

Philosophy 3710
Fall Semester 2018
Philosophies of East Asia

Instructor: Gordon Steinhoff
Place: Geol. 308
Time: Tues, Thurs 3:00-4:15

In this course we will study Confucianism, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism. We will study teachings from Confucius (*The Analects*), Mencius, the Buddha, Lao Tzu, and commentaries by monks, scholars, and popular writers. The course will emphasize open participation, and there will be much assigned reading every week. Essay assignments will cover topics discussed in class and in the assigned readings.

Objectives:

The primary objective of the course is to come to an understanding of the above philosophies, and how they compare to each other. Participation in the discussions is encouraged. Feel free to ask questions in class, and to express your thoughts and opinions. This is also a writing course. We will practice writing medium-length essays in philosophy. The essays will be graded primarily on completeness and clarity.

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 (“prompts”). 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. Doing these papers will help you participate in the class discussions. All essays and reaction papers are due on the dates assigned. The final essay will be due Thurs. Dec. 13. There will be no in-class exams.

Each student will receive a participation grade. Very good participation during the semester earns an A, good participation a B, and fair participation, including coming to class and being attentive, earns a C. Attendance is required in this course—if you are not in class, you are not participating. During the semester, you are allowed 3 absences. For each additional absence, your participation grade will be dropped to the next lower letter grade.

Your final grade will be determined as follows: The short reaction papers will count as much as one essay. The four essay grades and reaction papers grade will be averaged and will count for 80 percent of your final grade. Participation will count for 20 percent of your final grade.

Texts and Tentative Schedule:

Paul Goldin, *Confucianism*, 2011. Covered in first three weeks.
Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 1974. Weeks four and five.
Thich Nhat Hanh, *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*, Mencius, and selections from D.T. Suzuki, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*. These readings are on electronic reserve in the canvas site for this course.

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. Do not write the essays quickly at the last minute.

For all who take this course:

Please come to class on time! The class begins at 3:00. Also, plan on staying for the entire class. Individual students leaving before the class ends is too disruptive. If you really do need to leave from class early, please let the instructor know at the beginning of class. Please do not sit and chat with your neighbor during class. Such behavior is distracting to the instructor, your neighbors, and yourself. Please socialize outside of class.

Plagiarism

This is understood (from the university catalogue) as representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own, in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. In this course, do not plagiarize. Any plagiarism will result in a failing grade on that assignment. Except for some quotes, all essays and shorter papers must be *in your own words*. Do not paraphrase unless you clearly indicate that you are paraphrasing and provide the source.

My office: Old Main 202D

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

Office hours: afternoons 4:30-6:30 PM, or by appointment