

840:211 Religions of the Eastern World Winter 2012

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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.

Required Texts

- (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) *Wabi-Sabi*, by Leonard Koren. Imperfect Publishing.

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 four (MS word or pdf format, font size 12 and double-spaced). The report has to be submitted to sakai.rutgers.edu by 11 p.m. on Jan. 9, 2012 (remember to press the "submit" button at the end). Late submission will result in 10-point-per-day reduction of the final grade.

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.

* 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 (Sakai): Jan. 9, 2012

Final Exam: Jan. 13, 2012

Schedule and Readings

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. 23	Introduction to the World of Eastern Religions
Dec. 26	<i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> , (1 st – 5 th teachings)
Dec. 27	<i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> , (6 th – 10 th teachings)
Dec. 28	<i>Bhagavad-Gita</i> , (11 th – 18 th teachings)
Dec. 29	<i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , I-II
Dec. 30	<i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , III-IV
Jan. 2	<i>What the Buddha Taught</i> , V-VI
Jan. 3	<i>Wabi-Sabi</i> and Japanese Religions
Jan. 4	<i>Mencius</i> , Book 1, A&B
Jan. 5	<i>Mencius</i> , Book II, A&B
Jan. 6	<i>Mencius</i> , Book VII, A&B
Jan. 9	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> , I-XXX; Book Report due online (Sakai)
Jan. 10	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> , XXXI-LX
Jan. 11	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> , LXI-LXXXI
Jan. 12	Reading Day
Jan. 13	Exam