COURSE DESCRIPTION

Although Confucius himself said relatively little about the arts, ideas and values generally considered "Confucian" have influenced Chinese theories and practices in various arts over the centuries. In this course, we will start by spending several weeks studying ideas associated with Confucius and his later interpreters, and then focus on various ways he has been represented visually. The rest of the course will consider some genres of art and material culture in which Confucian ideas played different kinds of important role, such as tomb and temple design, didactic illustration, and ancestor portraits. The goal is to understand ways that Confucian concepts guided choices of content, style, and structure, as well as the expectations of patrons, users, viewers, and collectors.

Classes will be conducted in a combination of informal lecture and discussion, and students will be expected to be active participants. Course grades will be based on writing assignments, oral presentations, and participation in class discussion.