

Syllabus: East Asian Religious Traditions (RELS 308): WKU Fall 2011

Instructor: Paul Fischer

Office: Cherry Hall 321

Office hours: Tuesdays from 1.00 to 2.00pm, Wednesdays from 10.10 to 11.10am, and by appointment

Phone: 745-5758

Email: via Blackboard

Class times: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4.00 to 5.20pm in Cherry Hall 320

Course Description:

The intellectual history of China, indeed of all of East Asia, is rhetorically dominated by Ruism, Daoism, and Buddhism. In this class we will read and discuss some foundational classics of each of these ideologies. Our time will be divided equally among the three, spending five weeks on each. First we will read Confucius' *Analects*, then short excerpts from the *Meng Zi* and *Xun Zi*, the two most famous Ruist works of the following few centuries. Second, we will read the *Lao Zi* and the *Zhuang Zi*. These delightful narratives are the two best known works of philosophical Daoism, and are often portrayed as the passive/feminine *yin* to Ruism's aggressive/masculine *yang*. Last, we will read the *Platform sutra* of the Sixth Patriarch of Zen. While Buddhism began as an Indian religion, Zen is a decidedly Chinese take on it. All three of these traditions have had a great influence on the social, political, literary, and artistic cultures of East Asia. Even now they continue to present us with historically resonant yet contemporarily relevant personal visions of the human condition situated within a vast and mysterious cosmos.

Goals:

Read four of the most influential texts in Chinese cultural history: do the readings before class

Understand their basic concepts and how they interrelate: take notes for readings and lectures

Clarify those topics that interest and/or puzzle you: please ask questions in class every week

Summarize and synthesize the data: construct coherent explanations for specific issues (summaries & exams)

Think critically and express yourself eloquently about culturally sensitive topics: engage in class discussions

Grades:

You are evaluated on your demonstrated commitment and understanding. Your grade will be based on your written summaries of the readings, participation in class, one in-class exam, one five-page paper, and one five-minute digital narrative. Each of these is 20% of your grade. However, I reserve the right to change this grading rubric at any time. Regardless of whether or not you study together, all written and digital work must be completely *original*. It is your responsibility to understand what "plagiarism" means and entails. Reading summaries are due, via Blackboard, before the beginning of every class that has an assigned reading. They should each be about 500 words in length and will collectively constitute your annotated bibliography for the course. (This paragraph is 396 words long.) Late submissions are docked a third of a grade per day.

"Participation" is not the same as "attendance." Details upon request. The exam is open-note (*your* notes only, hand-written or printed, but not photocopied; printed notes have a five-page maximum and must be handed in with the exam). The paper should be five double-spaced pages, with one-inch margins, and in 12-pt type and Times New Roman font. Your group presentation may not exceed eight minutes and must include a 500-word paper responding to the other projects from each of you as well as a complete transcript of the narrative. The paper may be on any topic of philosophical Daoism and the digital narrative on any topic of Chinese Buddhism, but I must approve your topics in advance. Late work is not allowed without prior arrangement. There is no extra credit work available for this course. Contesting a grade must be done in writing, not orally or via email; reconsideration of a grade may result in it going up or down. Illness, with a doctor's note (with your name, relevant dates, and the doctor's phone number) for me to keep, is usually the only acceptable excuse for an absence. To help you develop sustained focus, no handheld electronic devices are allowed: please put it away before class begins. For the same reason, if you use a computer, you must sit in the back row. In short, you are graded on your responsible participation in the meetings, your critical analysis of the data, and your creative response to both; three things, not coincidentally, that your future employers will likely expect of you.

As Confucius said: "I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again." *Analects* 7.8 [子曰不憤不啓不排不發舉一隅不以三隅反則不復也]

Texts: Always bring the reading for the day to class.

Ivanhoe, Philip and Bryan Van Norden, eds. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. 2nd edition. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001.

Yampolsky, Philip. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Readings not in these two books will be on Blackboard.

