

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Discipline: Philosophy
Spring 2013
PHIL 1510-102: Classical Asian Philosophy
Lower Division
Instructor: Louise Harmon

Required Texts:

Classic Asian Philosophy: A Guide to the Essential Texts ("Classic Asian Philosophy") (Joel Kupperman, 2007) Publisher: Oxford University Press; ISBN 10: 0195189817

Hinduism: A Cultural Perspective ("Kinsley") (David R. Kinsley, Second Edition, 1993) Publisher: Prentice Hall; ISBN-0133957322

Sources of Indian Tradition/Volume One ("Sources") (Ainslie T. Embree, Second Edition, 1988) Publisher: Columbia University Press, ISBN 10: 0231066511

Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction ("Keown") (Damien Keon, 2000, Publisher: Oxford University Press; ISBN-019285364

On-Line Texts: *in Sacred-Texts* (<http://www.sacred-texts.com>—Also available in the ship's intra-net under Professor Harmon)

DVDs: Hinduism and Buddhism, from the Religions of the World Series (2003)(to be watched in class; provided by Professor Harmon)

Course Description: This course will consist of a survey of classic Asian philosophy. It would examine the historical background, schools, and philosophical traditions the Indian philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the Chinese philosophies of Daoism and Confucianism. The topics will include metaphysical, ethical, and epistemological issues raised in these Asian traditions. Whenever possible, students would be reading selections from primary texts such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita; and from basic Buddhist texts, including some Tibetan Buddhist texts by teachers from the Kagyud sect, and from the Analects of Confucius, the Tao TzeChing, and Zhuangzi.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To familiarize students with the basic philosophical bases of Hinduism and Buddhism, such as karma, reincarnation, dharma, mokshe and nirvana, etc., as well as to explore the different metaphysical, epistemological and ethical assumptions of these traditions, comparing them to those of the west;

- 2) To familiarize students with the basic philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism, again comparing their tenets to firmly held beliefs in the west;
- 3) To achieve some literacy about some of the world's most important Asian philosophical texts such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Laws of Manu, the Sutras, the 6 Yogas of Naropa, the Analects, the Tao Tze Ching and the works of Zhuangzi.
- 4) To allow students to explore their own philosophical and/or religious beliefs, compare them with those others in the world, and examine both critically;
- 5) To prepare students to be better, and more informed, world citizens, respectful and knowledgeable about the beliefs of others.

Course Requirements: The student will be required to take two take-home essays, two multiple choice quizzes, and one reflective journal on the Field Lab. Each essay and quiz will test for knowledge of the readings, lectures and class discussions. Each take-home essay will consist of a 7-9 page essay about an assigned topic. (You will have at least seven days at sea to complete each take-home essay. It will be typewritten, double-spaced, with 12 pt. font and one inch margins.) See the schedule below. Unexcused late assignments will have points deducted from the grade; only extenuating circumstances will justify turning in a late paper. Rules concerning plagiarism apply. Both of the multiple choice quizzes will be held in class.

As a third writing assignment, each student must write a reflective journal on the Mauritius Field Lab; it will be from 6-8 pages (typewritten; double-spaced; 12 pt. font, one inch margins). In addition, for extra credit of 5 points, students may also write a second 5-page reflective journal on some other individualized learning experience that a student may engage in when we are "in port." A list of sample individualized learning experiences follows the description of the required Field Lab, but students may develop their own as well. Students may opt out of the extra credit if they so desire.

Each take-home essay will count for 25% of your grade, for a total of 50%. The two multiple choice exams will each count for 15% of your grade, for a total of 30%, and your reflective journal on the required Field Lab will count for 20% of your grade. The extra credit individualized reflective journal may earn the student up to 5 extra points.

Here is the schedule for your essays and multiple choice portions:

Take-Home Essay # 1—Will be assigned on February 10th, and will be due on February 24th.

First Multiple Choice exam portion: March 3rd

Take-Home Essay # 2---Will be assigned on March 14th and will be due on March 23rd.

Second Multiple Choice exam portion: April 15th

Reflective Journal on Mauritius Field Lab: March 23rd

Last day to turn in any extra credit individualized journals: April 15th

I will leave the format of the reflective journals up to you, although you will see at the end of the syllabus, I have given you some suggested topics for discussion---both after the required Field Lab, as well as some of individualized learning experiences that you might develop when you are in various ports.

Your writing assignments will be evaluated on the basis of two criteria: Form and Content. Matters of form include grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity and organization. Matters of content include understanding of the material, use of texts to support positions, thoroughness, originality, and overall quality of thought.

