

Mary L. Wryst—Athens High School
Class: Junior Honors American English
American Literature

Text: *Elements of Literature*: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston (1997)

Chinese Literature

Homework Readings Assigned Prior to Class on handouts:

1. Historical Background: Chinese and Japanese Literature (1000- B. C. E-1890 C. E.)
2. Excerpts from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*
3. Excerpts from Confucius' *The Analects*

In-class Procedure—may take two days

Focus: Lao Tzu, Taoism, and the *Tao Te Ching*

1. Begin class with a quickwrite: students refer to texts and list three traits consistent with Taoism and three for Confucianism.
2. Briefly share traits and begin master list on board—students take notes.
3. Lecture notes—bulleted list of traits for Chinese history and philosophy.
4. Continue lecture with bio traits for Lao Tzu with emphasis on Taoism.
5. Solicit volunteers to read aloud excerpts from *Tao Te Ching*. Have students pair and note underlying beliefs for each of four excerpts at the end of each reading. Discuss and clarify with entire class. Correct interpretations, if necessary.
6. Show clips from *Star Wars*—Yoda's philosophy. As students watch, have them list their thoughts about how the clips link to Taoism. Discuss their links.

The following days—possibly 2-3

Focus: Confucius, Confucianism, and *The Analects*

1. At beginning of class, students copy a bulleted list of traits for Confucianism. I will discuss the traits and provide examples to help students make connections.
2. In pairs, students will re-read the excerpts from *The Analects*, and in their notes jot the moral principle espoused in each piece.
3. After a brief pairing, the class will create a master list of Confucian beliefs. Students should add any additional beliefs to their notes.
4. The session will close with students writing two paragraphs. The first paragraph will explain which Confucian belief(s) the individual agrees with, and the second will identify and give reasons for questioning or rejecting at least one Confucian belief. After discussing responses, I will collect the paragraphs and check for potential misunderstandings or points to clarify in future lessons.

The Next Day(s)

1. In pairs, students will create a dichotomy contrasting the philosophies of Taoism and Confucianism. A couple volunteers will place dichotomies on an overhead for discussion.
2. I will pass out fortune cookies and kids can eat them, but they must save the fortune. I will write the term “aphorism” on the board and have students define it in their notes. I will explain that the brief, universal sayings of Confucius, and the fortunes, are examples of aphorisms.
3. Students will then peruse textbook page 95 with Franklin’s aphorisms from *Poor Richard’s Almanac*. With a partner they will link each of Franklin’s aphorisms with either Taoism and Confucianism. We will discuss their answers.
4. The final activity is for students to create their own aphorisms. Two must be consistent with Taoism and two with Confucianism. They will write these with markers on nice paper, present one to the class, and explain the underlying philosophy. Aphorisms will then be posted on a bulletin board in the room.