

840:211 Religions of the Eastern World Summer 2015

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Course Description

This course examines the main religious traditions of the Eastern World. We will concentrate on those traditions with continuing significant spiritual, philosophical, sociological, political, aesthetic and literary influence. Emphasis is on classical traditions, since this provides a solid foundation upon which students are then able to pursue further independent study in more recent developments. More specifically, our focus is on Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. An important aspect of our study of these religions is the exploration of their central scriptures/texts.

Required Texts

1. *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*, translated by Barbara Miller. Bantam Books.
2. *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula. Grove Press.
3. *Mencius*, translated by D.C. Lau. Penguin Books.
4. *Tao Te Ching*, by Lao Tzu, translated by D. C. Lau. Penguin.
5. *Shinto: The Way Home*, by Thomas P. Kasulis, University of Hawaii Press.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance (15% of final grade)

Attendance is required. You will lose two points on every day you miss class unless a medical proof or a written proof of an emergency is provided.

The format of the course would be a combination of lectures and class discussions. It is very important that you complete the reading assignment for each class. Since some materials in the lecture are not necessarily covered in the required texts, it is highly recommended that you take notes during the lecture. Of course, questions are always welcome.

2. Two exams (70% of final grade)

There will be two exams: a mid-session exam on June 16 and the final exam on July 2.

3. Book Report (15% of Final grade)

The book report is on the book, *a Shinto: The Way Home*. Basically, you should follow this structure: after summarizing every chapter of the book (including the Introduction), identify the central thesis of the book and discuss how the author presents it in the book. Please do not write this report as an opinion paper. Summary of the book is its most important part. The report

should be entirely based on this book. Do not use any other material (e.g. material from internet) to write this book report. It should be about four pages long (MS word or pdf format, font size 12 and double-spaced). The report has to be submitted on sakai.rutgers.edu by 11 p.m. on June 26. There will a penalty for late-submission.

Grading System

A=100-90, B+=89-87, B=86-80, C+=79-77, C=76-70, D=69-65, F=64 and below. Incompletes, i.e., "T" grades, will not be given under normal circumstances.

Schedule and Readings

May 26-28	Introduction, Hinduism, <i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> , (1 st – 9 th teachings)
June 1-2	<i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> , (10 th – 18 th teachings)
June 3-4	Buddhism, <i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , I-IV
June 8-10	<i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , V-VIII
June 11	Japanese Religions, <i>Shinto: The Way Home</i>
June 15	Mid-session Exam
June 16-18	Confucianism, <i>Mencius</i> , Book 1, A&B
June 22-23	<i>Mencius</i> , Book II, A&B; Book VII, A&B
June 24-25	Taoism, <i>Tao Te Ching</i> , I-XXXVII
June 26	Book Report due (Sakai)
June 29-30	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> , XXXVIII-LXXXI
July 1	Reading day
July 2	Final Exam