

Religion in Asia

Fall 2016

01: 840: 211-02

Section 2: T-Th 4:30-5:50 Murray 211

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-gītā*, 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** and **short response papers** as assigned; **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.

This course fulfills the following SAS core curriculum requirements:

Social and Historical Analysis

Understand the bases and development and human and societal endeavors across time and place.

Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.

Historical Analysis (HSt)

Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.

Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.

Grading: Grades will be based on three quizzes (60%), a final paper (20%) and classroom participation, including occasional, short response papers (20%). Students will be called upon in class to answer questions pertaining to the week's reading, as well as participate in discussion. **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+ = 89-85; B = 84-80; C+ = 79-75; C = 74-70; D = 69-65; F = 64 and below.

Required Course Texts:

Miller, Barbara Stoller. *The Bhagavad-Gita*. New York: Bantam, 1986 ISBN-0-553-21365-2

Anonymous. *The Dhammapada*. New York: Penguin USA. ISBN 978-0-144-49419

Lau, D. C. *Tao te Ching*. New York: Penguin Books, 1963 ISBN-13: 978-0-140-44131-4

Van Norden, Bryan W. *The Essential Mengzi*. Hackett. ISBN 978-0-872-209855

Course Schedule

1 Tu / Sept 6

General Introduction to Hinduism: the Veda, sacrifice, the gods, the Three Worlds

2 Th / Sept 8

Vedic Hymns and Ritual

Readings: O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger (transl.). *The Rig Veda: Selections*

“I pray to Agni” (p. 99); “Agni and the Gods” (pp. 99-101)

“To All the Gods” (p. 22); “The Three Strides of Viṣṇu” (pp. 225-227)

[Above readings are available on SAKAI at Rigveda selections.pdf]

3 Tu / Sept 13

Social Structures; The *Varṇāśrama* System; The king & the Sage; Impersonal *Brahman*; The Imperishable; Concept of *mokṣa* and tensions between the path of ritual and path of knowledge.

Readings: Olivelle, Patrick. *The Law Code of Manu*: selections

[on SAKAI at Manu-smṛiti excerpts]

Radhakrishnan, S. *The Principal Upaniṣads: Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (pp. 671-673)

[on SAKAI at Muṇḍaka Up excerpts.pdf]

4 Th / Sept 15

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

Readings: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Introduction, Chs. 1-3 [Miller pp. 1-14 / 23-49]

5 Tu / Sept 20

Eternal *Yoga*; *Avatāra*; Knowledge; Yoga practice

Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 4-6 [Miller pp. 51-72]

6 Th / Sept 22

Constitutional nature of Divinity; material nature; *Bhakti*; Qualifications of the Devotee

Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 7-9 [Miller pp. 73-90]

7 Tu / Sept 27

Kṛṣṇa's Universal Form; The Indwelling Supersoul;

Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 10-13 [Miller pp. 91-118]

8 Th / Sept 29

Transcending the *Guṇas*; The Universal Tree of *Samsāra*; Divine & Demonic Qualities

Reading: *Bhagavad-gītā*: Chs. 14-16 [Miller pp. 119-130]

9 Tu / Oct 4

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 6 – Quiz #1

11 Tu / Oct 11

Introduction to Buddhism; Life & Realization of Gautama Buddha; The First Noble Truth

Readings: Roebuck, Valerie (transl.). *The Dhammapada*: Introduction; Sections 1-2

Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*. rev. ed. 1991: “Buddhism” pp. 82-153

[on SAKAI: Huston Smith Buddhism excerpts]

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*: pp. 16-28

[on SAKAI: Rahula 1.pdf]

12 Th / Oct 13

The Second & Third Noble Truths; The Three Jewels

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 3-5

Rahula, Walpola. *What the Buddha Taught*: pp. 29-44

[on SAKAI: Rahula 1.pdf]

13 Tu / Oct 18

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

[on SAKAI: Rahula, Walpola. The 8-fold Path.pdf]

14 Th / Oct 20

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 25

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 27

Japanese Religions: (1) Shinto; (2) Buddhism: Tendai, Shingon & Zen;

Za-zen; Koan practice; Pure Land Schools;

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 20-23

Suzuki, Shunryu. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*: selections

17 Tu / Nov 1

Lamaistic Buddhism in Tibet, etc; Modern global Buddhism; Engaged Buddhism

Readings: *The Dhammapada*: Sections 24-26

Thich Nhat Hanh. Selections

18 Th / Nov 3 – Quiz #2

19 Tu / Nov 8

Introduction to Chinese Religions: Ancient Kings, Shang Dynasty, Gods & Heaven

Readings: Lau, D. C. (transl). *The Analects*: selections

20 Th / Nov 10

Benevolence, Righteousness versus Profit

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book I A&B

21 Tu / Nov 15

Reading: *Mengzi*: Book II A&B

22 Th / Nov 17

Reading: *Mengzi*: Books VI A & VII

23 Tu / Nov 22

Introduction to Taoism: Laozi, the Way, Heaven & Earth

Readings: Smith, Huston. *The World's Religions*: "Taoism" pp. 196-220

Tao Te Ching: Introduction; Book I Texts 1-17 [Lau pp. vii-21]

Thanksgiving Break

24 Th / Nov 29

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book I Texts 17-37 [Lau pp. 22-42]

25 Tu / Dec 1

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book II Texts 38-50 [Lau pp. 45-57]

Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book II Texts 51-81 [Lau pp. 58-88] - Review

26 Tu / Dec 6 – Reading: *Tao Te Ching*: Book II Texts 51-81 [Lau pp. 58-88] - Review
Zhuangzi Select Readings: TBA

27 Th / Dec 8 – **Quiz #3**

28 Th / Dec 13 - Summary Discussion – Final Student Presentations

Final Paper Due

Additional information and regulations for students:

All of your work must be your own. Please be familiar with the Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Violations include: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, denying other access to information or material, and facilitating violations of academic integrity.

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

Full disability policies and procedures are at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>