

## **MERCEDES VALMISA**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy  
Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellow '18-19  
Gettysburg College  
Campus Box 404  
Gettysburg, PA 17325  
mvalmisa@gettysburg.edu

### **AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

Classical Chinese Philosophy, Philosophy of Action

### **AREAS OF COMPETENCE**

Social Philosophy, Metaphysics, Asian Philosophy, Comparative Philosophy (Analytic, Continental, Hispanic)

In Sinology: Early China, Textuality and Manuscript Studies, Chinese Art & Archaeology

### **ACADEMIC POSITIONS**

- 2018- Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Gettysburg College
- 2018-19 Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellow, Gettysburg College
- 2017-18 Visiting Fellow, International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IKGF), Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany

### **EDUCATION**

- 2017 PhD Princeton University, East Asian Studies (Chinese Philosophy)  
Dissertation: "Changing Along with the World: Adaptive Agency in Early China"  
Committee: Willard Peterson, Martin Kern, Melissa Lane, Franklin Perkins
- 2011 MA National Taiwan University, Chinese Philosophy  
Thesis: "Freedom in the *Zhuangzi*" (written in Mandarin: 莊子之自由觀念)  
Taiwan Philosophical Association Prize of Excellence  
Advisor: Wim De Reu
- 2008 MA Autonomous Madrid University, East Asian Studies (Chinese Studies)
- 2005 BA University of Sevilla, Philosophy, Honors

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Books

*All Things Act* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2025)

*Adapting. A Chinese Philosophy of Action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021)  
Abstract, table of contents, and praise [here](#).

### Reviews of *Adapting*

*Mind* (2022); *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* (2023); *The Journal of Asian Studies* (August 2023); *The Philosophical Review* (2024); *Philosophy East and West* (2024).

### Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

2025	“When Transformative Experience is a Trap” (with Tim Connolly; work in progress)
2024	“The Philosophy of the <i>Zhuangzi</i> ,” in <i>Chinese Philosophy and Its Thinkers: From Ancient Times to the Present Day</i> , volume 1, eds. Selusi Ambrogio and Dawid Rogacz. New York: Bloomsbury, 223-243.
2024	“Should We Use Unprovenanced Materials in our Research? Epistemic, Methodological, and Ethical Issues,” in <i>The Methods and Ethics of Researching Unprovenanced Artifacts from East Asia. Cambridge Elements</i> , ed. Erica Fox Brindley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024, 42-55.
2024	“Truth and Ideology in Classical China: Mohists vs Zhuangists,” in <i>Practices of Truth in Philosophy: Historical and Comparative Perspectives</i> , eds. Pietro Gori and Lorenzo Serini. New York: Routledge, 61-83.
2023	“Wang Bi and the Hermeneutics of Actualization,” in <i>The Craft of Oblivion: Aspects of Forgetting and Memory in Ancient China</i> , ed. Albert Galvany. Albany: SUNY, 245-270.
2021	“What is a Situation?” in <i>Coming to Terms with Timelessness. Daoist Time in Comparative Perspective</i> , ed. Livia Kohn. Cambridge, Mass.: Three Pines Press, 25-46.
2019	“The Reification of Fate in Early China.” <i>Early China</i> 42: 147-199.
2019	“The Happy Slave isn’t Free: Relational Autonomy and Freedom in Zhuangzi.” <i>Philosophy Compass</i> 2019;e12569. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12569">https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12569</a>

2019	對中國哲學的「漢學挑戰」：一個從後學科角度出發的回應 (The ‘Sinological Challenge’ to Chinese Philosophy: A Response from a Post-Disciplinary Perspective). <i>Chinese Philosophy and Culture 中國哲學與文化</i> vol. 16: 20-50.
2016	“La espontaneidad no es un valor en el Zhuangzi” in <i>Daoísmo: Interpretaciones Contemporáneas</i> , ed. Paulina Rivero Weber. Mexico City: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras UNAM, 197-223.
2015	“Beyond Our Control? Two Responses to Uncertainty and Fate in Early China” in <i>New Visions of the Zhuangzi</i> , ed. Livia Kohn. Cambridge, Mass.: Three Pines Press, 1-22.