Readings:

1. Tuesday (30 Aug 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), xi-xvii (Introduction)
2. Thursday (01 Sep 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 1-10 (*Analects* chs.1-3).
3. Monday (06 Sep 2011):
Robert Loudon, ““What Does Heaven Say?”: Christian Wolff and Western Interpretations of Confucian Ethics” in Bryan Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73-93.
4. Thursday (08 Sep 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 10-30 (*Analects* chs.4-10).
5. Tuesday (13 Sep 2011):
Philip Ivanhoe, “Whose Confucius? Which *Analects*?” in Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*, 119-133.
6. Thursday (15 Sep 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 31-54 (*Analects* chs.11-20).
7. Tuesday (20 Sep 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 59-76, 90-94 (*Mo Zi* chs.8, 11, 16, 26).
8. Thursday (22 Sep 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 115-117, 144-157 (*Meng Zi* chs.6, 7).
9. Tuesday (27 Sep 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 255-266, 298-306 (*Xun Zi* chs.1, 2, 23).
10. Thursday (29 Sep 2011):
In-class exam on early Ruism
11. Tuesday (04 Oct 2011):
Brook Ziporyn’s online essay “The Dao of the *Daodejing*”
<http://www.hackettpublishing.com/zhuangzidao>
12. Thursday (06 Oct 2011): **no class**: Fall break
No readings; no reading summary due this week
13. Tuesday (11 Oct 2011):
Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 161-180 (*Lao Zi* chs.1-37).

14. Thursday (13 Oct 2011):
 Bryan Van Norden, “Method in the Madness of the *Laozi*,” in Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip Ivanhoe, eds., *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 187-210.
15. Tuesday (18 Oct 2011): *19 Oct is the last day to drop with a W or change from credit to audit*
 Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 181-203 (*Lao Zi* chs.38-81).
16. Thursday (20 Oct 2011):
 Paul Goldin, “A Mind-Body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?” in Scott Cook, ed., *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 226-247.
Buddhism Digital narrative groups assigned (by me)
17. Tuesday (25 Oct 2011):
 Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 207-224 (*Zhuang Zi* chs.1-2).
18. Thursday (27 Oct 2011):
 Scott Cook, “Harmony and Cacophony in the Panpipes of Heaven,” in Scott Cook, ed., *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 64-87.
19. Tuesday (01 Nov 2011):
 Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 224-235 (*Zhuang Zi* chs.3-5).
20. Thursday (03 Nov 2011):
 William Callahan, “Cook Ding’s Life on the Whetstone: Contingency, Action, and Inertia in the *Zhuangzi*,” in Roger Ames, ed., *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1999), 175-195.
21. Tuesday (08 Nov 2011):
 Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 235-250 (*Zhuang Zi* chs.6, 7, 12-14, 17-20, 22-24).
22. Thursday (10 Nov 2011):
 Buddhism introduction: no readings; no reading summary due.
Paper on Daoism due
Deadline to choose/be assigned a Buddhism Digital narrative topic
23. Tuesday (15 Nov 2011):
 Yampolsky (1967), 1-22 (Chan, the Lankavatara school).
24. Thursday (17 Nov 2011):
 Skim Yampolsky (1967), 23-57 (Shenhui): no reading summary due; work on concept map in class.
Buddhism Digital narrative concept map due
25. Tuesday (22 Nov 2011):
 Yampolsky (1967), 125-141 (*Platform sutra*)
26. Thursday (24 Nov 2011): **No class**; “Thanksgiving” holiday
 No readings

27. Tuesday (29 Nov 2011):

Yampolsky (1967), 141-162 (*Platform sutra*).

Buddhism Digital Narrative storyboards due

28. Thursday (01 Dec 2011):

Yampolsky (1967), 162-183 (*Platform sutra*).

