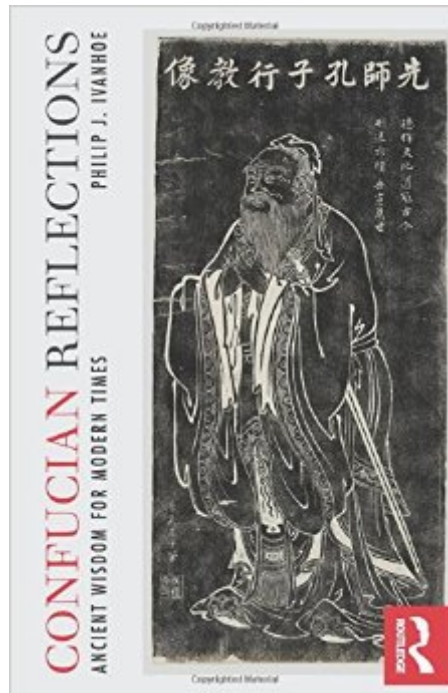


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Confucian Reflections: Ancient Wisdom For Modern Times



Synopsis

Confucian Reflections: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times is about the early Chinese Confucian classic the "Analects" Lunyu, attributed to the founder of the Confucian tradition, Kongzi (551-479 bce) and who is more commonly referred to as "Confucius" in the West. Philip J. Ivanhoe argues that the Analects is as relevant and important today as it has proven to be over the course of its more than 2000 year history, not only for the people who live in East Asian societies but for all human beings. The fact that this text has inspired so many talented people for so long, across a range of complex, creative, rich, and fascinating cultures offers a strong prima facie reason for thinking that the insights the Analects contains are not bound by either the particular time or cultural context in which the text took shape.

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Customer Reviews

As a teacher of Chinese philosophy, history, and literature, I've always been frustrated by the difficulty of getting students to really get the value of the Confucian path. I've assigned primary and secondary source readings, led seminars, shown films and documentaries, on and on, and always with the same disappointing results: Confucianism, so very relevant and resonant to the teacher (who has applied it daily for years now with life-enhancing results), leaves the students lukewarm to cold. Just another dead philosophy. I bought and read Prof. Ivanhoe's book in February 2014. My Asian Lit class had already read the Analects, journaled about it, discussed it in seminars--with the same result as usual. Able to sound knowledgeable about the ideas but clueless about the

relevance and value of the way. Prof. Ivanhoe's book sparked this theory: The best way to teach Confucianism is not through *reading* it; it's through *practicing* it. I assigned only the last chapter (Ch. 6) to my students. We read it slowly, as a group, pausing after each paragraph to discuss, debate, deepen, clarify. It took us one week. After that, we began a "Self-Cultivation Project" in which students *and I* sketched out a self-criticism of ourselves from a Confucian Role Ethics angle: students reflected on their weaknesses in their roles as student, son/daughter, sibling, friend; I reflected on my weaknesses as teacher, husband, son, sibling. We envisioned specific behaviors, attitudes, and emotions we could cultivate to improve ourselves and our relations in each of these roles, and committed to spend three weeks trying to remain "Aware of, Attentive to, and Caring about" our self-cultivation as we "steered" toward our more optimal selves in the Everyday.

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