

## Religions of the Eastern World

Fall 2015

840:211-01 & 840:211-02

Section 1: T-Th 2:50-4:10 Scott 105

Section 2: T-Th 4:30-5:50 Murray 211

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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-gītā*, 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** and **short response papers** as assigned; **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 (10%). 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 1

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

#### 2 Th / Sept 3

Vedic Hymns and Ritual

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

“I pray to Agni” (p. 99); “Agni and the Gods” (pp. 99-101)

“To All the Gods” (p. 22); “The Three Strides of Viṣṇu” (pp. 225-227)

[Above readings are available on SAKAI at Rigveda selections.pdf]

No class on Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> (class day change)

#### 3 Th / Sept 10

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

[on SAKAI at Manu-smṛiti excerpts]

Radhakrishnan, S. *The Principal Upaniṣads: Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (pp. 671-673)

[on SAKAI at Muṇḍaka Up excerpts.pdf]

#### 4 Tu / Sept 15

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-gītā*: Introduction, Chs. 1-3 [Miller pp. 1-14 / 23-49]

#### 5 Th / Sept 17

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

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

#### 6 Tu / Sept 22

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

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

#### 7 Th / Sept 24

Kṛṣṇa's Universal Form; The Indwelling Supersoul;

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

#### 8 Tu / Sept 29

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

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

#### 9 Th / Oct 1 – Quiz #1

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

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

#### 10 Tu / Oct 6

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

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

#### 11 Th / Oct 8

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

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

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

[on SAKAI: Huston Smith Buddhism excerpts]

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

[on SAKAI: Rahula 1.pdf]

#### 12 Tu / Oct 13

The Second & Third Noble Truths; The Three Jewels

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 3-5

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

[on SAKAI: Rahula 1.pdf]

#### 13 Th / Oct 15

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

[on SAKAI: Rahula, Walpola. The 8-fold Path.pdf]

**14 Tu / Oct 20**

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 Th / Oct 22**

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 Tu / Oct 27**

Japanese Religions: (1) Shinto; (2) Buddhism: Tendai, Shingon & Zen;

Za-zen; Koan practice; Pure Land Schools;

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 20-23

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

**17 Th / Oct 29**

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

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 24-26

Thich Nhat Hanh. Selections

**18 Tu / Nov 3 – Quiz #2****19 Th / Nov 5**

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

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

**20 Tu / Nov 10**

Benevolence, Righteousness versus Profit

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book I A&B

**21 Th / Nov 12**

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book II A&B

**22 Tu / Nov 17**

Reading: *Mengzi*: Books VI A & VII

**23 Th / Nov 19**

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 Tu / Nov 24**

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

**Thanksgiving Break****25 Tu / Dec 1**

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

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

**26 Th / Dec 3 – Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book II Texts 51-81 [Lau pp. 58-88] - Review**

Zhuangzi Select Readings: TBA

**27 Tu / Dec 8 – Quiz #3****28 Th / Dec 10 - Summary Discussion – Final Student Presentations****Final Paper Due**