REL 2320: NONWESTERN RELIGIONS
Fall Semester 2014

Instructor: Dr. Judson Murray
Office: 384 Millett Hall
Time: TTH11:00-12:20
Contact: (937)775-2740
Office Hrs: TTH 1:00-2:00 pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introductory survey of the major currents of religious thought and practice in Asian history and culture. Our aim will be to gain an appreciation and richer understanding of some characteristic Chinese, Indian, and Japanese ways of thinking and ways of experiencing the self, society, and the world. By examining both representative primary source material and important secondary scholarship, we will explore the different histories, doctrines, and practices of Chinese Confucianism and Daoism/Taoism, Indian Hinduism and Buddhism, and Japanese Shintō. We will view them in light of three key areas which will help us to organize, analyze, and interpret our readings, and they will introduce students to several major categories in the academic study of religion. These areas include: (1) word, scripture, and ethos; (2) religious practice, self-cultivation, and ethics; (3) monastic life and religious institutions and religious identity or ethnos. Through these general categories we will explore how these diverse religions have addressed, in a variety of ways, fundamental religious questions and problems. For example: (1) What is their view of the world and the role of human beings in it? (2) What is their view of human nature? (3) What is the ultimate religious goal for human beings? (4) What means of self-cultivation do they advocate to reach this goal? (5) What values, characteristics, and lifestyle do human beings who reach this goal typically embody? (6) What is their ideal vision of human culture and society? (7) What is their understanding of death and, if applicable, the afterlife? Lastly, the course also seeks to demonstrate the vital role religious thought and practice has played in Asian history, culture, and society.

This course meets the requirements for the Global Traditions Element of the Wright State Core, which provides students with "historical analysis and global perspectives necessary to understand our diverse world." In addition to aims particular to its subject matter, the course also is designed to promote the learning outcomes of Core Element (3):

- Critically describe some of the political, social, or economic systems; historical, cultural, or spiritual traditions; and/or technological innovations around the world
- Demonstrate and awareness of the diversity of people or traditions in our world in ways that promote effective engagement, both locally and globally
- Use political, social, economic, historical, cultural, spiritual, or technological knowledge to evaluate contemporary issues
The course is also designed to meet the learning outcomes for the Multicultural Competence component of the Wright State Core:

- Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, economic, social, political, or racial diversities in the US or throughout the world
- Apply the methods of inquiry of the natural sciences, social sciences, or the arts and humanities to understand cultural, economic, social, or racial diversity
- Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary social or ethical issues related to diversity
- Demonstrate skills required to engage in an informed and respectful way with diverse peoples, cultures, and histories

Third, this course is designed to meet the learning outcomes for the Integrated Writing component of the Wright State Core. Integrated Writing courses require students to produce writing that

- Demonstrates their understanding of course content,
- Is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task,
- Demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and
- Shows competency in standard edited American English.

Since this is an integrated writing course, many of the assignments and in-class activities focus on developing the skills necessary for good writing. Many of these skills—such as the ability to read and think critically and to express yourself well—will be fundamental to all your courses at Wright State and to your future careers.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS


Supplemental Readings: As indicated in the schedule of readings, you will be assigned readings throughout the semester from sources other than the course text. These readings will be posted electronically on Pilot.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You must complete all course requirements to receive a grade in this class. Failure to complete all assignments will result in an “X” for the class. The requirements, which include satisfactorily meeting the basic classroom responsibilities, taking three exams, and submitting both a draft and revised final paper will count as a percentage of your grade as designated:

- Classroom Responsibilities 10%
- Three Examinations 60% total
- Paper 30%
  - Rough draft 10%
  - Final draft 20%

Classroom Responsibilities

Class attendance: I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. If you are late or have documentation satisfactorily explaining your absence, it is your responsibility to inform me. If, during the course of the semester, you have MORE THAN SIX UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, you will automatically RECEIVE AN F FOR THE COURSE.

Reading assignments: You should complete the assigned reading before coming to class. YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BRING WITH YOU TO CLASS COPIES OF THE ASSIGNED READINGS. These readings will be the foundation for class lecture and discussion.

Class discussion: The class will be taught in a lecture and discussion format. You are encouraged to freely engage in class discussion. The more active you are in class, the more you will learn.

Examinations

You will have THREE exams during the semester. These exams will consist of some combination of the following components: (1) identify and define key terms, figures, and/or concepts; (2) identify, comment on, and discuss the significance of specific passages drawn from the course readings; and (3) write longer answers in response to questions about the religions, topics, and texts we will study. The exams will require students to write essay answers. There will be NO true/false, matching, multiple choice, or fill-in-the-blank questions on the exams. The exams will NOT be cumulative.

