



# Selfishness & Self-Centeredness

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TUESDAY SEP 19

1:30–3 PM CDT (2:30–4 PM EASTERN TIME)

Registration via Zoom:

<https://slu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJlucOygrTsrHtISel-RPL6pVR8x0Mg7vf9K>

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明傳謝環杏園雅集  
圖卷  
Title: Elegant  
Gathering in the  
Apricot Garden  
Artist: After Xie Huan  
(Chinese, 1377–1452)  
Period: Ming dynasty  
(1368–1644)  
Collection from The  
Metropolitan  
Museum of Art

The aims of this talk are to describe and make clear the philosophically related but distinct notions of selfishness and self-centeredness and show how the latter in particular relates to concerns about oneness, the self, and happiness. Early Confucians (pre-Qin, c. 221 BCE) are more concerned with selfishness, while neo-Confucians (roughly Song-Qing dynasties, 10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries CE) more often are primarily concerned with self-centeredness and self-centered desires (*siyu* 私欲); among other things, this shows the profound influence of Buddhism upon neo-Confucian philosophy. The neo-Confucian view has both a metaphysical and an ethical component. While I will introduce the ideas of self-centeredness and self-centered desires by appealing to the thought of the traditional neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming (1472-1529), I will focus on modern variations of self-centeredness that can stand apart from their original metaphysical framework

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