

Religions of the Eastern World

Religion: 840:211-01 – Fall 2014

Section 2: Tu-Th 2:50-4:10 - Scott 105

Section 3: Tu-Th 4:30-5:50 - Frelinghuysen B6

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Office Hours: Tu 2 – 2:30

Loree 108

Course Description:

This course will introduce the Hindu, Buddhist and Chinese religious traditions through close readings of four primary texts: the *Bhagavad-gita*, the *Dhammapada*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and the *Mengzi*.

Course Requirements: adequate preparation of assigned primary texts and supplementary readings, demonstrated by thoughtful contributions to class discussion; three comprehensive, in-class quizzes based on assigned readings and class lectures; a final 5-6 page paper due the last day of class. Regular participation in classroom discussion is expected.

Grading: Grades will be based on three quizzes (60%), a final paper (20%) and classroom participation (20%). Students will be called upon in class to answer questions pertaining to the week's reading. **No** make-ups for missed exams will be given without valid medical proof or a signed letter from a student dean. Extra credit may be earned through in-class presentations. A = 100-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-70; D = 69-65; F = 64 and below.

Required Course Texts:

Miller, Barbara Stoller. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. New York: Bantam, 1986 ISBN-0-553-21365-2

Anonymous. *The Dhammapada*. New York: Penguin USA. ISBN 978-0-144-49419

Lau, D. C. *Tao te Ching*. New York: Penguin Books, 1963 ISBN-13: 978-0-140-44131-4

Van Norden, Bryan W. *The Essential Mengzi*. Hackett. ISBN 978-0-872-209855

Course Schedule

1 Tu / Sept 2

General Introduction to Hinduism: the Veda, sacrifice, the gods, the Three Worlds

2 Th / Sept 4

Vedic Hymns and Ritual

Readings: O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger (transl.). *The Rig Veda*: Selections

“The Hymn of Man” (pp. 29-32)

“I pray to Agni” (p. 99)

“Varuna” (pp. 217-218)

3 Tu / Sept 9

Social Structures; The Varṇāśrama System; The king & the Sage; Impersonal Brahman; The Imperishable; Concept of *mokṣa* and tensions between the path of ritual and path of knowledge.

Readings: Olivelle, Patrick. *The Law Code of Manu*: selections

Radhakrishnan, S. *The Principal Upaniṣads*: selections

4 Th / Sept 11

Literary Background of the Gītā; Arjuna's Grief & Arguments against War; Nature of the Self; Buddhi-yoga; Characteristics of Self-realization; Sacrifice; Conquest of Desire & Anger
Readings: *Bhagavad-gita*: Introduction, Chs. 1-3 [Miller pp. 1-14 / 23-49]

Radhakrishnan, S. *The Bhagavadgita, Introductory Essay*, p. 11-37

5 Tu / Sept 16

Eternal *Yoga*; *Avatāra*; Knowledge; Yoga practice

Reading: *Bhagavad-gita*: Chs. 4-6 [Miller pp. 51-72]

6 Th / Sept 18

Constitutional nature of Divinity; material nature; *Bhakti*; Qualifications of the Devotee

Reading: *Bhagavad-gita*: Chs. 7-9 [Miller pp. 73-90]

7 Tu / Sept 23

Kṛṣṇa's Universal Form; The Indwelling Supersoul;

Reading: *Bhagavad-gita*: Chs. 10-13 [Miller pp. 91-118]

8 Th / Sept 25

Transcending the *Guṇas*; The Universal Tree of *Samsāra*; Divine & Demonic Qualities

Reading: *Bhagavad-gita*: Chs. 14-16 [Miller pp. 119-130]

9 Tu / Sept 30

Faith, etc. as manifestation of the *Guṇas*; Five factors of Action; Surrender to God

Reading: *Bhagavad-gita*: Chs. 17-18 [Miller pp. 131-146]

10 Th / Oct 2 – Quiz #1

11 Tu / Oct 7

Introduction to Buddhism; Life & Realization of Gautama Buddha; The First Noble Truth

Readings: Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*. rev. ed. 1991: "Buddhism" pp. 82-153

Roebuck, Valerie (transl). *The Dhammapada*: Introduction; Sections 1-2

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*: pp. 16-28

12 Th / Oct 9

The Second & Third Noble Truths; The Three Jewels

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 3-5

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*: pp. 29-44

13 Tu / Oct 14

The Fourth Noble Truth: The Eight-fold Path; Comparisons with Jainism;

Theravāda School in India & Southeast Asia.

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 6-10

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*: pp. 45-50

Buddhadāsa. *Toward the Truth*: "Handbook for Mankind" pp. 110-180

14 Th / Oct 16

Development of Buddhism in India; Mahāyāna School; Bodhisattva; Emptiness

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 11-14

Śāntideva. *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*: selections

Sakyong Mipham. *Turning the Mind into an Ally*: pp. 163-175

15 Tu / Oct 21

Buddhism in China & Korea: Bodhidharma; Ch'an School

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 15-19

Red Pine. *Bodhidharma*: selections

Cleary, J. *Zen Essence*: pp. 1-3, 53-59

16 Th / Oct 23

Buddhism in Japan: Tendai, Shingon & Zen; Za-zen; the Koan; Pure Land Schools;
Co-existence with Shinto.

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 20-23

Suzuki, Shunryu. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*: selections

17 Tu / Oct 28

Lamaistic Buddhism in Tibet, etc; Modern global Buddhism; Engaged Buddhism

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 24-26

The Dalai Lama. Selections

Thich Nhat Hanh. Selections

18 Th / Oct 30 – Quiz #2

19 Tu / Nov 4

Introduction to Chinese Religions: Ancient Kings, Shang Dynasty, Gods & Heaven

Readings: Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*: "Confucianism" pp. 154-195

Lau, D. C. (transl). *The Analects*: selections

20 Th / Nov 6

Benevolence, Righteousness versus Profit

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book I A&B

21 Tu / Nov 11

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book II A&B

22 Th / Nov 13

Reading: *Mengzi*: Books VI A & VII

23 Tu / Nov 18

Introduction to Taoism: Laozi, the Way, Heaven & Earth

Readings: Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*: "Taoism" pp. 196-220

Tao Te Ching: Introduction; Book I Texts 1-17 [Lau pp. vii-21]

24 Th / Nov 20

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book I Texts 17-37 [Lau pp. 22-42]

25 Tu / Nov 25

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book II Texts 38-50 [Lau pp. 45-57]

[Thanksgiving Recess]

27 Th / Dec 2

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book II Texts 51-81 [Lau pp. 58-88] - Review

28 Tu / Dec 4 – Quiz #3

29 Th / Dec 9 - Summary Discussion – Final Student Presentations

Final Paper Due