

## 840:211 Religions of the Eastern World Winter Session 2016

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### Course Description

This course examines the main religious traditions of the Eastern World. We will concentrate on those traditions with continuing significant social, political, literary, philosophical, spiritual, and aesthetic influence. Emphasis is on classical traditions, since this provides a solid foundation upon which one can then pursue further independent study on later developments. More specifically, our focus is on Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. An important aspect of our study of these religions is the exploration of their central scriptures/texts.

### Required Texts

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

### Course Requirements

1. Exam: 70% of the course grade. The final exam will be held on January 15. The exam will be based on lectures in class and on the reading of the textbooks.
2. Book Report: 30% of the course grade. The report is on the book *Wabi-Sabi*. Basically, you should follow this structure: summarize every chapter beginning with the introduction and then identify the central thesis of the book and discuss how the author presents it 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. Do not use any materials from the internet to write this book report; it will be treated as a case of plagiarism. The length of the report is four pages. Format: MS word or pdf, font size 12, and double-spaced. The report has to be submitted to [sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu) by 11 p.m. on or before Jan. 3, 2016. Late submission will result in 5-point-per-day reduction of the final grade.
3. Class Attendance. It is absolutely required in this very short course. Every session missed (there are two sessions on every class day) will result in a 5-point reduction of the final grade unless a medical proof or a written proof of an emergency is provided.

### 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.

- Dec. 23 Introduction to the World of Eastern Religions;  
Shinto, *Wabi-Sabi*, entire book.
- Jan. 3 **Book Report due** (Sakai)
- Jan. 4 Hinduism; *The Bhagavad-Gita*, 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> teachings.
- Jan. 5 *The Bhagavad-Gita*, 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> teachings
- Jan. 6 *The Bhagavad-Gita*, 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> teachings;  
Buddhism; *What the Buddha Taught*, chapters, 1-11
- Jan. 7 *What the Buddha Taught*, chapters, 11I-IV
- Jan. 8 *What the Buddha Taught*, chapters, V-VIII
- Jan. 11 Confucianism; *Mencius*, Book 1, A-B
- Jan. 12 *Mencius*, Book 11, A-B, Book V11, A-B;  
Taoism; *Tao Te Ching*, 1-XXX
- Jan. 13 *Tao Te Ching*, XXX1-LXXXI
- Jan. 14 Reading Day
- Jan. 15 **Final Exam.**