A true encounter implies a dialogue. In order to begin a valid dialogue with non-European cultures, it is indispensable to know and understand these cultures.

**Purposes**

Who are we? What is our real nature? What are our most important duties to family, society, ancestor, gods, and God? What is the nature of God and the soul, and do they even exist? Why is religion important even if God does not exist and the soul is not eternal? How does one live in harmony with nature and society? These are some of the central questions that the Asian religious and philosophical traditions have dealt with for many thousands of years. In addition to examining how Taoist, Confucian, Buddhist and Hindu thinkers answered these questions, we’ll also think about the social, ritual, and ethical implications of their answers. Should one leave the world behind or should one adhere to one’s social duties? How should one treat other humans, animals and the gods? How should one relate with the divine? From my experience with research and teaching we often learn comparatively; we make sense of the unfamiliar by means of the familiar. There is, therefore, a comparative component of this course, one that encourages discussion of the Asian religions in comparison with more familiar religions, and we will also reflect on how Asian is interpreted in modern Western scholarship and popular media.
Time & Location

TUESDAY 11:45 AM - 1:40 PM, Matherly Hall 108
THURSDAY 12:50 PM - 1:40 PM, Matherly Hall 15
OFFICE HOURS Monday & Wednesday 10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

Required Texts


4. All handouts and assigned readings or websites.

The Ritz Student Union has these books. If they run out, they will get more. Please always bring the book or article we are reading to class with you.

Evaluation

1. Class Participation - 10%
2. Paper One - 20% (due Week 9)
3. Paper Two - 20% (due Week 16)
4. Midterm - 25% (given Week 8)
5. Comprehensive Final Exam - 25% (given 12/13/2018, 5:30–7:30 PM)

Each paper should be 1000 words each, which satisfies Gordon Rule (GR2). You will be asked to formulate your own topic in consultation with me. The midterm and final examinations will consist in multiple choice questions and essay(s).

Tentative Weekly Schedule

Week One - Review of Syllabus
Thursday: Introduction to entire course

China

Week Two - General overview of Chinese Religions and focus on the Confucian tradition
Tuesday: Begin discussing and reading OCTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.262-278
Thursday: Continue, OCTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.262-278

Week Three - Focus on Confucian tradition
Tuesday: Discuss Mengzi and Xunzi, OXTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.2276-278; Watch & Listen – Michael Puett: “The Path,” Talks at Google
Thursday: Read and discuss handout – Confucian Analects

**Week Four - Early Daoism (or Taoism)**
Tuesday: Begin discussing and reading OXTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.278-288
Thursday: Continue, OXTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.278-288

**Week Five - Focus on Daodejing**
Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing Daodejing, Chapters 1-20
Thursday: Continue, Daodejing, Chapters 21 and onward

**Japan**

**Week Six - Early Japanese Religion and Japanese Zen Buddhism**
Thursday: Possible Guest Lecture – Professor Tony Stewart, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in Humanities, Topic TBA

**India**

**Week Seven – Early Buddhism**
Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXTOBY, Chapter 5, pp.184-204
Thursday: Continue, OXTOBY, Chapter 5, pp.184-204

**Week Eight – Midterms**
Tuesday: catch-up and review
Thursday: mid-term will be given in class

**Week Nine - Mahāyāna Buddhism**
*Deadline – Paper One*
Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXTOBY, Chapter 5, pp.217–225
Tuesday: Continue, OXTOBY, Chapter 5, pp.217–225

**Week Ten - Hindu Traditions**
Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXTOBY, Chapter 2, pp.26-40
Thursday: Continue, OXTOBY, Chapter 2, pp.26-40

**Week Eleven - Focus on the Upanishads**
Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing Valerie Roebuck, Upanishads, read Īśavāya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Kena
Tuesday: Thursday: Continue, Upanishads, read Īśavāya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Kena

**Week Twelve - Classical Hinduism**
Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXTOBY, Chapter 2, pp.40-66
Thursday: Continue, Oxtoby, Chapter 2, pp.40-66

**Week Thirteen - Focus on Bhagavad Gītā**

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing JONATHAN EDELSTRA\N，“Introducing the Bhagavad Gītā,” Teaching Interreligious Encounters, M.Pugliese & A.Hwang, Oxford Uni Press.

Thursday: Continue, EDELSTRA\N, “Introducing the Bhagavad Gītā”

**Week Fourteen – No Classes**

No class November 20 – American Academy of Religion
No class November 22 – Thanksgiving Break

**Week Fifteen - General Issues in Indian Religion: Karma and Rebirth**


**Week Sixteen**

Tuesday: Deadline - Paper Two; Review for Final Examination

**Policies**

**Grading**

The final grade is based on each student’s individual performance and his/her fulfillment of the course requirements, as stipulated in the syllabus.

The same course rules and expectations apply equally to all students—no student is entitled to special consideration or unique treatment. Other extraneous or irrelevant factors, including student’s personal desires or expectations about grades, are not considered. Students should also not expect retroactive changes or other forms of grade modification.

No incomplete grades are given, except in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the students should contact the instructor no later than a week before the last day of classes.

Final grades are computed according to the standard grading scheme in Canvas.

**Attendance and Participation**

Attendance is expected of all students, starting with the first day of classes. (For more on the university’s attendance policies, see the Undergraduate Catalog)

Students are advised to take extensive notes in class, and to use them prudently in their preparation for the exams. The exams are primarily be based on the lectures, along with the readings.

Student with exceptional participation performance may be awarded up to 3 bonus points (3% of the final grade). This bonus is entirely based on the instructor’s discretion, and the final assessment takes into account both the quantity and quality of student’s participation in classroom discussions, as well as other elements of coursework.

**Exams and Papers**

No make-up exams are given, except in documented instances of illness or other emergency, in which case the student must contact the instructor directly before the exam, if feasible, or as soon as possible.

If any student has a valid reason to request rescheduling of an exam—such as observance of a religious holiday—he/she must contact the instructor in person and make suitable arrangements one week before the examination. Failure to act in accord with these instructions will lead to a failing grade.

All papers and exams must be provided to the instructor at the scheduled time. In the absence of a documentable emergency, late papers and exams will given no credit.
Classroom Conduct
All students are required to come to class on time, as late arrivals (and early departures) are disruptive.

Office Hours and Communication
Students are encouraged to come to office hours, especially if they have questions on the course materials. The instructor is also glad to discuss all relevant topics that, due to time constraints, are not covered in class in much detail. Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor directly and in person, preferably during office hours.

Plagiarism and Cheating
Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties. For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure (posted online by the Dean of Students Office).

Disability
A student who has a documented disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor in person at the beginning of the course so that appropriate arrangements may be made. The student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor, as early as possible. All arrangements for changes pertaining to the quizzes and the exams must be made at least one week in advance.