

Philosophy 4140

A Rough Guide for Pronouncing Chinese using the *Pinyin* Romanization System

Consonants:

Most consonants are pronounced like they are in English, but with the following differences:

“C” is pronounced like “ts” in “it’s.”

“Q” is pronounced like “ch” in “cheese.”

“X” is pronounced like “sh” in “she.”

“Z” is pronounced like the “dz” sound of “ds” in “fads.”

“Zh” is pronounced like “j” in “juice.”

Vowels:

“A” is pronounced like the “a” in “car.”

“E” is pronounced like the “e” in “the.”

“I” is pronounced like the “ee” in “meet” in most cases, except for the following:

“I” is pronounced like the “er” in “her” after “ch,” “sh,” “zh,” or “r.”

“I” is pronounced like the “i” in “it” after “c,” “s,” and “z.”

“O” is pronounced like the “o” in “go” if it is followed by other letters.

“O” is pronounced like the “wa” in “water” if it is not followed other letters.

“U” is pronounced like the “oo” in “hoot,” except when it follows “j,” “q,” “x,” or “y.”

“U” is pronounced like a short French “u” when it follows “j,” “q,” “x,” or “y.”

“Ü” is pronounced like a short French “u.”

“Ai” is pronounced like the “i” in “fight.”

“Ao” is pronounced like the “ow” in “owl.”

“Ei” is pronounced like the “ei” in “weight.”

“Ia” is pronounced like the “ya” sound in “Y’all.”

“Ie” is pronounced like the “ye” in “yes.”

“Io” is pronounced like the “yo” in “Yo!”

“Iu” is also pronounced like the “yo” in “Yo!”

“Ou” is pronounced like the “o” in “go.”

“Ua” is pronounced like the “wa” in “water.”

“Uai” is pronounced like “why.”

“Üe” is pronounced like the “we” in “wet.”

“Ui” is pronounced like “way.”

“Uo” is also pronounced like the “wa” in “water.”