

**Philosophy 314**

**Asian Philosophy**

**Spring 2009**

Morton Hall 337

TR 3:55 - 5:15

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**Course Description**

This is a survey of the major ancient philosophies from India and China. From India, the course covers five of the orthodox Upanishadic schools and two Buddhist schools. From China, the course covers three indigenous traditions and the subsequent assimilation of Buddhism. The focus throughout is examining each philosophy on its own terms, as a whole, while avoiding simplistic explanations or translations into more familiar (European) ways of understanding. The guiding theme of the course is that differences between European and Asian philosophies, as well as differences among Asian philosophies, result from treating certain experiences and concerns as more or less salient, and that small-scale difference in emphasis produces large-scale difference in results.

**Course Aims**

- to understand what distinguishes Asian from European philosophies, in terms of style, focus, concern, and presupposition
- to understand the distinctive contributions of the major Asian philosophies, and in particular each philosophy's distinctive metaphysics, theory of human nature, and prescription for meaningful life
- to understand the arguments and insights that motivate each of the major Asian philosophies
- to acquire background knowledge requisite for understanding the major texts of Asian philosophy

**Course Text**

*Asian Philosophy* (Philosophic Classics Volume VI), eds. Forrest E. Baird & Raeburne S. Heimbeck (Pearson/Prentice-Hall), ISBN 0-13-352329-2

**Lecture, Reading, and Assessment Schedule (tentative)**

01/06	Studying Asian Philosophies	
01/08	Origins of Indian Philosophy	[Read pp.3-7 and <i>Rig Veda</i> ]
01/13	<i>Katha Upanishad</i>	[Read pp.44-57]
01/15	<i>Mandukya Upanishad</i> and OM	[Read pp.81-82 & Hamilton Chapter 1]
01/20	Unresolved Questions from the <i>Upanishads</i>	[Read pp.135-140]
	<b>Receive Take-Home Quiz #1</b>	
01/22	Samkhya-Yoga: Metaphysics	

- 01/27 Samkhya-Yoga: Yoga and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* [Read pp.144-147 & 188-199]  
**Take-Home Quiz #1 Due**
- 01/29 Nyaya-Vaisheshika [Read Koller Chapter 13]
- 02/03 Advaita-Vedanta: Criticisms and Shankara's *One Thousand Teachings*  
**Receive Take-Home Quiz #2** [Read pp.147-149 & 200-213]
- 02/05 Advaita-Vedanta: Analogies and Insights [Read pp.213-224]
- 02/10 Early Indian Buddhism and the *Dhammapada* [Read pp.85-94 & Siderits Chapter 1]  
**Take-Home Quiz #2 Due**
- 02/12 The Buddhist Self: Anatman [Read pp.95-117]
- 02/17 Madhyamika Buddhism  
**Receive Take-Home Exam #1**
- 02/19 Yogacara Buddhism and Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses* [Read pp.131-134]
- 02/24 *Guest Lecture*: Caroline Lopez, Kadampa Meditation and Study Group of Northern Alabama  
**Take-Home Exam #1 Due**
- 02/26 Origins of Chinese Philosophy
- 03/03 Confucianism: Society and the *Analects* [Read pp.281-290 & 296-352]  
**Receive Take-Home Quiz #3**
- 03/05 Confucianism: Language and more of the *Analects*
- 03/10 Mohism: Utilitarianism and the *Mozi* [Read *Mozi*, Book 4 on Universal Love]  
**Take-Home Quiz #3 Due**
- 03/12 Mohism: Cosmopolitanism and more of the *Mozi*
- 03/24 Daoism and the *Zhuangzi* [Read pp.361-363, 367-369, 391-432]  
**Receive Take-Home Quiz #4**
- 03/26 Huayan Buddhism: Hermeneutics [Read Chapter on Fazang]
- 03/31 Huayan Buddhism: Metaphysics and Fazang's *Treatise on the Golden Lion*  
**Take-Home Quiz #4 Due** [Read pp.437-439 & 492-495]
- 04/02 Origins of Zen and Hui-neng's *Platform Sutra* [Read pp.439-443 & 474-491]
- 04/09 Zen Buddhism and Joshu's MU! [Read Zen Buddhism Quotes]  
**Receive Take-Home Exam #2**
- 04/14 Rinzai Zen and Koans
- 04/16 *Guest Lecture* (?): Blake Stewart, Head Coach, Team Kirage, Webster's Karate  
**Take-Home Exam #2 Due**
- 04/21 Final Remarks [Read pp.269-277 & 584-593]
- 04/28 Final Exam and Term Paper Due by 4:00p.m.** [Final Exam available on Syllabus]

## Student Expectations

Abide by the UAH Code of Student Conduct.

### *In Class*

Attend class regularly. It is unlikely that one can succeed in this course without doing this.

Arrive at class in a timely fashion: lateness is disruptive.

