Finally, end with a paragraph in which you do *one of two* things:
  - Review the thesis and give solid, text-based reasons for your opinion and why you believe it.
  - Say how you have gained new insight into the work/subject. Explain clearly how and in what ways ("AP Central").

In this essay, you will be examining modern American society, analyzing certain aspects of our culture, and explaining how Confucian ideals are present even in Western society, proving the pervasiveness and universality of Confucianism.

Pick three aspects of American culture (education, politics, family structure, gender issues, religion, careers, etc.) in which you notice Confucian ideas are present. Analyze how you see the interplay between East and West and to what you attribute this cultural diffusion.

You will need to explain the Confucian value or idea, cite it, and analyze how and why you see it in modern American culture.

This will require MLA citations as well as a Work Cited page. Use [easybib.com](http://easybib.com) to create your bibliography for this assignment.

Use the concrete detail-commentary-commentary paragraph development structure we have been working on to develop your paragraphs.

Essay Outline

Introduction: Give an overview of Confucianism and its universality. Include the thesis as the last sentence of the introduction. The thesis should note that Confucian ideals are present in American society and how.

First Body Paragraph: Topic sentence should name the first aspect of American society you see exhibiting Confucian thought. The rest of the paragraph should give the Confucian ideal, explain it, tell how it shows up in American society, and analyze possible reasons why it does.

Second Body Paragraph: Topic sentence should name the second aspect of American society you see exhibiting Confucian thought. The rest of the paragraph should give the Confucian ideal, explain it, tell how it shows up in American society, and analyze possible reasons why it does.

Third Body Paragraph: Topic sentence should name the third aspect of American society you see exhibiting Confucian thought. The rest of the paragraph should give the Confucian ideal, explain it, tell how it shows up in American society, and analyze possible reasons why it does.

Conclusion: Re-state thesis as the first sentence of your conclusion. Use one sentence each to summarize the main point of each body paragraph. Conclude with a sentence about the universality of Confucian thought.

Essay Rubric	Points
<p><b>THESIS and CONTENT (Development)</b>            The essay has a thesis—a single, central point that is interesting, original, striking and substantial. The central idea is developed in the essay through well-chosen, appropriate, concrete details that show originality and freshness. Author shows rather than merely tells. Generalizations and assertions are defended. Arguments are logical. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>ORGANIZATION</b>            The essay is organized and well structured (there is a beginning, a body, and a conclusion). The essay exhibits a clear strategy for persuasion and pattern of development (chronological order, spatial order, comparison/contrast, etc.). The organization works with the thesis so that the thesis and the organization contribute to serving the purpose of the essay. Essay does not digress from central point. Transitions help the paper flow smoothly. Introductory paragraph(s) is (are) interesting and appropriate. Concluding paragraph is satisfying. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>PARAGRAPHS</b>            Paragraphs are organized, unified and coherent. Each supporting paragraph has a controlling idea expressed in a topic sentence. In supporting paragraphs, topic idea helps further the thesis. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>STYLE</b>            Sentences are mature (contain a subject, verb, and proper modifiers with a variety of clauses and sophomore-level vocabulary) and parallel. Writer avoids modifier problems. Sentences show variety of pattern and are rhetorically effective. The essay is written in a style and tone appropriate to the audience, topic and purpose. Words are appropriate and well chosen. Writer avoids jargon and sexist language. Writer speaks in an authentic voice. Paper is enjoyable and interesting. Citations are correct. (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>GRAMMAR, SPELLING, MECHANICS</b>            Subtract points for errors in grammar (comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, agreement, etc.), spelling, and mechanics (margins, format, etc.). (20 points)</p> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p>	
<p><b>TOTAL</b></p>	

## Appendix A-6

### *The Analects* In-Class Group Discussion Questions

Your group will be assigned two of the following questions to answer for the class. As part of your grade, you must present your answers, but also comment on two other groups' answers to receive full points and contribute to the class discussion.

1. The insights of Confucius are offered by means of dialogue--how might this form add to the impact of the Master's ideas? Also, comment on how this presentation relates to that of the Platonic dialogues; how would you say the conversations between Confucius and his circle compare to Socrates' way of setting forth his ideas (which we covered in the Ancient Greece unit)?

2. Confucius finds himself responding to requests for clarification on the nature of learning and teaching. What does he have to say about these things--what is it to learn and understand, and what makes a good teacher? What is your opinion on the subject?

3. Confucius refers to "the rites" several times, and he discourses on music as well. Why might following established religious and ceremonial procedures be so important to him, and what do you suppose to be the significance of music to Confucius?

4. What characterizes "the gentleman," according to Confucius? How, for instance, does a gentleman look upon his own endeavors? In what light does he understand his relationship to others both above and below him? How does he regard his parents?

5. Confucius modestly disclaims his status as a sage, but it's clear he deserves the name. In this book, what makes him more than a gentleman--good though that title may be in itself? What benefits flow from this high degree of character?

6. What relationship does Confucius assert between individual goodness (i.e. following the Way) and the social and political environment? What does Confucius appear to think of the "common people," and of the degree of influence upon them that a gentleman may attain by his own conduct?

7. The writer of *The Analects* says Confucius always refused to be either egotistical or inflexible. How has the Master demonstrated these virtues?

8. What picture of Confucius emerges regarding his way of dealing with those above and below him in rank? What is he like in his day-to-day habits and manner of speech? Why are we being told all this? What does this tell you about the way you should conduct yourself in life?

9. Confucius speaks about government. How does he think that rulers and administrators can maintain order? What wise thing did Emperor Tang, mentioned in *The Analects*, do?

10. Do you think the principles Confucius sets forth about the relationship between the rulers and the ruled are possible in a modern democratic society? How do you see the relationship between ordinary people and those who hold elective office in America? Should they set an example for all of us? Or would that be presumptuous and inappropriate? Explain your view.

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