

RELIGION 211: Religions of the Eastern World

Summer 2012
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	80 points
& Five one-paragraph reports	20 points
# Optional book report	10 points

& You need to write a one-paragraph report for the reading assigned for five of the following six online sessions, indicated in the schedule below (if you do all six, I will count the best five toward your final grade). The purpose is to make sure that you keep up with the reading. It can be three to five sentences long (not longer than a page), discussing any point in the reading that interests you. You can also use the report to gather your thoughts on the reading. The report is due by 6pm on the day of the online session. Late submission will be accepted with a 2-point reduction per day.

The last textbook on Shinto is for extra-credit book report and it is optional. It should be about 7 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 midnight, August 13, 2011. Given the tight grading schedule, late submission will not be accepted.

Course Policies:

* **NO** make-up for missed exams will be given, unless a letter verifying an emergency is provided.

* The class strictly follows the university policy on academic integrity. It is available at <http://TeachX.rutgers.edu/integrity/index.html>

Exam Dates:

Midterm Exam: July 25

Final Exam: August 15

Optional book report due: August 13 by midnight 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 report)

Schedule:

The format of this hybrid course will be a combination of in-person class meetings and online chat sessions. I will be available online at sakai.rutgers.edu in the chat room from 8:00pm to 9:30pm in the online period to answer any questions. Any question about the reading is welcome. If nobody asks any question during the chat session, I will pose some questions in order to focus the attention of the discussion. You do not have to be available online during the chat session, but you do have to turn in the short report by 6pm. When you have time please make sure to check the chat room and see what questions are discussed.

July 9	Introduction to Hinduism; <i>Gita</i> : First Teaching-Sixth Teaching (in person)
July 11	<i>Gita</i> : Seventh Teaching-Twelfth Teaching (online, <u>short report due</u>)
July 16	<i>Gita</i> : Thirteenth Teaching-Eighteenth Teaching (online, <u>short report due</u>)
July 18	Buddha I-III (in person)
July 23	Buddha IV-VI (online, <u>short report due</u>)
July 25	Midterm Exam; Introduction to Confucianism (Mencius Book I A) (in person)
July 30	Mencius (Book I B & II A) (online, <u>short report due</u>)
Aug. 1	Mencius (Book II B & VI A) (online, <u>short report due</u>)
Aug. 6	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> intro-XX (in person)
Aug. 8	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> XXI-L (online, <u>short report due</u>)
Aug. 13	<i>Tao Te Ching</i> LI-LXXXI (online); optional book report due today by midnight on sakai.rutgers.edu
Aug. 15	Final Exam (in person)