

## Chinese Religions (01:840:324)

Spring 2016  
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### Course Description:

This class treats Chinese religions, with a primary focus on Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism). Major topics include the conflict of values in classical Chinese religious/philosophical texts, ritual in Chinese religions, Chinese conceptions of self, role models and paradigms for cultivation (especially the value of spontaneity), and religious revival in contemporary China. We will also seek to understand how the concept of religion has developed historically and how it has been applied to Chinese traditions. This course fulfills Arts and Humanities core requirements (AH).

### Core Learning Goals (Arts and Humanities):

Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production. [AHO]

Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies. [AHP]

### Textbooks:

- A. Nadeau, Randall. 2012. Introduction, in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions*, edited by Randall Nadeau. Blackwell.
- B. Ivanhoe, Philip J. & Bryan van Norden. 2005. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. Hackett.
- C. Slingerland, Edward. 2015. *Trying Not to Try: Ancient China, Modern Science, and the Power of Spontaneity*. Broadway Books.
- D. Sun, Anna. 2013. *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities*. Princeton.
- E. Komjathy, Louis. 2014. *Daoism: A Guide for the Perplexed*. Bloomsbury.

### Course Requirements:

* Book report	30%
# Final Exam (Undergraduate)	70%
□ Term paper (Graduate)	70%
❖ Extra credit	5 points

\* Everybody is required to write a book report on Edward Slingerland's *Trying Not to Try* (5-7 pages, word or pdf format, double-spaced, Time New Roman fonts, size 12). It must be submitted to sakai by midnight on March 22 (email submission will not be accepted). The report should be a summary of the book, chapter by chapter. You can comment on the book at the end of the report, but that is not required.

# Undergraduate students are required to take a final exam, focusing on key figures and concepts covered in the class. A study guide will be provided before the exam.

□ Graduate students are required to write a paper for the course, which must be submitted to sakai by midnight on May 8. The term paper can be on any topic related to Chinese religions and/or philosophies. It should be no shorter than 20 pages (size 12 font and double-spaced). The paper needs to address the following general questions: what is the thesis? Why is it important or worth writing on? Is it an attempt to clarify some misunderstanding of an important concept or is it a defense for/against interpreting a text/concept in a particular way in contemporary scholarship? How has it been discussed in the contemporary scholarship? How does your paper contribute to the contemporary discussion?

❖ I will be hosting a conference on Chinese philosophy on Friday, April 15. There will be four sessions in each of which a scholar of Chinese philosophy will discuss the works of a prominent contemporary western philosopher from some perspective of Chinese philosophy and the western philosopher will respond. This is an attempt to foster in-depth conversations between scholars of western philosophy and Chinese philosophy. Further detail will be posted on religion.rutgers.edu in late March or early April. If you can attend any one of the four sessions and write a 2-page report on the exchange during that session, you will receive up to 5 points of extra credits toward your final grade (due by midnight Sunday, April 17). Of course, you are welcome to attend all four sessions.

**We will strictly follow the university's policy on academic integrity  
(<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>).**

Schedule:

Jan. 19	Introduction to three key transformative periods in Chinese history as well as major themes in Chinese religions and philosophies (A)
Jan. 26	Chinese classical traditions; Confucius (B: Introduction + Chapter 1)
Feb. 2	Mozi (B Chapter 2)
Feb. 9	Mengzi (B Chapter 3)
Feb. 16	Laozi (B Chapter 4)
Feb. 23	Zhuangzi (B Chapter 5)
March 1	Xunzi (B Chapter 6)
March 8	The value of spontaneity in classical Chinese thought (C Chapters 1-4)
March 22	Book report on C due (no class due to Jiang's conference presentation in Taiwan)
March 29	Confucianism I (D Chapter 1)
April 5	Confucianism II (D Chapter 2)
April 12	Confucianism III (D Chapter 3)
April 19	Daoism I (E Chapters 1-5)
April 26	Daoism II (E Chapters 6-9)