

Philosophy 3710  
Fall Semester 2014  
**Philosophies of East Asia**

Instructor: Gordon Steinhoff  
Place: Family Life 307  
Time: Tues, Thurs 1:30-2:45

In this course we will study Confucianism, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. 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.

**Objectives:**

The objective of the course is to come to an understanding of the above philosophies and how they compare to each other. This is also a writing course. We will practice writing medium-length essays in philosophy.

**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 to four 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. The final essay will be due on the day of our final exam (there will be no in class tests): Tues. Dec. 9.

### **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 of 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 discussions. Plan to put a fair amount of time and effort into writing the essays. Don't write these essays "at the last minute."

### **For all who take this course:**

Please come to class on time!! The class begins at 1:30. Also, plan on staying for the entire class. Individual students leaving before the class ends is disruptive. If you really do need to leave a class early, please let the instructor know at the beginning of class.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is representing another authors' work as your own. In this class, do not plagiarize. Except for some quotes in places, clearly marked as quotes, all papers you turn in must be in your own words.

My office: Old Main 202D

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

Office hours: afternoons 3:00-5:30PM, or by appointment