

Daoist Thought and Qi Gong: Practical exercises and philosophy for personal resilience and business strategy

Course number:	new
Hours per week:	2
ECTS:	2 – 5 (depending on individual requirements)
Scheduled:	Winter and summer semester
Format:	Practical workshop, seminar and experiential learning
Examination:	Oral exam (for 2 ECTS) plus written report (for 5 ECTS)
Lecturer:	Prof. Dr. Oliver A. Hugo
Objectives:	<p>How did ancient Chinese philosophers like Sun Tzu (“The Art of War”), Confucius and Lao Tzu (“Tao Te Ching”) think about strategy? How can their views help us even today to develop business plans and strengthen personal resilience? And how can these timeless ideas be physically experienced through the practice of Qi Gong as a form of “embodied cognition”? In this course, we will contrast ideas about strategy from Western and Eastern traditions, focusing, in particular, on Daoist thought. As an intellectual framework the latter is unique in that it can, to an extent, be physically experienced through Qi Gong exercises (a form of “embodied cognition”). By learning these exercises and reflecting upon the process, conclusions can be drawn about strategy, resilience and success in business and personal life. As essential sources of Chinese culture, Daoist and Confucian thought also offer opportunities for building our cross-cultural understanding.</p>
Contents:	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key strategy concepts from Western scholarship ▪ Basics of Daoist and Qi Gong history and philosophy ▪ Strategic concepts from Daoism, Sun Tzu and Confucius ▪ Overview of current scientific work in the field of Qi Gong ▪ The modern concept of embodied cognition <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to apply concepts based on Eastern philosophy to improve personal resilience and business strategy ▪ Ability to perform a sequence of 8 – 12 physical Qi Gong exercises <p>Competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Through analysis, students are able to determine how and when the application of Daoist thinking and practice is beneficial ▪ Students have developed a better sense of and improved their cognitive and physical ability to learn exercise sequences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to reflect on the personal learning process, obstacles and possible solutions <p>Note: A significant part of the course will be dedicated to learning and discussing the physical exercises.</p>
Pre-requisites	<p>Normal physical mobility and mental stability, otherwise no special fitness required. Interest in Chinese culture and Daoist thought. Participation during pregnancy is not possible.</p>
Recommended Reading:	<p>Will be provided in the course. Among others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hennig, A. (2017) 'Daoism in Management', Philosophy of Management, 16(2), pp. 161 – 182. • Hennig, A., 2017. Applying Laozi's Dao De Jing in Business. Philosophy of Management 16, 19 – 33. • Bourgeois, L.J., Eygenson, S. and Namasondhi, K. (2021) The Tao of strategy: how seven ancient philosophies help solve twenty-first-century business challenges. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. • Henz, D. and Schöllhorn, W.I. (2017) 'EEG Brain Activity in Dynamic Health Qigong Training: Same Effects for Mental Practice and Physical Training?', Frontiers in Psychology, 8. • Jahnke, R. et al. (2010) 'A Comprehensive Review of Health Benefits of Qigong and Tai Chi', American Journal of Health Promotion, 24(6), pp. e1 – e25. • Van Dam, K. (2020) 'Individual Stress Prevention through Qigong', International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 17(19), p. 7342. • Tian, V. et al. (2024). 'The impact of health qigong practice on creative self-efficacy among primary school students', Journal of Physical Education and Sport, 24 (3), pp. 738 – 746 • Sunzi, 2025. The art of war: timeless wisdom distilled, New edition. ed. John Murray, London. • Joshi, D., 2025. Putting Daoist thought into practice: happiness, longevity, and enlightenment. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon New York, NY.