Introduction to Eastern Philosophy

Philosophy 520, Fall 2016
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TR 9:40-11:00 NEM 119

CREF #13945
Discovery: World Cultures (WC)

Office hours: Tues. 11-12 and by appointment

This course is an introduction to some of the major systems of South and East Asian thought. We begin with Indian Philosophy, particularly Hindu thought: Vedas, Upanishads, Jainism and Yoga. We will then focus on Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Daoism and Confucianism will each get two or three weeks attention. We end with Zen and Western Buddhism.

Our focus will be philosophy, though historical and cultural aspects will not be ignored. We will also examine ways in which Eastern thought has been taken up in the West.

Topics to be discussed are reality and illusion, suffering and awakening, craving and detachment, gods and atheism; karma and rebirth, self and no-self; living rightly and enlightenment.

Texts

- The Best Guide to Eastern Philosophy and Religion
- The Bhagavad-Gita
- The Analects
- The Dao

Course Requirements

35%  7 × Canvas discussion board post with response to classmate. Post every other week. See course calendar for schedule.
25%  Activity/Renunciation response paper
40%  Midterm (15%); Final (25%)

Extra Credit

Extra credit will be given for written responses to non-Hollywood movies with Asian themes, concerts, talks and museum visits. Extra Credit can be used to replace missed posts. Additional extra credits are worth 1.5 points on your final grade.
Canvas, E-mail, the Internet and Computers

You should ensure that Canvas knows your active e-mail address. You should check your e-mail at least once between classes. I will assume that you are aware of announcements that are made via e-mail. E-mail is the most effective way to contact me. On weekdays I will respond to your e-mail within twenty-four hours.

The schedule inevitably changes during the semester. You are expected to check regularly the Canvas course website. Please check the website if you miss a class or are unsure of an assignment.

Classroom Decorum

Please do not text, eat, pop flip-tops, read newspapers or chat with your neighbor during class. If you need to leave early, please let me know and sit by the door. Please talk to me if you will be consistently drowsy in class. Please do not pack up to leave before the end of class. Most of us are restless and addicted to our cell phones. These traits will be discussed explicitly in class.

Response Grading Factors

_ Does the response focus on a clearly identified position? Has the thesis been clarified, if needed?
_ How strong are the supporting considerations? Are the considerations evaluated, not merely listed?
_ Does the response respond to reasonable objections and to the questions a reader is likely to have? Are important alternatives considered?

Bonzi

_ Is the response well organized? Is there a general framework within which the parts fit smoothly? Are paragraphs used effectively? Does the paper start with a strong lead paragraph? How is the material ordered? Are the transitions smooth?
_ Does the response reference appropriate course materials? Are there suitable references? References may be simple and included in the text (e.g., Smith, p.20).
_ Are there problems with proofreading, spelling (sp), sentence fragments (frag), word choice (wc), awkward phrases (awk), grammar (gram), paragraphing (P) or word processor garble?