



PHIL 170

World Philosophies

Overview

In this course we will look at the formative philosophical thought of Mesoamerica, East Asia, South Asia and the Middle East, in an attempt to come to a broad understanding of 1) what philosophy is 2) how philosophy as done in other cultures and periods can have an effect on our own lives 3) come to a better understanding of the thinking of people around the world.

Goals

By the end of this course, students should be familiar with the main figures, school, and concepts of numerous systems of global philosophy. This serves multiple purposes. You will understand the rich philosophical traditions of the regions discussed and be well placed to understand particular and more esoteric or advanced topics in Chinese, Indian, Mesoamerican, and Islamic Philosophy. You will at the same time become familiar with foundational concepts that will give you a deeper understanding of philosophy and global cultures as a whole, including those of the present day. We are purposefully avoiding very much Western philosophy in this course, in order to develop a broader sense of the boundaries of philosophical thought.

Requirements

The work in this course will be comprised of reading (mainly primary sources), a midterm and final exam, two concept papers, and “mini-tests” on each of the four sections

Evaluation

The grade will be determined as follows:

Midterm—25%

Final—25%

Concept Papers—25%

Section “mini-tests”—25%

Colorado State University, Spring 2016
Shepardson 118, T/Th 11am-12:15pm

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Office Hours: T: 12:30-1:30, Th: 1:30-2:30

Materials

In Bookstore:

Popol Vuh- Tedlock, trans.

Understanding Asian Philosophy-
McLeod

Zhuangzi- Ziporyn, trans.

Ibn al-Arabi, The Bezels of Wisdom—

Austin, trans.

Online:

Additional readings posted on Canvas

Significant Dates

Tuesday, March 8

Midterm Exam

May 12, 9:40-11:40 am

Final Exam

Exams

The midterm and final exams will be held in class (on the dates provided above). They will both be comprehensive, and will be composed of essay questions as well as short-answer questions on specific concepts from the readings and discussions.

Concept Papers

There will be two short “concept papers” in the course, asking you to make a comparison between two or more of the texts or traditions we have studied concerning a particular concept (for example, virtue, knowledge, identity, time, etc.). These papers need be no longer than 1-2 pages, but should involve at least an examination of a few points related to each of the systems discussed. Due dates for the concept papers are shown below. I will post a more detailed description of the projects on Canvas.

Section “mini-tests”

At the end of each of the major sections, we will have a “mini-test” comprised of a few short-answer questions and multiple choice. I call these “mini-tests” because they are less than a test but more than a quiz. These are basically meant to demonstrate that you have picked up the basics of the material we are covering—the exams will ask for more than this, concerning both exposition and interpretive argument.

Policies

Due Dates

The concept papers are due by the listed due date, which is a *final* submission date. You can turn in assignments *up to* the date listed, after which assignments will not be accepted. Thus, you should aim to finish your assignments well before the due date in case of technology failures, etc. These will not be acceptable excuses after the due date.

Attendance

Attending class is key for understanding of the material, especially with dense and difficult material such as the *Popol Vuh*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Fusus al-Hikam*. I will cover philosophical, interpretive, and language issues not discussed in the primary texts we are reading in class.

Plagiarism

Please be familiar university’s policies on academic integrity and plagiarism (included under section 1.6 in the General Catalog). Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment in question and possibly of the course as a whole.

Accommodations

Any student eligible for academic adjustments because of a learning disability or medical condition should contact the Office of Resources for Disabled Students at (970) 491-6385 for development of appropriate accommodations.

Rough Schedule of Topics (with readings)

SECTION ONE—MESOAMERICA (MAYA)

1: Jan 19, 21 Introduction, Popol Vuh intro 21-60, Coe, “Maya Thought and Culture” (on Canvas)

2: Jan 26, 28 Popol Vuh part 1&2, Markman and Markman--*The Flayed God* 57-96 (on Canvas)

3: Feb 2,4 Popol Vuh part 3, 4

SECTION TWO—EARLY CHINA

- 4: Feb 9, 11 Analects of Confucius, McLeod ch. 1
- 5: Feb 16, 18 Confucianism, Daoism, and Zhuangism (*Daodejing*, on Canvas)
- 6: Feb 23, 25 *Zhuangzi* chapter 1 and 2, McLeod ch.2 [CONCEPT PAPER 1 DUE]
- 7: Mar 1, 3 *Zhuangzi*
- 8: Mar 8, 10 (MCCT on 11-12) MIDTERM EXAM, *Zhuangzi*
- 9: **March 14-17 (SPRING BREAK)**

SECTION THREE—INDIA

- 10: March 22, 24 Vedic thought, *Bhagavad Gita*
- 11: Mar 29, 31 *Gita*, McLeod ch. 4
- 12: Apr 5,7 Buddhism, McLeod ch. 3
- 13: Apr 12, 14 (14-16 Rutgers workshop) Buddhism [CONCEPT PAPER 2 DUE]

SECTION 4- ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND SUFISM

- 14: Apr 19, 21 Buddhism, Islamic Philosophy, Sufism, and Ibn al-Arabi (Kupperman, *Classic Asian Philosophy* ch. 4 “The Bezels of Wisdom” on Canvas)
- 15: Apr 26,28 Ibn al-Arabi
- 16: May 3, 5: Ibn al-Arabi