29. Tuesday (06 Dec 2011):

Student presentations: 7 of 30:

All presentations must be uploaded to Youtube

Each group must email me (in Blackboard) a written transcript of the narrative

30. Thursday (08 Dec 2011):

Student presentations: 7 of 30

31. Thursday (15 Dec 2011): 3.45-5.45pm *Note new hours for finals week*

Student presentations: 7 of 30

Written responses (500 words) to other presentations due via email to Blackboard

Possible paper topics for *Lao Zi* and *Zhuang Zi*:

1. Analyze one chapter from the *Lao Zi* or one story from the *Zhuang Zi*.
2. Analyze the entire *Lao Zi* or *Zhuang Zi* using one metaphor from either text.
[E.g., water, valley spirit, unhewn block, empty spaces, Kun & Peng, skillful people, etc.]
3. Analyze the entire *Lao Zi* or *Zhuang Zi* using one key concept from either text.
[E.g., effortlessness, flexibility, introspection, spontaneity, relativity, mind fasting, etc.]
4. Is philosophical Daoism a religion?
5. How have excavated texts changed our understanding of the *Lao Zi*?
6. How is the *Lao Zi* related to the *Zhuang Zi*?
7. Is *Zhuang Zi* a relativist?
8. What is the relation between Ruist and Daoist ethics?
9. Why does *Zhuang Zi* use such an odd cast of characters?
10. How *did* *Zhuang Zi* know the joy of fish? (Ch.17)
11. Why is the fish-trap pericope in *Zhuang Zi* ch.26 relevant to philosophical Daoism?

Possible presentation topics for Buddhism:

1. Life of the Buddha
2. Jataka tales
3. Life of Bodhidharma
4. Chan koans
5. Faxian visits India
6. Life of Empress Wu Zetian
7. The Buddhist persecution of 845ce
8. Dunhuang
9. The Zen garden at Ryoan-ji
10. Angkor Wat

Digital narrative grading rubric:

Concept map: 20%

Storyboard: 20%

Digital narrative: 50%

Response paper: 10%

| CATEGORY | Excellent | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Content : accuracy and choice of material included in presentation 35% | All content throughout the presentation is accurate and relevant . Demonstrates the relative importance of the major concepts, ideas, topics | Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that seems inaccurate or irrelevant or unimportant | The content is generally accurate and relevant but more than one important concept, idea or topic is left out | Content confusing or contains more than one factual error. |
| Sequencing of Information / Storyboard 30% | Information is organized in a clear, logical way. | Most information is organized in a clear, logical way. One slide or piece of information seems out of place | Some information is logically sequenced. An occasional slide or piece of information seems out of place. | There is no clear plan for the organization of information. |
| Effectiveness of message delivery/ Creativity and use of media 35% | Presentation makes effective use of well chosen graphics/media to highlight and inform. Narration is clear and flows smoothly all the time | Most of the graphics/media used are effective. Narration is clear and flows smoothly most of the time | Some graphics/media do not support the topic of the presentation. Narration does not flow smoothly. | Several graphics/media are irrelevant and detract from the content of the presentation. Narration is neither clear nor does it flow smoothly |

Student issues:

Student-teacher relations in the Humanities:

I'm not here to sell you knowledge. You can get that online or in the library. Selling knowledge to a customer may be the paradigm for other academic divisions, but not in the Humanities. History, literature, philosophy, and religion professors are like football coaches: we show you what exercises to do to acquire certain skills, skills like critical thinking, creativity, and communication, but you do the actual work. You are not a passive receptacle of learning, but rather an active practitioner of skill acquisition. Thus we often say of our courses: the more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

Preparation for class:

It is generally accepted in higher academic circles that students must study two to three hours outside of class for every hour spent in class, and this course will certainly demand such commitment. As this course meets 2.5 hours per week, you should expect to spend between five and eight hours per week studying for this course. Students who are unable or unwilling to commit this amount of time to this course should reconsider whether this course is appropriate for them. Try not to fall behind on the reading because it is very difficult to catch up. This is a survey course, and we move along quickly.

Classroom behavior:

I expect you to be not only on time and prepared, but also to demonstrate initiative by asking interesting questions and otherwise engaging the topic at hand. You may have thoughtfully read all of the assignment, but I won't know this unless you give me evidence of this by talking with me about it. A Humanities classroom is also like a corporate boardroom: there is protocol to be followed (e.g., raising your hand for a question), there are other people in the room deserving of your respect (e.g., by not distracting them), and there is the fact that you are being judged on your behavior and participation (that 20% of your grade).

