

Religions of the Eastern World

Religion: 840:211-01 – Spring 2015

Section 1: Tu 4:30-5:50 - Hardenbergh A1

Th 4:30-5:50 – Hardenbergh A6

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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 **three 1½ page response papers; 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 / Jan 20

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

2 Th / Jan 22

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]

3 Tu / Jan 27

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-smriti excerpts]

Radhakrishnan, S. *The Principal Upaniṣads: Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (pp. 671-673)
[on SAKAI at Muṇḍaka Up excerpts.pdf]

4 Th / Jan 29

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 Tu / Feb 3

Eternal *Yoga*; *Avatāra*; Knowledge; Yoga practice
Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 4-6 [Miller pp. 51-72]

6 Th / Feb 5

Constitutional nature of Divinity; material nature; *Bhakti*; Qualifications of the Devotee
Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 7-9 [Miller pp. 73-90]

7 Tu / Feb 10

Kṛṣṇa's Universal Form; The Indwelling Supersoul;
Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 10-13 [Miller pp. 91-118]

8 Th / Feb 12

Transcending the *Guṇas*; The Universal Tree of *Samsāra*; Divine & Demonic Qualities
Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 14-16 [Miller pp. 119-130]

9 Tu / Feb 17

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 Th / Feb 19 – Quiz #1

11 Tu / Feb 24

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 Th / Feb 26

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 Tu / Mar 3

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 Th / Mar 5

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 / Mar 10

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 / Mar 12

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

March 14-22 – Spring Recess

17 Tu / Mar 24

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

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 24-26

Thich Nhat Hanh. Selections

18 Th / Mar 26 – Quiz #2

19 Tu / Mar 31

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

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

20 Th / April 2

Benevolence, Righteousness versus Profit

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book I A&B

21 Tu / April 7

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book II A&B

22 Th / April 9

Reading: *Mengzi*: Books VI A & VII

23 Tu / April 14

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 / April 16

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

25 Tu / April 21

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

27 Th / April 23

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

28 Tu / April 28 – Zhuangzi Select Readings: TBA

29 Th / April 30 – Quiz #3

30 Tu / May 4 - Summary Discussion – Final Student Presentations

Final Paper Due