

Philosophy 3710
Fall Semester 2008
Philosophies of East Asia

Instructor: Gordon **Steinhoff**
Place: Main 326
Time: Tues, Thurs **1:30-2:45**

In this course we will study **Confucianism**, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. In this course, the instructor will not lecture. The course will be conducted as a seminar, with emphasis on class discussion. Participation in the discussions is required. There will be much assigned reading every week. Essay assignments will cover topics discussed in the readings and in class.

Objective:

The objective of the course is to come to an understanding of the above philosophies and how they compare to each other and to Christianity. These philosophies will be presented in a positive way, emphasizing their strengths.

Requirements and Final Grade:

You will be asked to write four essays during the semester, on topics covered in the readings and in class. Each essay will be three pages long. The essay assignments will consist of a series of questions you'll be asked to answer. The essays will be graded strictly. Plan on putting a fair amount of work into each one. Careful reading and good class notes will be essential.

In addition, you will be asked to write short (one page) reaction papers on the reading assignments. A reaction paper will be due each week at the beginning of Tuesday's class. These papers will be graded on a 10 point scale. These are truly reaction papers. I will be checking to see that you've done the reading and that you've thought about what you've read. Doing these papers will help you participate in the class discussions.

Participation in class discussions is mandatory. For each class, think about a point you would like to make or a topic you would like the class to talk about. Very good participation during the semester earns an A, good participation a B, and fair participation a C.

Class attendance is also required (if you aren't in class, you aren't participating). During the semester, you are allowed 3 absences. For each additional absence, **your** participation grade will be lowered one half letter grade.

Your final grade will be determined as follows: your (4) essays will count for 1/2 of your final grade, your short reaction papers will determine 1/4 of your final grade, and your participation will count for 1/4 of your final grade.

All essays and reaction papers are due on the dates assigned.

Texts and Tentative Schedule:

Peimin Ni, On Confucius, 2002. Covered in first three weeks.

Walpola Rahula, What the Buddha Taught, 1974. Weeks four and five.

Thich Nhat Hahn, Peace is Every Step, 1991. Weeks six and seven.

Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind Beginner's Mind, 1990. Weeks eight and nine.

Lao Tzu, Te Tao Ching, edited by Robert G. Henricks, 1989. Weeks ten and eleven.

John Blofeld, Taoism: The Road to Immortality, 1979. Weeks twelve and thirteen.

Raymond Smullyan, The Tao is Silent, 1977. Weeks fourteen and fifteen.

We will also read selections from the Analects by Confucius, and selections from D.T. Suzuki, An Introduction to Zen Buddhism. These readings are on electronic reserve in Merrill Library under this course number.

Keys to doing well in this course:

Attend each class. Take good notes in class. Keep up with the assigned readings, and participate in the class discussions. Plan to put a fair amount of time and effort into writing the four essays. Don't write these essays "at the last minute."

My office: Old Main 202D

phone (if I'm not in leave a message): 797-3688

office hours: Afternoons 3:00-5:30, or by appointment