# HKU03x Humanity and Nature in Chinese Thought

**Week 2: Introduction: God, Nature and Dao**
**Section 11: Using metaphor to approach meaning**

- Metaphors are ways of understanding things in terms of activities we have already mastered
- A baseball metaphor only works if you understand baseball
- Some metaphors are *conventional* - depend on your knowledge of the convention to understand the metaphor
- Distinguish between conventional vs. natural metaphors
- Natural metaphors are virtually universally understandable by all humans
    - Mothering, walking, smiling - virtually universal
    - Shaking hands, rubbing noses - more culturally dependent
- Focus on natural, normative metaphors
    - Possibly universal and in muscle memory - walking, throwing, balancing
- Two core metaphors for the course: one natural, one less sol
    - 道 *dao*[path] : Paths are a possibly universally understood metaphor
        - Finding, choosing, and following a path
    - Kingship & laws are, by contrast, constructed social institutions
        - Concept of *law* is linked to that of an authority entitled to enforce them
        - Classical China did not use this metaphor of normative behavior
        - In China, 'guidance' is conceptually linked with successful pathfinding rather than with commands and punishment