Unit One: Hinduism

Class One: Introduction to the Hindu World View/Historical Background

Assignment: Kinsley, pp. 2-25; Sources, pp. 203-212

Class Two: The Hindu Way of Life/The Four Ends of Man

Assignment: Kinsley, pp. 84-96, pp. 152-161

Class Three: The Vedic Period/The Rig Veda

Assignment: Sources, pp.23-28

Class Four: The Upanishads

Assignment: Kupperman, 3-22, Sources, pp. 29-39

Katha-Upanishad, Sections 1.1 to 1.6; from Sacred Texts (on e-reserve)

Class Five: Dharma

Assignment: Sources, pp.213-233

Class Six: The Laws of Manu

Assignment: Chapters 1, 2, 5 of *Laws of Manu*; from Sacred Texts (on e-reserve)

Class Seven: **Moksha and Karma**

Assignment:

Kupperman,
pp. 43-59, Sources, pp. 274-287; Kinsley, pp. 32-36

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Class Eight :The Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita (A Modern Prose Translation) in Sacred Texts (on e-reserve)

Class Nine: Worship in the Hindu Tradition (DVD on Hinduism)/Review for Midterm

Assignment: Kinsley, pp. 67-82

Class Ten: Transition to Buddhism

Assignment: Watch DVD on Hinduism

Unit Two: Buddhism

Class Eleven: The Life of the Shakyamuni Buddha

Assignment: Keown, pp. 16-30

Classes Twelve and Thirteen: Theravada Buddhism/The Four Noble Truths/The Eight-Fold Path

Assignment: Sources, pp. 93-114

Keown, pp. 46-58

Kupperman, pp. 23-42

Classes Fourteen and Fifteen: Mahayana Buddhism/Bodhisattvas

Assignment: Sources, pp. 153-187; Keown pp. 59-72

Heart Sutra, in Sacred Texts, on e-reserve

*Classes Sixteen and Seventeen: Tibetan Buddhism/History/Tibetan Sects
The Yoga of the Six Doctrines/The Doctrines of the Illusory*

Body, the Dream-State, the Clear Light

Muses,
Assignment: Esoteric Teachings of the Tibetan Tantra, by C.A.
Chapter 4. The Steps of Practice in the Path, in Sacred Texts, on
e-reserve
Chapter 5, The Art of Gtum-Mo or Heat Yoga, in Sacred Texts, on
e-reserve
Chapter 6, The Practice of the Illusory Body or Dream Yoga, in
Sacred Texts, on e-reserve

Classes Eighteen: **Tibetan Book of the Dead/Transition to Classical Chinese
Philosophy (And watch DVD on Buddhism)**

Assignment: Esoteric Teachings of Tibetan Tantra, by C.A. Muses,
Chapter 7, On the Bardo Realm, in Sacred Texts, on e-reserve

Unit Three: Classical Chinese Philosophy

Note: For the Chinese Philosophy students will continue to use the free internet site called Sacred-Texts which has archived many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century translations of classical Chinese philosophy, including Confucius, Lao Tzu, Chaung Tzu, and the like. The site's address is: <http://www.sacred-texts.com>. I have also put the relevant portions on the ship's Intranet. You might want to print out some of the texts since many of them are dense, highly philosophical, and may require you to contemplate the words while lying on your bed, thinking about the nature of reality---preferably in the dark (with a flashlight) during the late hours of the night.

Class Nineteen: **Classical Chinese Philosophy/Confucius and the Analects**

Assignment: Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, of the Confucian Analects(Lun Yu)/Sacred-Texts,
trans. by James Legge, on e-reserve
Kupperman, pp. 76-94

Class Twenty: **Confucius/Analects cont.**

Assignment: Chapters 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the Confucian Analects
(Lun Yu)/Sacred-Texts, trans. by James Legge, on e-reserve

Class Twenty-One: **Daoism/The Tao-Te Ching**

Assignment: Chapters 1 through 40 of Tao-Te Ching by Lao-tzu
Sacred-Texts, Trans. by James Legge, on e-reserve
Kupperman pp. 113-132

Class Twenty-Two: **Daoism/The Tao-Te Ching cont.**

Assignment: Chapters 41-81 of Tao-Te Ching by Lao-tsu
Sacred-Texts, trans. by James Legge, on e-reserve

Class Twenty-Three Chuang Tzu

Assignment: Introduction, The Doctrine of Relativity, The Identity of Contraries, Illusion, in Musings of a Chinese Mystic, The Mysterious Imminence of Tao, The Hidden Spring, Non-Interference with Nature, Self-Adaptation to Externals Sacred-Texts, trans. By James Legge, on e-reserve Kupperman pp. 133-149

Field Lab Description: Hindu Temples in Mauritius

--Port Louis, and Triolet, March 18, 2013

--Temple Maheswavath in Triolet

Grand Bassin Shiva Temple

Academic Objectives

- 1) To expose students to two of the largest, and most dramatic nineteenth century Hindu temples in Mauritius;
- 2) To give students some historical background regarding how Hinduism came to flourish in a small island off the coast of South Africa;
- 3) To help students to identify the most common Hindu gods, and to learn about their stories and iconography;
- 4) To give students a sense of how Indian Classical Asian Philosophy is manifested visually in the Hindu temples, and how Hindus worship their gods.