### Public Philosophy

- 2025 Actor in philosophical play *Frog in the Well*, written by philosopher Jana Rošker and directed by Butoh artist Ryuzo Fukuhara (International Association for Chinese Philosophy, Ljubljana, Slovenia, June 22, 2025)
- 2023 Actor in philosophical play [Zhuangzi and the Riddle of European Subjectivity](#), written by philosopher Jana Rošker and directed by Butoh artist Ryuzo Fukuhara (European Association for Chinese Philosophy, Ljubljana, Slovenia, May 21, 2023)
- 2023 [New Books Network Podcast](#) on *Adapting: A Chinese Philosophy of Action*
- 2022 [We are interwoven beings](#) Aeon, 25 November, 2022
- 2022 [我们是一荣俱荣一损俱损的存在](#) Rujiawang, 25 December, 2022

### Book Reviews

- 2019 Paul van Els, *The Wenzi: Creativity and Intertextuality in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018). *Monumenta Serica* 67.2: 556-560.
- 2018 Jane Geaney, *Language as Bodily Practice in Early China: A Chinese Grammatology* (Albany: SUNY, 2018). *American Academy of Religion*, “Reading Religion,” September 6, 2018.

### FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

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- 2025 Invited research stay at University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2024 Underrepresented Faculty Grant (Provost’s Office)

- 2023 Pre-Tenure Sabbatical Leave (Gettysburg College)
- 2023 Invited research stay at University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2022 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Public Scholars Grant *denied*
- 2020 Andrew W. Mellon Curricular Development Grant
- 2020 Invited research stay at Elling Eide Center, Sarasota, Florida
- 2019 Andrew W. Mellon Curricular Development Grant
- 2018 Andrew W. Mellon Faculty Fellowship
- 2017 Young Scholar Award, European Association for Chinese Philosophy
- 2016 Laurence S. Rockefeller Graduate Prize Fellowship, University Center for Human Values, Princeton University
- 2015 Harold W. Dodds Honoric Fellowship for Outstanding Performance and Professional Promise, Princeton University
- 2012 Tsang Yee and Wai Kwan Chan So P\*71 Fellowship for Chinese History and Culture
- 2012 Princeton University Summer Language Fellowship for the study of Japanese in Ishikawa, Princeton in Ishikawa
- 2012-15 Princeton Interdisciplinary Program in the Humanities Reading Group Fellowship
- 2011 Taiwan Philosophical Association Prize of Excellence to Best M.A. Chinese Philosophy Thesis Written in Chinese
- 2011 Princeton University Graduate Fellowship
- 2011 Princeton University Pre-Enrolment Language Fellowship for the study of Japanese in Tokyo, International Christian University
- 2009-11 Taiwan Ministry of Education Fellowship for Graduate Studies, National Taiwan University (NTU), Philosophy Department
- 2008 Taiwan Ministry of Education Scholarship for Mandarin Language, Normal Taiwan University, Mandarin Training Centre
- 2007 Instituto de Crédito Oficial (ICO Spain) Chinese Summer Language Program at Beijing University
- 2005 University of Seville, Philosophy Department Research Grant
- 2003 European Union Erasmus Mundus Grant, University of Jules Verne, Amiens, France

### **KEYNOTE SPEECHES**

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- Keynote Speech TBD. European Association for Chinese Philosophy (EACP), June 28, 2025.

