Course Description. In this course we will examine: 1) the major philosophical, ethical, and religious traditions of China and Japan; 2) the ways in which these traditions have influenced East Asian cultures, and 3) the resources these traditions hold for addressing contemporary global issues.

Course Orientation. This is not an information-based survey course, but a textually-based reading course which demands solitary reflection as well as communal discussion. While any legitimate interpretation of a classical Confucian or Taoist text, for example, requires an understanding of its original social-historical context, its relevance and inner riches go beyond that setting as witnessed to by the generations of Chinese who interpreted, commented on, and lived by its message. And the voices in these texts have something to say to the wider human community today: something about how to live our lives as individuals and how to conduct our affairs as societies. They can challenge our comfortable certainties, deepen and expand our common humanity. Our task is to listen deeply and respond seriously while not losing an appropriately critical eye.

Goals. This course is designed so that you will develop: (1) an informed appreciation for the beliefs, values and practices (spiritual and ethical) of Confucianism, Taoism and Zen Buddhism; (2) an ability to analyze and interpret culturally unfamiliar texts; (3) an awareness of your own cultural and personal assumptions, beliefs, and biases; (4) skills to critically and fairly compare your own and others’ worldviews; (5) an ability to organize arguments and articulate them in both written and oral form.

Format. Lecture/Discussion.

Evaluation.

Writing-to-learn assignments. These assignments are meant to assist you in understanding new and challenging material. Each will consist of a short (one-page) essay concerning the assigned readings. Usually the topic will be given and answered at the beginning of a class. Occasionally the instructor will assign a topic to be worked on at home for the next class (worksheets on the Tao te Ching (daodejing) fall into this category). You are
expected to do this work on your own. Assignments will be graded either "S" (Satisfactory), or "U" (Unsatisfactory). If 80% or more of the graded papers are "S," then the final grade will be raised one notch (e.g. B to B+). If 51%-79% are "S" the final grade will remain the same. If 50% or fewer are "S" the final grade will be dropped one notch (e.g. B to B-). Only with a legitimate excuse may a student "make-up" a writing assignment.

Essay Exams (3): Writing to Demonstrate Understanding. There will be three essay exams of equal weight. The essays will assess the extent to which you have achieved the goals (above) of the course. In writing an essay, you should be prepared to: generalize from particulars, apply abstract ideas or theories to concrete situations or problems, and compare what has been learned to things already known.

Attendance/Participation. Everyone is expected to attend class and participate in discussions. The quality of participation can influence one’s final grade, especially if one is on the “borderline”.

Plagiarism. Zero tolerance. Plagiarism on a writing to learn assignment, paper, or exam will result in failure for the course. Please consult your Student Handbook for clarification of what counts as plagiarism—ignorance is no excuse, so please ask if uncertain.

REQUIRED TEXTS


COURSE OUTLINE

Jan. 16 Introduction to Ancient China
Video: “Confucius”

I. EARLY CONFUCIANISM

A. Confucius (Kongzi: 551-479 B.C.E.)
Text: “The Analects” (Lunyu)
Jan. 18 1. The Life and Mission of Confucius  
   Read: Ivanhoe, “Introduction” and  
   Ch.1; Chan, pp. 14-17
Jan. 23 2. Self-Cultivation and Governmental Service  
   Read: Chan, Ch. 2 “The Analects” (Selections)
Jan. 25 3. Outer Correctness and Inner Benevolence  
   Read: Chan, Ch. 2 (Selections)

B. Mencius (Mengzi: 371-289 B.C.E.)
Text: “The Mencius” (Mengzi)
   Read: Ivanhoe Ch.2; Chan, pp.51-60;65(2A:6)
Feb. 01 2. Government and Optimistic Confucianism  
   Read: Chan, pp. 66ff

II. REALISM AND LEGALISM

A. Hsun Tzu (Xunzi: 298-238? B.C.E.)
Text: “The Hsun Tzu” (Xunzi)
Feb. 06 1. Pessimistic (“realistic”) Confucianism  
   Read: Ivanhoe, Ch.3; Chan, pp.128-135;116-124
Feb. 08 B. Han Fei Tzu (Han Feizi d.233 B.C.E.)
Text: “The Han Fei Tzu” (Han Feizi)  
1. Legalism and Bureaucracy  
   Read: Chan, Ch.12 (Selections)
Take-Home Exam#1

III. TAOISM (DAOISM)
A. Lao Tzu (Laozi)
Text: “Tao Te Ching” (Daodejing)
Feb. 13 1. How to Read the Daodejing  
   Read: St. John, Part I, pp.1-10
Feb. 15 to 27 2. Discussions of the “Tao te Ching” (daodejing)  
   Read: St. John, Study Guide: Do Worksheets  
   Read: Assigned TTC chapters: Chan, Chapter 7

B. Chuang Tzu (Zhuangzi) (369(?)-286(?)B.C.E.)
Text: “The Chuang Tzu” (Zhuangzi)
Mar. 01 1. Introduction to “The Zhuangzi”  
   Read: “Chuang Tzu” (Handout)
Mar. 06, 08 NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK
Mar. 13 to 20 2. Discussion of “The Zhuangzi”  
   Read: Mair, Wandering on the Way (Selections)  
   EXAM #2 TAKE-HOME (March 20)
Mar. 22 C. Taoism and the Martial Arts  
   Guest: Sifu Paul Miller,  
   Lehigh Valley Martial Arts, Emmaus, PA
IV. NEO-CONFUCIANISM
Mar. 27, 29  1. Education, Self Cultivation and Society
   Texts: “The Great Learning” (Ta Hsueh/Daxue) and “Doctrine of the Mean” (Chung Yung/Zhongyong)
   Read: Chan, Chs. 4 & 5 (Selections)

V. BUDDHISM in Japan
Apr. 03  1. Introduction to Buddhism
   Read: "Buddhism" (On Reserve)
Apr. 05  2. Buddhism in Japan: Zen & Pure Land
   Read: Handouts
Apr. 10-17  3. Discussion: The Mumonkan with Commentary
   Read: Shibayama (Selections)
Apr. 24  VI. Shinto: The Indigenous Tradition
   Read: Handouts
Apr. 26  Poetry:
   Read: Handouts

Note: This syllabus may be changed at the discretion of the instructor but such changes will be discussed with students. Changes will not be made to the number or relative weight of exams and writing assignments.

ZEN ASSIGNMENTS

Tuesday, April 10
“Introduction by Shibayama Roshi”
“Master Mumon’s Preface to the Mumonkan”
Koans/Chapters: 1, 3, 5

Thursday, April 12
Koan/Chapters: 14, 15, 18, 19
Tuesday, April 15
Koan/Chapters: 24, 30, 34, 36

Thursday, April 17
Koan/Chapters: 37, 43, 46
“Mumon’s Postscript”
“Mumon’s Zen Warnings”