Students will take a bus to the Hindu Temple Maheswavath in Triolet that is north of Port Louis. Built in the 1850s, this is one of the largest Hindu temples in Mauritius, with white buildings that are brightly painted. After a tour of the temple in Triolet, we will head south into the mountains of southeast Mauritius to visit the Grand Bassin Shiva Temple, built in 1891. There students will see large statues of Shiva, Lakshmi, and Hanuman, among others. Many Hindus in Mauritius make a yearly pilgrimage to the Grand Bassin Shiva Temple where there is a lake made of water from the River Ganges that Shiva and Parvati had brought with them, and spilled. Students will climb up a trail to a Hanuman Temple that will give them a splendid view of all of Mauritius. It may seem odd to be making our "Hindu Temple" pilgrimage in Mauritius, and not in the port of Cochin, but Kerala is primarily a Catholic part of India. Mauritius was under British rule from 1810 to 1968. The Indian-Mauritians are descended from Indian immigrants who came to Mauritius to work in the sugar fields as indentured servants after slavery was abolished in 1835. The treatment of Indian indentured servants by the British was quite cruel, and there was actually a thriving trade in "coolies," workers of Asian descent. Thousands of Indians from Calcutta and other parts of India came to Mauritius to work; others went on

to the West Indies. This means that Mauritius has a number of significant Hindu temples. **Attendance is Mandatory**

Students should take notes and reflect upon some of these questions in their journals. Be sure to locate these gods in the two temples: Shiva, and his vahana Nandi, Lakshmi, Parvati, Hanuman, Ganesh, among others. What does it mean to say that Parvati is Shiva's consort? Who is Rama's consort? Did you see their images anywhere in the temples? Why are Ganesha and Hanuman usually depicted alone? Why is Shiva dressed the way that he is? What is the religious significance of the water in the lake at Grand Bassin being from the River Ganges? What is a Shiva Lingam, and how is it used in Hindu worship? Who is the god Ganesha, and what is his relationship to Shiva? How did he come to have the head of an elephant? When do Hindus pray to Ganesha? Who is the god Hanuman? What is Hanuman's relationship to Lord Rama? What does it mean to take "darshan" of a god? When does that happen in a Hindu Temple? Did you see any Brahmin priests around the temples? What did their role seem to be?

Sample Individualized Learning Experiences for Reflective Journals

The following are samples of possible "in port" individualized learning experiences for reflective journals for extra credit. They are suggestions, only. If the student would like to come up with something more creative, I am open to innovation.

- 1) In Asian culture, it is quite common to see representations of important deities in mundane environments. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should collect three photographs of religious shrines inside shops, homes, schools, etc., and discover who the gods and goddesses might be, interview the owners or inhabitants if possible, and explain why these particular deities have been chosen as objects of veneration at this particular location.
- 2) You will learn about the theory of reincarnation. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should collect a photograph of a piece of art that in some fashion depicts a Buddhist or Hindu view of the afterlife, and explain/analyze its symbolism. Interview someone from the culture about what the image means to him/her. What are your own thoughts about reincarnation?
- 3) How the body of the Buddha is presented tells a story by itself. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should collect five photographs of different representations of the Buddha, research the depicted mudras, and explain/analyze the symbolism.
- 5) Tibetans can be found in diaspora throughout Asia. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should collect a photograph of a Tibetan thangka, research and explain/analyze its symbolism. Consider how a visual image might transmit an idea, without the use of language. Again, Tibetans can be found in diaspora throughout Asia. Anywhere in our Asian ports, you should interview a Tibetan,

find out which of the four sects of Tibetan Buddhism he belongs to, how he feels about the Dalai Lama as a spiritual/political leader, and what he/she believes will happen to the Tibetan leadership once the Dalai Lama has passed on. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this method of succession?

- 6) Asian "religions have a monastic tradition. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should find a student monk or nun affiliated with a Buddhist temple or university, and interview him (or her) about his/her life, family, education, religious practices, and how he/she came to become a member of this tradition. Can you imagine life as a member of such a community?
- 7) Temple art reflects the ideas and beliefs of its religious tradition. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, visit a Buddhist temple and describe/analyze how the architecture and art reflect the Buddhist world view.
- 8) Again, temple art reflects the ideas and beliefs of its religious tradition. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, visit a Hindu temple and describe/analyze how the architecture and art reflect the Hindu world view.
- 9) Confucian thought emphasizes filial piety. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should interview three individuals about their relationships with and attitudes towards their parents. How do they regard parental mandates and expectations? What would happen if the child disagreed with the parent over significant matters such as choice of education, profession, or marriage partner?
- 10) In Asia, martial arts are more than mere sport. Most of them have an extensive history, and are intimately related to bodies of philosophic thought. Anywhere in our Asian ports of call, you should observe someone engage in martial arts, and research and explain/analyze how Asian philosophy permeates the practice.
- 11) The adherents of both Buddhism and Hinduism believe in the concept of "karma. You should interview an individual from each tradition---one Hindu and one Buddhist---and ask them to explain their beliefs about Karma, and how those beliefs relate to reincarnation. You should then compare the two views, and see what, if any, differences can be found. Where in your own religious tradition do notions of karma appear?
- 12) Calligraphy is an Asian art form that has a philosophical basis. You should go either to a museum, or perhaps to a store that sells art, collect an image, either a postcard or photograph, and then explain/analyze how calligraphy manifests Asian thought.