

RELIGION 211: Religions of the Eastern World

Winter 2010

Instructor: Dr. Tao Jiang

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

This course examines three major areas of Asian religious traditions from a philosophical perspective: South Asia, East Asia, and Buddhist traditions. Since it is not possible to offer a comprehensive overview of all important traditions in these areas, concentration will be on those traditions with continuing significant spiritual, philosophical, sociological, political, aesthetic and literary influence. More specifically, it is an introduction to some of the major Asian religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto, approached through philosophical reflection. Emphasis is on classical traditions, since this provides a solid foundation upon which students are then able to pursue further independent readings in more recent developments. Furthermore, this emphasis permits an extended exploration of the interaction among contemporary economic, sociological and religious developments and classical traditions.

Course Requirements:

One exam:	70%
# One Book Report	30%

There will be one book report on the textbook, *Wabi-Sabi*. Basically, you should follow this structure: identify the central thesis and discuss how the author presents it by summarizing the author's argument in every chapter. Please do not write it as an opinion paper. Summary of the book is the most important part of the book report. You cannot use any materials on the internet to write this book report; it will be treated as a case of plagiarism. The report should be about five pages (word or pdf format, font size 12 and double-space). Please name your book report in the following format before submitting it: `firstname_lastname` (e.g., `Thomas_Johnson`). The report has to be submitted to sakai.rutgers.edu by 11 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2009 (remember to press the "submit" button at the end). Late submission will result in 10-point-per-day reduction of the final grade.

Course Policies:

- * Attendance is required. Every session missed will result in a 5-point reduction of the final grade unless a medical proof or a written proof of an emergency is provided through the dean's office.
- * 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 discuss points about the assigned reading.
- * The class strictly follows the university policy on academic integrity. It is available at <http://TeachX.rutgers.edu/integrity/index.html>

Important Dates:

Book report due online: Jan. 12 Final Exam: Jan. 15

Required Texts:

- (A) *Mencius*, translated by D.C. Lau. Penguin Books.
- (B) *Tao Te Ching*, by Lao Tzu, translated by D. C. Lau. Penguin.
- (C) *Wabi-Sabi*, by Leonard Koren. Imperfect Publishing.
- (D) *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*, translated by Barbara Miller. Bantam Books.
- (E) *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula. Grove Press.

Tentative Schedule:

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change. The format of the course would be a combination of lectures and class discussions. 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.

Dec. 28	<i>Mencius</i> Book I A&B
Dec. 29	<i>Mencius</i> Book II A&B
Dec. 30	<i>Mencius</i> Book VII A&B
Jan. 4	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> I-XXX
Jan. 5	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> XXXI-LX
Jan. 6	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> (LXI-LXXXI); <i>Wabi-Sabi</i>
Jan. 7	<i>Gita</i> pp.21-61 (1 st – 5 th teachings)
Jan. 8	<i>Gita</i> pp.63-95 (6 th – 10 th teachings)
Jan. 11	<i>Gita</i> pp.97-154 (11 th – 18 th teachings)
Jan. 12	<i>Buddha</i> I-II; book report due online
Jan. 13	<i>Buddha</i> III-IV
Jan. 14	<i>Buddha</i> V-VI
Jan. 15	Exam