Paper

The major writing assignment for the class will be a 5-6 page paper that analyzes a religious text—either the Analects of Confucius or Laozi’s Daodejing or a
comparison between them—on a topic you choose to examine. Suggested topics for the paper assignment will be handed out, although students are welcome to choose their own topics. Those students who choose this latter option are encouraged to discuss their topics with the professor in advance.

This writing assignment is NOT a research paper. Outside sources, either online sources or books and articles, are not to be consulted and content from them is NOT to be included in writing this paper. You may only use information from our textbooks, your class notes, and the ideas from your own minds in composing this short essay. Failure to comply with this instruction will result in a failing grade for the paper.

In addition to the 5 full pages minimum page requirement (typed, double-spaced, 12pt. Times New Roman font), you must also include at least 5 passages to support and illustrate the main points of your argument from whatever primary source (or sources if you choose to compare the Analects and the Daodejing) you choose to analyze.

The analytical skills that this assignment emphasizes are critical reading and effective writing. Your paper will be evaluated based on the qualities essential to all good academic writing: These qualities include:

1. **Content** (are the ideas presented in the paper interesting, are they supported with evidence taken from the text(s) in question, are they well developed and clearly expressed?)

2. **Structure** (is there a clearly identifiable thesis statement and is that thesis developed in the body of the essay? Does each paragraph make a clear contribution to the argument presented in the essay? Do the paragraphs flow, build on, and support both one another and the overall argument? How effective are the introduction and conclusion at presenting the paper’s main points?)

3. **Mechanics** such as grammar, spelling, style (e.g., does the author use professional language? Is his/her tone authoritative?), and syntax (e.g., are the sentences clear and easy to follow?)

This course encourages you to think of your writing as a process rather than an end product by giving you an opportunity to rethink and revise a specific writing assignment. By submitting a draft of your paper and receiving extensive feedback on your written work and will learn to use your writing as a powerful communicative tool.

**Rough Draft:** You are required to submit a first draft of your paper on the due date posted under the Course Schedule (see below). The first draft must be at least 4 full pages in length and include at least 5 passages from the primary
source and on the topic you will examine. You will receive a grade for your first
draft that is worth both 10% of your overall final grade for the course and one-
third of the grade for your paper assignment. After receiving written and possibly
oral feedback from me during my office hours, you will then be given the
opportunity to REVISE this paper.

Final Draft: The REVISION PROCESS is the key to good writing and is a core
component of your success on this assignment. Failure to revise your paper will
result in a failing grade for the paper. After revising your first draft, you'll submit
the final draft on the date indicated below under the course schedule along with
your first draft with my written comments on it so that I can accurately evaluate
how the paper has been revised and improved by you.

Regarding late submissions: When there is no documented medical or family
emergency a five-point penalty will be assessed for each day the first draft, the
final draft, or both are late.

COURSE POLICIES

(1) Classroom Decorum: You should behave in class in a way that promotes
learning and is respectful of your fellow students. A few pointers:
• Put away your cell phone and turn off its ringer.
• Put away your computer. Taking notes by hand promotes learning.
• Keep talking with your neighbors to a minimum.
• Leave class early only if absolutely necessary, but don’t hesitate to come in late.
• Unless faced with an emergency, don’t step out into the hall to take a phone call.

(2) Accommodation: Students requiring accommodation for certified disabilities
should inform the instructor at the outset of class of the nature of the
accommodation to insure that it is provided in a timely and satisfactory manner.

(3) Grading: The final grade for the class will be calculated according to the
following scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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(4) Plagiarism: Students who commit plagiarism on any assignment will at minimum
receive a failing grade for the assignment, and may receive a heavier penalty. See the
WSU Code of Student Conduct at [http://www.wright.edu/students/judicial/integrity.html](http://www.wright.edu/students/judicial/integrity.html)
for clarification on the meaning of and penalty for plagiarism.
COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1: CHINESE RELIGIONS I: CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM

August 26: Classical Confucianism: Confucius’s Biography and his Historical Context

Readings: SMITH, Chapter IV: Confucianism, pp. 99-121

August 28: Classical Confucianism: Rivals to Confucianism: Mohism and Legalism

Readings: SMITH, Chapter IV: Confucianism, pp. 99-121

WEEK 2: CHINESE RELIGIONS I: CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM AND CONFUCIUS’S ANALECTS

September 2: Classical Confucianism: The Western Zhou Dynasty


September 4: Confucius’ Analects: On Humaneness (jen/ren 仁)

Readings: PILOT: Confucius and the Analects, pp. 41-56 continued

WEEK 3: CHINESE RELIGIONS I: CLASSICAL CONFUCIANISM AND CONFUCIUS’S ANALECTS CONTINUED

September 9: Confucius’ Analects: On Filial Devotion (hsiao/xiao 孝)

