

R.124 Religious Thought of China & Japan
Moravian College
Spring, 2008

Dr. St. John
(610) 861-1585 (O)
(610) 691-1797 (H)
medps01@moravian.edu

Office: Comenius, Rm. 204
Ofc. Hrs: M.W.F 1:30-2:30
T.Th. 1:00-2:00;
Th. 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.
- Merton, Thomas. *The Way of Chuang Tzu*. New Directions, 1966.
- 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. 15 Introduction to the Course &
 Background to Confucius
- I. EARLY CONFUCIANISM
- A. Confucius (Kongzi: 551-479 B.C.E.)

- Text: **"The Analects" (Lunyu)**
- Jan. 17 1. The Life and Mission of Confucius
Read: Ivanhoe, "Introduction" and Ch.1;
Yu-lan, Ch. 4
- Jan. 22 2. Self-Cultivation and Governmental Service
Read: Chan, Ch. 2 "The Analects" (Selections)
- Jan. 24 3. Outer Correctness and Inner Benevolence
Read: Chan, Ch. 2 (Selections)
- B. Mencius (Mengzi: 371-289 B.C.E.)
Text: **"The Mencius" (Mengzi)**
- Jan. 29 1. Nature, Nurture and Moral Cultivation
Read: Ivanhoe Ch.2; Read: Yu-lan, Ch. 7;
Chan, pp.51-60;65(2A:6)
- Jan. 31 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. 05 1. Pessimistic ("Realistic") Confucianism
Read: Ivanhoe, Ch.3; Read: Yu-lan, Ch. 7;
Chan, pp.128-135;116-124
- Feb. 07 B. Han Fei Tzu (Han Feizi d.233 B.C.E.)
Text: **"The Han Fei Tzu" (Han Feizi)**
1. Legalism and Bureaucracy
Read: Read: Yu-lan, 14; Chan, Ch.12 (Selections)
- Feb. 07 Exam#1 (Take-Home)
- III. TAOISM (DAOISM)
- A. Lao Tzu (Laozi)
Text: **"Tao Te Ching" (Daodejing)**
- Feb. 12 1. Two Ways to Read the Daodejing
Read: Yu-lan, Ch. 9; St. John, pp.1-10
- Feb. 14-21 2. Discussions of "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)**
- Feb. 28 Introduction to Chuang Tzu (zhuangzi)
Read: Yu-lan, Ch. 10
- Mar. 04, 06 NO CLASS. SPRING BREAK
- 11,13,18, Discussion of "The Zhuangzi"
Merton, *The Way of Chuang Tzu* (Selections)
- Mar. 20 Neo-Taoism and Chinese Poetry
Read: Yu-lan, Ch. 20 and Handout-Poetry
EXAM #2 (Take-Home)

- IV. NEO-CONFUCIANISM
- Mar. 22 1. Education, Self Cultivation and Society
Texts: **"The Great Learning" (Ta Hsueh/Daxue)**
- Mar. 25 2. **"Doctrine of the Mean" (ChungYung/Zhongyong)**
Read: Chan, Chs. 4 & 5 (Selections)
- Mar. 27 3. Chu His (Zhu Xi)
Read: Ivanhoe, Ch. 4; Yu-lan, Ch. 25
- Apr. 01 4. Wang Yangming
Read: Ivanhoe, Ch. 5
- V. BUDDHISM in Japan
- Apr. 03 1. Ch'an (China) and Zen (Japan)
Read: Chan, Ch. 22
- Apr. 08-17 2. Discussion: **The Mumonkan** with Commentary
Read: Shibayama (Selections)
- Apr. 22-24 VI. SHINTO: The Japanese Indigenous Tradition
Read: "Shinto" (Reserved)

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.