Ask questions and share thoughts, especially if something is not understood.

Participate courteously in class discussions.

Treat other people's questions as opportunities for learning rather than distractions from lecture.



### *Outside of Class*

Keep up with the material.

Carefully read the selections assigned for each class.

Seek help from the instructor (or other students) as often as needed.

Consult additional readings on an as-needed basis.



## Assessment

There are **four take-home quizzes**, each worth 5% of the final grade.

There are **two take-home midterm examinations**, each worth 25% of the final grade.

There is **one final examination**, worth 15% of the final grade.

There is **one term paper** due, worth 15% of the final grade.

Assessments and final grades are assigned according to the following measure:

> 93% = A	80-82% = B-	67-69% = D+
90-92% = A-	77-79% = C+	60-66% = D
87-89% = B+	73-76% = C	< 60% = F
83-86% = B	70-72% = C-	



Only dire circumstances merit an incomplete.

Cheating is unacceptable. You shouldn't cheat. Don't cheat. Seriously.

Late submission of assessments, and submission of assessments by email, is permissible if and only if the student obtains prior consent from the instructor.

*Retain a copy of all graded work*, in order to resolve grade disputes.

- The instructor is not responsible for "lost" material.



The instructor reserves the right to augment the final grades of students who demonstrate superior class performance, and to lower the grades of students who demonstrate a dereliction of their work or contribute to a classroom environment that is not conducive to learning.

## Academic Honesty

At the instructor's discretion, plagiarism and other academic misconduct will be reported promptly to the Vice President for Student Affairs as being in violation of the UAH Code of Student Conduct, Chapter 7, Article III, Part C, Section 1.

- Plagiarism is defined as "the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product's of one's own mind" --Black's Law Dictionary, 5th edition.
- Students should refer to page 93 of the *Student Handbook* to review the definition and examples of academic misconduct. Students should contact the instructor without delay to discuss questions regarding academic misconduct.

UAH is committed to the fundamental values of preserving academic honesty as defined in the *Student Handbook*. The instructor reserves the right to utilize electronic means to help prevent and identify plagiarism, including the use of Turnitin.com. Students agree that by taking this course, all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service, as well as additional information about the company, are described at [www.uah.edu/library/turnitin](http://www.uah.edu/library/turnitin)

No student may submit, in fulfillment of requirements for this course, any work submitted, presented, or used by the student in any other course, without the prior consent of the instructor.

The instructor reserves the right to impose academic sanctions, in lieu of or in addition to those imposed by the Vice President for Student Affairs, upon any student who commits any form of academic misconduct during the course. Students have the right to discuss such sanctions with the instructor before they are imposed, and to protest sanctions to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

## Final Examination

Select *two* of the following paraphrases. For each one you select: (a) briefly explain why it might seem to be false, and then (b) explain, in more detail and in your own words, what the statement means and why someone might believe that it is true.

No one is ever born, and no one ever dies. (Shankara)

No one persists through time as the same person. (Nagarjuna)

Sometimes a child is not a child and a ruler is not a ruler. (Confucius)

The lion is in its hair, and its hair is its ear. (Fazang)

Everything has Buddha-nature, but the dog's Buddha-nature is nonexistent [*mu*] (Joshu)

## Term Paper

Critically discuss a philosophical issue from this course about which there is disagreement among Asian philosophers. Explain each side's stance and their reasons. Then defend your stance on the issue with arguments. Grades are a function of: intrinsic interest of topic; clarity of expression; depth of understanding; quality of interpretation, explanation, and argumentation; and degree of engagement with other thinkers, including sagacious use of quotations and illustrative examples.

## Miscellany

Philosophy is not easy. You must make a serious effort to understand and articulate the material. It helps to take detailed notes, and let your mind wander over what you find interesting outside of the classroom. It also helps to discuss ideas with others, especially people not in the class.

If at any time you would like to discuss the issues covered in this course or philosophy in general, feel free to visit during office hours or to arrange a meeting.

If at any time you are having problems with the subject matter or the manner of its presentation, do not hesitate to bring this to my attention (in person, via email or anonymous note, etc). It is your responsibility to bring any course-related concerns to my attention.

Any student who feels that accommodations based on the impact of a disability are required should contact the instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Please also contact the Disability Support Services at 113 University Center (256-824-6203); they coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Any student who feels that their life is overwhelming or unmanageable is encouraged to contact the Counseling Center at 113 University Center (256-824-6203) for free and confidential appointments. It is normal to use counseling services: no problems are too big or too small.

I encourage a free and tolerant atmosphere in class. I encourage and expect questions and challenges at appropriate times during class. I welcome visits to my office. *I am here to help you learn.*

I reserve all federal and state copyrights over my lectures and course materials.

I reserve the right to alter any or all portions of this syllabus, at my sole discretion, at any time.