The Birth of Chinese Philosophy

* During the warring states period, Chinese values of ancestor worship and familial respect were replaced with chaos, arrogance, and disunity.
* The Chinese People turned to philosophies on order to get a style of life.

Daoism:

* Founder: Loazi. He was interested in finding harmony between nature and man in order to find inner peace with simplicity in his philosophies.
* Beliefs:
  + Nature follows a natural order called the “Tao”
  + People originally don’t follow this force but they can learn to.
  + Encourage people to observe, seek and understand the laws of nature.
* Goals:
  + Humility
  + Simple life / inner peace
  + Harmony with nature
* Yin and Yang:
  + Found in both Confucianism and Daoism.
  + Based on the idea that like should be a balance and balancing the two opposite forces of nature leads to inner peace.
  + Yin:
    - The darker element
    - Feminine
    - Night
    - Water / Earth
  + Yang:
    - The brighter element
    - Active
    - Masculine
    - Day
    - Fire / Wind

Legalism:

* No real founders, but Han Fei is credited with expanding the influence of Legalism.
* Fei lived during the late warring states period in Chinese history (before the Qin dynasty)
* Principles:
  + Human nature is originally bad
  + Literacy and intelligence are discouraged
  + The ruler must rule with an iron fist
  + War is a way to increase a nation’s power
  + Threat of harsh punishment keeps a nation in line with society’s rules.

Confucianism:

* Founder: Confucius
  + One of the most important Chinese thinkers, born in 551 BCE and was a well-educated man who thought very deeply about the challenges in Chinese society.
  + He believed that a time of peace could return if people would improve 5 relationships (Filial piety):
    - Ruler and Ruled
    - Father and Son
    - Husband and Wife
    - Brother and brother
    - Friend and Friend
* Principles:
  + Beliefs that humans are naturally good
  + Respect for elders
  + The golden rule
  + Emphasis on education
  + Ancestor worship (praying for their support in the afterlife)
* Ideas for government:
  + In order to govern others, a person must govern oneself. Leaders should practice self-control, be moral, and act as a model for the subjects.
  + Leaders should strive to rule by example.
  + People will be given government jobs based on deserving it due to their education status and profession, not based on their relationships.