- Keynote Speech “A Call to Action: How Things Act and Why All Actions Are Collective.” East Stroudsburg University Comparative Philosophy Conference, March 29, 2025.
- Keynote Speech “The Collective Character of Creative Action.” Southeast Early China Roundtable (SEECR), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, October 25, 2024.
- Keynote Speech “All Entities Have Consequences.” Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought (MCCT), University of York, Toronto, March 12, 2023

## INVITED TALKS

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- “Harmony as a Sub-Type of Self-Organization.” Rutgers Workshop on Chinese Thought, April 10-11, 2025.
- “All Things Act.” Tsinghua New Books Seminar, Beijing (online), December 8, 2024.
- “Emergence, Spontaneity, and Volition: A New Interpretation of *Wuwei*.” Eastern Michigan University Philosophy Speaker Series, March 27, 2024.
- Panel Discussion: Philosophy and the Problems of Exclusion and Marginalization, with Prof. Mogobe Ramose, February 21, 2024, Gettysburg College.
- “Filosofía de la Acción.” Congreso Internacional de la Red Iberoamericana de Filosofía China, Universidad de Málaga, Spain, December 18-20, 2023.
- “Emergence, Spontaneity, and Volition.” Yale University, Council on East Asian Studies Colloquium Series, November 9, 2023.
- “Things and Powers.” Agency in Early Chinese Thought Roundtable Discussion with Karyn Lai and Christine Tan, *Collaborative Learning* 四海為學, June 13, 2023.
- “All Entities Have Consequences.” Humanism, Posthumanism, and Transhumanism in East Asian Past and Present, University of Ljubljana, May 19-23, 2023
- Book Talks *Adapting. A Chinese Philosophy of Action*:  
 University of Michigan, October 27, 2022  
 University of California, Santa Barbara, October 25, 2022  
 Rutgers University, March 10, 2022  
 Washington and Lee University, March 7, 2022  
 Bucknell University Humanities Center, Non/Humanity Seminar, March 3, 2022
- Book Panel *Adapting. A Chinese Philosophy of Action*, American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Denver, November 21, 2022
- Author-Meets-Critics Panel, Invited Program, American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting, January 2022, Montreal, Canada. *Panel cancelled due to Covid-19*
- Author-Meets-Critics Panel, Invited Program, American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, November 2021.
- Columbia Seminars: “A Discussion of *Fa* in the *Shenzi*.” The Columbia Society for Comparative Philosophy, October 22, 2021.

- “Relational Ethics in Classical Chinese Philosophy.” National Taiwan University, Philosophy Department, Taipei. April 2020. *Cancelled due to Covid-19.*
- “The Co-Action Paradigm.” The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium *Past and Future in a Philosophical Look East* at California State University, Fullerton. March 18-20, 2020. *Cancelled due to Covid-19.*
- “What is a Situation?” Scott and Heather Kleiner Colloquium Series, Philosophy Department, University of Georgia, September 25, 2020.
- “¿Qué Significa Entender a los Demás? Wang Bi y la Hermenéutica de la Actualización.” Cátedra Bolívar Echeverría, Universidad del Azuay (Ecuador), June 29, 2020.
- “The *Zhuangzi* and its Contemporary Significance.” *The Council of Taiwanese Chambers of Commerce in Europe* 歐洲台灣商會, August 30, 2020.
- Columbia Seminars: “On Non-Human Agency,” Neo-Confucian Studies Seminar, Columbia University, March 6, 2020.
- “De la Forma de los Cuerpos al Cuerpo sin Forma: Adaptación en la Filosofía China Clásica.” *Pensar a Través del Cuerpo en la Antigüedad: Grecia, India, China*, Tabakalera San Sebastian, Spain, June 5-7, 2019.
- Syllabus Make-Over Competition: Who Can Create the Best Multicultural Syllabus? APA Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies, American Philosophical Association, Pacific Meeting, Vancouver, April 17-20, 2019.
- “Forgetting for Getting: Wang Bi’s Reading of the *Zhuangzi*’s Fishnet Allegory that Revolutionized *Zhouyi* Exegesis.” *Global Reception of the Classic Zhuangzi* 莊子: *Han to Tang*, University of California at Berkeley, March 7-9, 2019.
- “Contentment Does Not Make Us Free: Relational and De Facto autonomy in Dialog with the *Zhuangzi*.” Seminars at National Chengchi University, Taipei, November 16 & 20, 2018.
- “Integrating Chinese Philosophy and Chinese Studies.” Panel Discussion. KU Leuven, April 9, 2018.
- “Adapting *versus* Conforming: Two Models of Agency in the Context of Early Chinese Divination Practices.” International Consortium for Research in the Humanities Lecture Series, IKGf, FAU, Erlangen, January 9, 2018.
- “The ‘Sinological Challenge’ to Chinese Philosophy: A Response from a Post-Disciplinary Perspective.” *Pre-Qin Thinkers: Philosophical Thoughts and Debates*, Chinese University of Hong Kong, December 15-16, 2016.
- “Beyond our Control? Two Responses to Uncertainty and Fate in Early China.” Daoism: Tradition and Transition. 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Daoist Studies. Boston University, May 29-June 1, 2014.
- “Spontaneity is not a value in the *Zhuangzi*.” First International Conference in Buddhism and Daoism UNAM, Mexico City, December 3-7, 2012 (in Spanish).

## PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

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- Book Panel *All Things Act*, with responses from Brook Ziporyn, Vytis Silius, and Tim Connolly. International Society for Chinese Philosophy (ISCP), Ljubljana, June 21, 2025.
- “Philosophy of Agency: Combining Chinese Philosophy with Anglo-European Relationalism.” XXV World Congress of Philosophy, Rome, August 1-8, 2024.
- “Things and Powers.” XXV World Congress of Philosophy, Rome, August 1-8, 2024.
- “Immigrant Agency: *Never Willing to Maintain a Single Course of Action*.” 12th East-West Philosophers’ Conference “Trauma and Healing,” Hawaii, May 24-31, 2024.
- “Music and the Power of Reorganization.” Midwest Conference on Chinese Thought (MCCT), Indiana University, April 12-13, 2024.
- “Things and Powers.” North East Conference in Chinese Thought (NECCT), Brown University, November 11, 2023.
- “Pragmatic Truth, Ideology, and Anti-Dogmatism.” American Philosophical Association, Eastern Meeting, Montreal, Canada, January 2023.
- “A Process-Relational Conception of Situations and Its Application.” American Philosophical Association, Eastern Meeting, Montreal, Canada, January 2023.
- “Rethinking Agency for Social and Political Change.” Friday Forum, Gettysburg College, September 9, 2022.
- “We are not so free, but oh, that’s why we can be free at all.” *Beyond Free Will: Varieties in Understanding of Choice, Luck, and Necessity*. Vilnius, Lithuania, June 20-23, 2022.
- “Adapting: Acting with Efficacy in a World of Interrelations and Co-Dependencies.” American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Texas, November 2021.
- “Can Objects be Agents?” International Society for Chinese Philosophy, Berne, July 2-5, 2019.
- “The Non-Subjective Agency of Fate (*ming* 命): Can Objects be Agents?” American Philosophical Association, Pacific Meeting, Vancouver, April 17-20, 2019.
- “Adaptive Preferences *versus* Adaptive Agency: Theoretical Perspectives on Dealing with Constraints.” Association for Asian Studies National Meeting, Denver, March 21-24, 2019.
- “What is Adaptive Agency?” Southeast Early China Roundtable, University of North Florida, October 19-21, 2018.
- “Adaptive Agency in Early China.” 2<sup>nd</sup> Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Philosophy. Basel, Switzerland, September 7-9, 2017.
- “The World is a Cage, or The Place of Freedom in Early Chinese Philosophy.” 11<sup>th</sup> East/West Philosophers’ Conference, East-West Center, Honolulu, May 30, 2016.
- “Adaptive Measures in the Zhou Conquest: An Unorthodox Portrayal of King Wu.” Association for Asian Studies, Seattle, March 30, 2016.
- “Phenomenality in the *Zhuangzi*.” American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division Meeting. Atlanta, Georgia, December 27-30, 2012.