Readings: Pilot: Confucius and the Analects, pp. 41-56 continued

September 11: Confucius’ Analects: On Education (hsueh/xue 学)

Readings: PILOT: Confucius and the Analects, pp. 41-56 continued


September 16: Confucius’ Analects: On Political Philosophy (te/de 德)

Readings: PILOT: Confucius and the Analects, pp. 41-56 continued
September 18: Classical Daoism: Laozi (Lao Tzu) and the Daodejing

Readings: SMITH, Chapter V: Taoism, pp. 122-143

WEEK 5: CHINESE RELIGIONS II: CLASSICAL DAOISM (TAOISM): LAOZI AND THE DAODEJING (TAO-TE-CHING) CONTINUED AND FIRST EXAM

September 23: The “Way” (dao 道)


September 25: FIRST IN-CLASS EXAM

Readings: Review prior readings and lecture notes in preparation for First Exam

WEEK 6: CHINESE RELIGIONS II: CLASSICAL DAOISM (TAOISM): LAOZI AND THE DAODEJING (TAO-TE-CHING) CONTINUED

September 30: The “Way” (dao 道) continued and Images of Early Daoist Naturalism and Primitivism: Water (shui 水)

Readings: PILOT: Laozi (“The Daodejing”), pp. 161-205 continued

October 2: Images of Early Daoist Naturalism and Primitivism: Unhewn Wood (pu 樸) and the Newborn Child (zi 子) and the Early Daoist Utopian Social Vision

Readings: PILOT: Laozi (“The Daodejing”), pp. 161-205 continued

WEEK 7: CHINESE RELIGIONS II: CLASSICAL DAOISM (TAOISM): LAOZI AND THE DAODEJING (TAO-TE-CHING) CONTINUED AND INDIAN RELIGIONS I: HINDUISM

October 7: Early Daoist Utopian Social Vision and Political Philosophy

Readings: PILOT: Laozi (“The Daodejing”), pp. 161-205 continued

October 9: Early Hindu Religions: Vedic Religion and the Vedas and the “Axis Age” and the Upanishads

Readings: SMITH, Chapter II: Hinduism, pp. 16-39
WEEK 8: INDIAN RELIGIONS I: HINDUISM CONTINUED

October 14: Brahman: The Hindu View of the Ultimate Reality and Atman: The Hindu View of Self

Readings: SMITH, Chapter II: Hinduism, pp. 40-57

October 16: Karma: The Hindu View of Reality and Samsara and Moksha: The Hindu View of Existence and the Aim of the Religious Life


WEEK 9: INDIAN RELIGIONS I: HINDUISM CONTINUED


October 23: The Yogas: The Means to Moksha continued


**NOTE: FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS THURS. 10/23**

WEEK 10: SECOND IN-CLASS EXAM AND INDIAN RELIGIONS II: BUDDHISM

October 28: SECOND IN-CLASS EXAM

Readings: Review prior readings and lecture notes in preparation for Second Exam

October 30: The Three Jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—An Overview and the Buddha’s Biography

Readings: SMITH, Chapter III: Buddhism, pp. 58-81
WEEK 11: INDIAN RELIGIONS II: BUDDHISM CONTINUED

**November 4:** The Three Jewels of Buddhism: The Buddha’s Biography continued

**Readings:** SMITH, Chapter III: Buddhism, pp. 58-81

**November 6:** The Three Jewels of Buddhism: The Dharma: The Four Noble Truths


WEEK 12: INDIAN RELIGIONS II: BUDDHISM CONTINUED

**November 11:** No Class—Veteran’s Holiday observed

**November 13:** The Three Jewels of Buddhism: The Dharma: The Noble Eightfold Path and the Three Marks and Five Aggregates

**Readings:** PILOT: Holder, “The Foundations of Mindfulness”

WEEK 13: INDIAN RELIGIONS II: BUDDHISM CONTINUED AND JAPANESE SHINTŌ

**November 18:** The Three Jewels of Buddhism: The Sangha: Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists

**Readings:** SMITH, Chapter III: Buddhism, pp. 81-97

**November 20:** Early Shintō Mythology, Kami, and Tama


WEEK 14: JAPANESE RELIGIONS II: SHINTŌ: THE WAY OF KAMI CONTINUED

**November 25:** Early Shintō Mythology, Kami, and Tama continued

**Readings:** PILOT: Molloy, “Shintō”

**NOTE: REVISED PAPER ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE IN CLASS TUES. 11/25**
November 27: No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday observed

WEEK 15: JAPANESE RELIGIONS II: SHINTŌ CONTINUED

December 2: Places and Occasions to be Shintō: *Matsuri*, Holidays, and Shrines


December 4: Shintō and Aesthetics: Motoori Norinaga and *Kokoro*


THIRD EXAM: Thursday, Dec. 11, 10:15-12:15