

Spring, 2013, *Classical Philosophies of India and China* 東洋哲學, 동양철학 (cc30.02)

Instructor: Dr. Jea Sophia Oh (Email: sophiajs5@gmail.com)

Department of Philosophy



I. COURSE DESCRIPTION and OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to introduce students to philosophies of Asia through the study of philosophical and religious texts and key concepts of Asian philosophies, and serves to foster interest in philosophy in general and in Eastern philosophies in particular with understanding of the geographical, historical and cultural particularities of Asia. Topics include reality, knowledge, self, right and wrong, non-attachment, the meaning of life, death, and aesthetics. This course examines the history, practices, and basic tenets of philosophies of Asia. Through the comparative study of the classical philosophies of China and India, students will examine such philosophical issues as the nature of reality, the self, knowledge, ethics, society, the good life, and enlightenment in writings associated with Confucius, Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu, the Hindu sages who composed the Vedas and Upanishads, the Buddha, and others. It also offers students an alternative to Western perspectives. In particular, the course seeks to provide students with a foundational understanding of representative thinkers of the traditional Asian philosophies up to a new philosophical trend of postcolonialism in Asia that inherits deconstructive bias against Enlightenment humanism of Western philosophies. Throughout this course, students will be able to develop a basis for evaluating classical philosophical texts of Indian and Chinese cultures.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS:

John M. Koller, *Asian Philosophies* (6th Ed.), Pearson Education

Recommended Texts:

Eknath Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita*, Nilgiri Press (2007), ISBN 1586380192

Confucius, Edward Gilman Slingerland, *Confucius analects: with selections from traditional commentaries*, Hackett Pub. Co. (2003), ISBN 0872206351

Philip J. Ivanhoe, Laozi, *The Daodejing of Laozi*, Hackett Pub. Co. (2003), ISBN 0872207013

J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames eds., *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, SUNY Press, ISBN: 0-88706-951-7, ISBN13: 978-0-88706-951-2

Jea Sophia Oh, *A Postcolonial Theology of Life: Planetarity East and West*, Upland: Sopher Press, ISBN: 978-1-935946-01-4

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: The course grade will be assigned according to the following formula: Participation: 10% (attendance)+10%(participation in debates)=20%, 2 Exams:40%X2=80% [mid-term and final].

1. Class Attendance and Participation (20%): Regular attendance (10%) and class participation (10%) are required. Attendance at every class is expected and necessary to best benefit the act and art of learning through discussion. Advance notification will be given only when an absence due to medical reasons will result in the student being unable to fulfill academic responsibilities such as presentations and examinations. Irregular attendance will result in the lowering of course grade (One absence will mark 1 negative point that will be counted from your second absence). You are responsible for active participation in class at all times. Amongst other things constant active participation in class and other course related activities are essential to the recognition of your presence and voice in the course. Anyone unwilling to attend classes regularly, prepare for classes and to participate in the life of the class should seriously consider not taking the class.

2. Midterm and Final exams (80% of grade: 40%/ each exam): There will be two exams on dates stated in the class schedule. Study Guides will be given two weeks in advance.

IV. COURSE OUTLINE:

1/30, Course Introduction, Vedas and Upanishads

2/6, The Jain Vision

2/13, Vedanta Tradition

2/20, Conversion Day

2/27, Theistic Developments

3/6, Buddhism: The Basic Teachings

3/13, 4 noble truths and 8 fold paths

3/20, **Mid-term Exam in class**

Spring Recess

4/3, East Asian Philosophies, yin-yang Synthesis

4/10, Confucianism, Mengzi and Xunzi

4/17, Daoism

4/24, Chinese Buddhism

5/1, Japanese Philosophy

5/8, Film: Why Has Bodhi Dharma Went for the East?

5/15, Reading Day

5/22, Final Exam in class