



840:211 RELIGIONS of the EASTERN WORLD

Spring 2013

TuTh 5:35-6:55 pm

Heldrich Science Bldg, HSB 204, D/C

Dr. Thomas Selover

Phone: 848-932-9641; e-mail: tselover@rci.rutgers.edu

Course Description

This course examines major South and East Asian religious traditions. Concentration will be on Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. We are also interested in comparing the diverse ways and methods through which humankind may achieve spiritual transformation. We will pay equal attention to the philosophical and theological foundations of the religious traditions as well as their social functions and manifestations.

Required Texts

- A. *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*, translated by Barbara Stoler Miller. Bantam. (ISBN 0-553-21365-2)
- B. *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula, Grove Press. (ISBN 0-8021-3031-3)
- C. *The Essential Mengzi: Selected Passages with Traditional Commentary*, translated by Bryan W. Van Norden. Hackett (ISBN-13: 978-0-87220-985-5)
- D. *Lao-tzu's Taoteching*, translated by Red Pine. Copper Canyon Press; 3rd Revised edition (ISBN-13: 978-1556592904)

Course Policies:

- * Attendance will be taken. Missing class will affect the final grade unless a medical proof or a written proof of an emergency is provided.
- * You are expected to attend all classes fully prepared: complete the reading assignment for each class with written notes, and be ready to raise specific questions and discussion points.
- * **NO** make-up for missed exams will be given, unless a letter verifying an emergency is provided through the dean's office. Any permissible make-up must be arranged with the instructor.
- * The class strictly follows the university policy on academic integrity. It is available at <http://TeachX.rutgers.edu/integrity/index.html>.

Course Requirements

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Two Exams | 70% |
| 2. One Reflection Paper | 20% |
| 3. Class Attendance and Participation | 10% |

1. There will be two in-class exams, covering South Asian and East Asian traditions respectively (70% of the final grade: Exam 1=35%; Exam 2=35%). These exams are not cumulative.
2. There will be one reflection paper. You must either use MS Word or OpenOffice or convert your document to the pdf format if you use some other software before submitting it sakai.rutgers.edu by **May 7, 2013**.

3. Class Attendance and Participation (10% of the final grade): You are expected to attend every class meeting. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to you. You will be held responsible for materials covered in lectures, much of which goes beyond required readings. The lectures and discussions will also provide the necessary background and transitions between the various religious traditions. Your participation in class discussions will show how well you have understood the readings and where clarification is necessary. It is therefore essential to keep up with the reading assignments.

Course Schedule:

1/22, 1/24 Week 1:

1. Orientation and Introduction
 2. Early Indian Religion
- READING: in-class readings

1/29, 1/31 Week 2:

1. Setting of the Gita
 2. Path of Knowledge
- READING: *Bhagavad Gita*

2/5, 2/7 Week 3:

1. Path of Action
 2. Path of Devotion
- READING: *Bhagavad Gita*

2/12, 2/14 Week 4:

1. Further Reflections on the Gita
 2. Jainism
- READING: *Bhagavad Gita* ; additional readings

2/19, 2/21 Week 5:

1. Life of the Buddha
 2. Analysis of Experience—1st Noble Truth
- READING: *What the Buddha Taught*

2/26, 2/28 Week 6:

1. Causes—2nd Noble Truth
 2. Cessation & Path—3rd & 4th Noble Truths
- READING: *What the Buddha Taught*

3/5, 3/7 Week 7:

1. The Sangha
 2. Later Buddhism
- READING: *What the Buddha Taught*

3/12, 3/14 Week 8:

1. **1st Exam**

2. Early Chinese Religion
READING: *Mengzi*

BREAK WEEK

3/26, 3/28 Week 9:

1. Confucius & His Disciples
2. Benevolent Government

READING: *Mengzi*

4/2, 4/4 Week 10:

1. Love with Distinctions
2. Human Nature

READING: *Mengzi*

4/9, 4/11 Week 12:

1. Locating Laozi
2. Talking about the Dao

READING: *Lao-tzu's Taoteching*,

4/16, 4/18 Week 13:

1. Beauty, etc.
2. Symbols of the Dao

READING: *Lao-tzu's Taoteching*,

4/23, 4/25 Week 14:

1. Wu-wei as Political Philosophy
2. **2nd Exam**

READING: *Lao-tzu's Taoteching*,

4/30, 5/2 Week 15:

1. Shinto
2. Summary & Reflections

READING: in-class readings

Reflection Paper due on sakai by Tuesday, May 7th.