- “Is the Ideology of the Mandate of Heaven Already Present in Western Zhou Bronze Inscriptions?” Southeast Early China Roundtable, Berea College, November 2012.

## TEACHING

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### Gettysburg College (2018-present)

FYS 138 Philosophy of Monsters  
 PHIL 101 Introduction to Philosophy  
 PHIL 216 Classical Chinese Philosophy  
 PHIL 240 World Philosophy  
 PHIL 251 Philosophy of Action  
 PHIL 355 Nothingness  
 PHIL 366 Great Philosophers: Zhuangzi  
 PHIL 400 Senior Seminar  
 PHIL 466 Senior Thesis  
 PHIL 467 Advanced Research and Communication in Philosophy

### Previous Teaching Experience and Teaching Certificates

University of Seville (Invited Professor), PHIL/EAS Chinese Philosophy (Spring 2018)  
 Princeton University (Teaching Assistant), REL 225 The Buddhist World of Thought and Practice (Fall 2015)  
 Language Teaching  
 Mandarin and French, Madrid Cultural Centre, Spain (2006-2008)  
 Spanish, Beijing Foreign Studies University, China (Spring 2006)  
 Spanish, International House Sevilla, Spain (Fall 2005)

### Teaching Certificates

McGraw Center Teaching Seminar Certification, Princeton University (2016)  
 Teaching Transcript Program Certification, Princeton University (2015)  
 Spanish as a Second Language Certification, International House Spain (2005)

## SERVICE

### Gettysburg College (2018-present)

- Honors Commission: Fall 2022-
- Subcommittee on Student Course Evaluations: Spring 2021
  - Researched the shortcomings of SETs as an instrument for the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, and alternative models for the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

- Junior Faculty Advocacy Group (founding member): 2020-2021
  - Researched pandemic-related challenges, their intersections with race, gender, and ability, and proposed initiatives to minimize their impact.
- Curricular and Departmental Diversification in Philosophy and Broader Impact on Campus:
  - Created new courses in non-Western philosophical traditions.
  - Changed major and minor requirements to include an equal number of prerequisites in Western and non-Western philosophy courses.
  - Created new Diversity and Inclusion Statement: <https://www.gettysburg.edu/academic-programs/philosophy/diversity-inclusion-statement>

## **Profession**

### *Associate Editor*

- *Philosophical Explorations. An International Journal for the Philosophy of Mind and Action*, 2024-

### *Academic Associations*

- President, Association of Chinese Philosophers in North America (ACPA), 2024 & 2025.
- Vice-President, Association of Chinese Philosophers in America (ACPA), 2022 & 2023.
- Secretary, Association of Chinese Philosophers in America (ACPA), 2020 & 2021.
- Elected Board Member, European Association for Chinese Philosophy (EACP), 2019-2021; reelected 2021-2023; reelected 2023-2025.
- Secretary-Treasurer, International Society for the Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy (ISCWP), 2020-2023.

### *Scientific Committees*

- Belgium Fund for Scientific Research (FNRS)—Postdoctoral Research Grants.
- Israel Science Foundation—Personal Research Grants.
- International Conference of the Iberoamerican Network of Chinese Philosophy, Universidad de Costa Rica, San José, August 2025.
- International Society for Chinese Philosophy, Ljubljana University, Slovenia, July 2025.
- (Rei)vindicando lo marginal: mujeres filósofas y temáticas periféricas, Universidad de Málaga, Spain, September 26-28, 2024.
- International Conference of the Iberoamerican Network of Chinese Philosophy, Universidad de Málaga, Spain, December 18-20, 2023.

### *Referee for Book and Journal Manuscripts*

SUNY; Oxford University Press; Princeton; Springer; Lexington; Bloomsbury; *Res Philosophica*; *Philosophical Studies*; *Philosophy East and West*; *Journal of World Philosophies*; *Early China*; *Dao. A Journal of Comparative Philosophy*.

