

Trying Not to Try: Cooperation, Trust and the Paradox of Spontaneity

無為

Many early Chinese thinkers had as their spiritual ideal the state of wu-wei, or effortless action. By advocating spontaneity as an explicit moral and religious goal, they inevitably involved themselves in the paradox of wu-wei—the problem of how one can try not to try—which later became one of the central tensions in East Asian religious thought. In this talk, I will look at the paradox from both an early Chinese and a contemporary perspective, drawing upon work in social psychology, cognitive neuroscience, and evolutionary theory to argue that this paradox is a real one, and is moreover intimately tied up with problems surrounding cooperation in large-scale societies and concerns about moral hypocrisy.

Friday

October 10, 2014

4:00 p.m.—5:30 p.m.

101 Jaqua Academic Center

1615 East 13th Avenue

University of Oregon

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

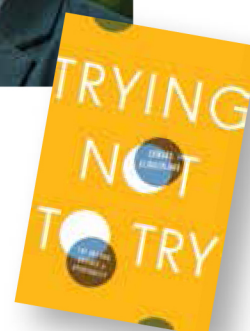
COSPONSORED BY:

The Oregon Humanities Center, the Institute for Cognitive and Decision Sciences (especially the Scientific Study of Values Group), the Department of Philosophy, and the Department of Psychology.



Edward Slingerland

Professor of Asian Studies
University of British Columbia



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

The University of Oregon is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request. 541-346-5547. Design by David Goodman. © 2014 University of Oregon MC0914 106ae K5xxxx