

R.124 Religious Thought of China & Japan  
Moravian College  
Spring, 2007

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Office: Comenius, Rm. 204  
Ofc. Hrs: M.W.F 1:30-2:30  
T.Th. 1:00-2:00;  
3:30-4:00

**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 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**

Chan,Wing-tsit. A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy.  
Princeton University Press, 1964.

Ivanhoe, Philip J. *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*.  
Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2000.

Mair, Victor H., *Wandering on the Way: Early Taoist Tales  
and Parables of Chuang Tzu*. New York: Bantam Books,  
1994

St. John, Donald P. *A Study Guide to the Tao te Ching*.  
Draft Manuscript, 2005.

Shibayama, Zenkei. *The Gateless Barrier: Zen Comments on  
the Mumonkan*. Boston: Shambala Publications, 2004.

**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)**
- Jan. 30 1. Nature, Nurture and Moral Cultivation  
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”