### *Mentorship*

Job Candidate Mentoring Program for Women in Philosophy, 2018-2019.

*Workshops, Conferences, and Panels Organized*

- 2024 Panel “Philosophy of Agency: Combining Chinese Philosophy with Anglo-European Relationalism.” XXV World Congress of Philosophy, Rome, August 1-8, 2024.
- 2024 Third Gettysburg Workshop in Chinese and Comparative Philosophy. Gettysburg College, April 8, 9, and 10.
- 2022 Second Gettysburg Workshop in Chinese and Comparative Philosophy “Openness, Contingency, and Change.” Gettysburg College, April 8, 2022.
- 2021 European Association for Chinese Philosophy Online Conference “Chinese Philosophy: Paths Between Convergence and Divergence.” December 3, 2021.
- 2019 First Gettysburg Workshop in Chinese and Comparative Philosophy “Body, Agency, Praxis.” Gettysburg College, Feb 8, 2019.
- 2018 Panel “Integrating Chinese Studies and Chinese Philosophy: Problems and New Methodological Orientations” (Organizer, Chair, Discussant). Association for Asian Studies, Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., March 22-25.
- 2016 The Princeton Early Text Cultures Workshop. Princeton Graduate School and Oxford University, April 16 and 17, 2016.
- 2016 Panel “Revisiting Old Heroes, or Non-Traditional Readings of Traditional Figures” (Organizer, Presenter). Association for Asian Studies, Annual Meeting, Seattle, March 31-April 3, 2016.
- 2015 “*Bellum vs zhan* 戰: A Comparative Workshop on Early Military Thought.” Princeton East Asian Studies Program and IHUM, April 4, 2015.
- 2014 Philosophy of the Past: Early Chinese Philosophy in Context. Council of the Humanities and East Asian Studies Program, Princeton, February 22, 2014.
- 2014 Memory and Adaptation in Early China. IHUM Reading Group “Philosophical Topics in Early China.” Princeton University, March 2-4, 2014.

*Editing*

Martin Kern, *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation*, American Oriental Series 2000. Contrasted, proofread, and edited Chinese translation: 柯馬丁, 秦始皇石刻: 早期中国的文本与仪式. Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2015.

Martin Kern, several articles. Contrasted and proofread Chinese translation and compilation: 文本與文化記憶: 早期中國的書寫、儀式和詩歌研究 [Text and Cultural Memory: Studies in Early Chinese Writing, Ritual, and Poetry]. Beijing: Sanlian, 2016.

*Professional Memberships*

American Philosophical Association  
American Academy of Religion

Association of Asian Studies  
 Association of Chinese Philosophers in North America  
 Comparative Philosophy Toward World Philosophy  
 European Association for Chinese Philosophy  
 International Society for Chinese Philosophy  
 International Society for the Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy  
 Red Iberoamericana de Filosofía China

## STUDY IN ASIA

2012 JAPAN Princeton in Ishikawa: Japanese Intensive Language Program  
 2011 JAPAN International Christian University: Japanese Intensive Language Program  
 2009-2011 TAIWAN National Taiwan University, Philosophy Department, MA in Chinese  
 Philosophy  
 2008-2009 TAIWAN Normal Taiwan University, Mandarin Training Center, Academic Mandarin  
 and Classical Chinese  
 2007 CHINA Beijing Foreign Studies University, Advanced Mandarin  
 2006 CHINA Beijing Languages and Cultures University, Beginner Mandarin

## LANGUAGES

SPANISH	Native
ENGLISH	Near native
MANDARIN	Advanced (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
CLASSICAL CHINESE	Advanced (reading)
FRENCH	Advanced (reading, writing, speaking, listening)
ITALIAN	Advanced (reading and listening)
JAPANESE	Intermediate (reading)