

Philosophy/AAAS 105: Introduction to Asian Philosophy Fall 2014

Prof. Charles Goodman

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Office Hours: 1:15 – 2:30 PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays, in LT 1214 on the twelfth floor of the Library Tower

Course Description:

Students will learn the basic concepts and teachings of several Asian traditions, including Hinduism, Confucianism and Daoism, with a special focus on Buddhism. Readings for the course will consist of scriptural texts, including the *Bhagavad Gīta*, selections from the Pāli Canon, and the *Dao De Jing*, as well as the works of Asian philosophers, such as Vasubandhu, Mencius, Zhuang Zi, and Śāntideva. Students will consider such issues as the existence of God, the nature of truth, and the difference between right and wrong. This course has no prerequisites.

Course Requirements:

There will be two papers, each four to six pages in length. Late papers will incur a penalty of one-third of a grade per day. There will also be a final exam, which will mainly involve essay questions. The final exam will also include short-answer questions requiring you to identify an important person or define an important term. You will complete five short in-class writing assignments on unannounced occasions during the semester.

Grading Policy:

Grades in Philosophy/AAAS 105 will be determined by the following factors:

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| First Paper | 25% |
| Second Paper | 25% |
| In-class Writing Assignments | 10% |
| Section Attendance and Participation | 10% |
| Final Exam | 30% |

Plagiarism:

Since it is a form of academic dishonesty, plagiarism will not be tolerated in Philosophy/AAAS 105. If you are shown to have engaged in plagiarism, you will fail the assignment in question, and further additional measures may be taken at the discretion of the professor. Serious cases of plagiarism may lead to a grade of F in this course. To ensure that no students commit plagiarism, papers will be submitted to Turnitin.com via the course's Blackboard website.

Learning Objectives:

To become familiar with some of the key figures in the early history of Asian thought.

To understand the most important concepts and basic teachings of four Asian traditions.

To be able to understand, analyze, critique and defend arguments deployed in early Asian philosophical discussions.

This course fulfills the H general education requirement:

Students in H courses will demonstrate an understanding of human experience through the study of literature or philosophy.

Required Books:

Cleary, Thomas, trans. *The Sūtra of Hui-Neng, Grand Master of Zen*. Boston: Shambhala, 1998.

Ivanhoe, Philip J., trans. *The Daodejing of Laozi*. Seven Bridges Press, 2002.

Lau, D.C., trans. *Mencius*. London: Penguin Classics, revised ed. 2003.

Prabhavananda and Isherwood, trans. *Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*. Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press.

Thompson, George, trans. *The Bhagavad Gita*. New York: North Point Press, 2008.

Thurman, Robert A., trans. *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*. University Park: Pennsylvania State U. Press, 2000.

Watson, Burton, trans. *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia U. Press, 1996.

Coursepack (henceforth CP) available at the Binghamton University bookstore

1/28: Philosophy in Asia

1/30: Introduction to Hinduism

Thompson ch. 1-5, pp. 1-29

2/4: The Origin of All

Thompson ch. 6-11, pp. 30-59

2/6: The Supreme Self

Thompson ch. 12-18, pp. 60-88

2/11: The Soul and the Body

Prabhavananda and Isherwood pp. 52-76

2/13: Introduction to Buddhism

Ariyapariyesanā Sutta: The Noble Search, and *Cūlasaccaka Sutta: The Shorter Discourse to Saccaka*. CP.

2/18: Buddhism and God

Brahmanimantanika Sutta: The Invitation of a Brahmā, Tevijja Sutta: The Threefold Knowledge, and Vasubandhu, Selection. CP.

2/20: The Basis of Buddhist Ethics

Ambalaṭṭhikārāhulovāda Sutta: Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhikā and Bāhitika Sutta: The Cloak. CP.

2/25: The Rules of Buddhist Ethics

Madhurā Sutta: At Madhurā and Kakacūpama Sutta: The Simile of the Saw. CP.

2/27: The Silence of the Buddha

Aggivacchagotta Sutta: To Vacchagotta on Fire, Cūlamālunkya Sutta: The Shorter Discourse to Mālunkyaṅputta, and Alagaddūpama Sutta: The Simile of the Snake. CP.

3/4: The Simile of the Chariot

“Menander, the Greek King, Asks about the Self and Personal Identity.” Available on Blackboard.

3/6: Causation and Responsibility

“Menander, the Greek King, Asks about the Self and Personal Identity.” Available on Blackboard.

3/11: The Means of Knowledge Argument

“Investigation of the ‘Person.’” CP

3/13: A Critique of the Soul

“Investigation of the ‘Person.’” CP.
First Paper Topics made available

3/18: The Way of the Bodhisattva

“Adopting the Awakening Mind” and “Dedication.” CP.

3/20: The Layman Vimalakīrti

Thurman pp. 10-23

3/25: Teaching the Great Way

Thurman pp. 24-49
First Paper due

3/27: Nonduality and Silence

Thurman pp. 50-77

4/1: Introduction to Confucianism

Lau pp. 3-28 (Book I)

4/3: The Four Sprouts
Lau pp. 29-51 (Book II)

4/8: Human Nature
Lau pp. 88-98 (Book IVB), pp. 122-32 (Book VIA)

4/10: Introduction to Daoism
Ivanhoe pp. 1-37

4/22: Cooking a Small Fish
Ivanhoe pp. 41-84

4/24: Relativism and Skepticism
Watson pp. 23-45

4/29: The Cook and the Oak Tree
Watson pp. 46-72
Second Paper Topics made available

5/1: Turtles and Skulls
Watson pp. 73-117

5/6: The Clear Mirror
Cleary pp. 3-36

5/8: Conversations with the Master
Cleary pp. 37-67
Second Paper due