

RELIGION 211: Religions of the Eastern World

Summer 2011

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, and Daoism/Taoism, 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:

Two exams:

100%

#Extra-credit book report:

10 points

The last textbook on Shinto is for extra credit purpose. The extra-credit book report should be about 7-10 pages long. You should follow this structure: identify the central thesis and summarize how the author presents it through several sub-theses. At the end you can (but do not have to) evaluate the author's presentation. The evaluation should not be more than one page long. The bottom line is that you have to demonstrate that you have read the book and understand what it is about. The book report must be submitted online to sakai.rutgers.edu by 11.59 pm, August 13, 2011.

Course Policies:

- * Attendance will be taken randomly. Every session missed will result in a 1-point reduction of your final grade unless a medical proof or a written proof of an emergency.
- * **NO** make-up for missed exams will be given, unless a letter verifying an emergency is provided through the dean's office.
- * The class strictly follows the university policy on academic integrity. It is available at <http://TeachX.rutgers.edu/integrity/index.html>

Exam Dates:

1st Exam: July 27

2nd Exam: August 17

Extra-credit book report due: August 13 on sakai.rutgers.edu

Textbooks:

- (A) *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*, translated by Barbara Miller. Bantam Books.
- (B) *What the Buddha Taught*, by Walpola Rahula. Grove Press.
- (C) *Mencius*, translated by D.C. Lau. Penguin Books.
- (D) *Tao Te Ching*, by Lao Tzu, translated by D. C. Lau. Penguin.
- (E) *Shinto: The Way Home*, by Thomas Kasulis. Hawaii. (optional book for extra credit book report)

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.

July 11	Introduction to Hinduism; <i>Gita</i> pp.21-39
July 13	<i>Gita</i> pp.41-109
July 18	<i>Gita</i> pp.111-154
July 20	Buddha I-III
July 25	Buddha IV-VI
July 27	1 st Exam; Introduction to Confucianism (Mencius Book I A)
Aug. 1	Mencius (Book I B & II A)
Aug. 3	Mencius (Book II B & VI A)
Aug. 8	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> intro-XX
Aug. 10	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> XXI-L; Extra-credit book report due this Saturday (Aug. 13) by 11:59 pm on sakai.rutgers.edu
Aug. 15	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> LI-LXXXI
Aug. 17	2 nd Exam