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
Instructor: Paul H. Sherbow
E-mail: psherbow@gmail.com
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:

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 moksa 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
Radhakrishnan, S. The Bhagavadgītā, Introductory Essay, p. 11-37

5 Tu / Sept 16
Eternal Yoga; Avatāra; Knowledge; Yoga practice
Reading: Bhagavad-gītā: Chs. 4-6 [Miller pp. 51-72]

6 Th / Sept 18
Constitutional nature of Divinity; material nature; Bhakti; Qualifications of the Devotee
Reading: Bhagavad-gītā: Chs. 7-9 [Miller pp. 73-90]

7 Tu / Sept 23
Kṛṣṇa’s Universal Form; The Indwelling Supersoul;
Reading: Bhagavad-gītā: Chs. 10-13 [Miller pp. 91-118]

8 Th / Sept 25
Transcending the Guṇas; The Universal Tree of Samsāra; Divine & Demonic Qualities
Reading: Bhagavad-gītā: 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-gītā: 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
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

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
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
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

28 Tu / Dec 4 – Quiz #3

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