Cellphones (and all other hand-held electronic devices):

We live in a fast-paced world. But the skills you have the opportunity to practice in Humanities courses require mental focus. Staying focused on a task for seventy-five minutes at a time is a skill, and a marketable one at that. Cellphones are distracting, perhaps delightfully so, but distraction detracts from focus. Therefore, no cellphones, or any other hand-held electric devices, are allowed in the classroom. Please turn them off and stow them in your pocket or bag before class begins. I don't want to see them or hear them. Thanks!

Computers:

Computers can be useful for taking notes, but they can also be a distraction, both to the user as well as to all those who can see the screen. For these reasons, I do allow computers in the classroom, but only if you sit where no one else can see your screen, that is, in the back row. If all the back row seats are already taken by the time you arrive to class, please accept my humblest apologies, but you will have to take hand-written notes instead. If you are using your computer in the back row, and whatever is on your screen distracts those sitting on either side of you, then I will ask you to turn it off. So sorry!

Talking in class:

You should not talk in class. Not out of respect for me, mind you, but out of respect for the other students trying to focus. I see the class period as an opportunity for you. If you do not wish to participate, that is fine with me: you may put your head down and go to sleep, or you can quietly pass notes to one another, or you can lean over and whisper to one another. But if I can hear you talking, that means you are distracting other students. Please don't do that. (Yes, it will affect your grade.)

Studying together:

Studying together can be a great thing or it can be a really bad thing. If you do the work and want to deepen your understanding by discussing it with other students to gain their perspective, that's great. This course is a rare opportunity for you to talk about religion without upsetting someone in the room. But if you do not do the work, meet up with other students, divide the reading, then meet back up to plagiarize each other's notes, that is not a good thing. It's just cheating.

The Library:

I like Google as much as the next guy. Probably more so. But as wonderful as Google is, there are still lots of things the library has that cannot be found with a Google search. Two spring immediately to mind: librarians and books. Librarians know all kinds of things about how to access useful and relevant information, both online and in dead-tree format. Go talk to one! The other thing is books. I know Google Books is making good progress, but there are still a great many texts that are only accessible by browsing the stacks. Browsing the stacks is a key part of the university experience. Don't miss out!

Exams:

There are three exams for this course, one every five weeks. The format is exactly the same for all three, and the third exam is not cumulative. Each exam will require you to answer three questions with one-or-two paragraph, 8-to-12 sentence answers. A good answer will draw information from the reading and/or the lecture (preferably both). It will be concise, relevant, and factual. (Your opinions are welcome in class, but not on the exams.) I give exams to induce you to creatively summarize and/or synthesize the data that you yourself have collected about the topics at hand. Because I do not want this course to be about memorization, all exams are open-note, but not open-book. Your notes must be yours and must be hand-written or printed; no photocopies are allowed. Printed notes may not exceed five pages (both sides is okay; any font size is okay) and must be handed in with the exam. Because I want you to read broadly, and construct interesting answers, I do not have "study-guides" or answer questions like "What are the main points?" Figuring that out for yourself is part of the fun!

Plagiarism:

Whenever you submit work to me, of any kind and for any assignment, either oral or written, if the words that you use in your work match uncited words anywhere else in the universe (except your own notes, written in your own words): that is plagiarism. This includes any webpage, any monograph in any language anywhere, and even other students' notes, past or present. If you were sick one day and got notes from another student, you must first put them in your own words if you are going to submit them as your own work. I am the judge of what constitutes words that "match." Any work that includes plagiarized words will receive a zero, and may result in failing the class and expulsion from the university. If this concept is unclear to you, please see me or an AUC librarian to explain it further.

Grades:

Your grades for this class derive from an Excel spreadsheet with five columns: one column for each of the three exams, the on-time annotated bibliography entries, and participation (half for attendance and half for in-class generation of interesting discussion; the former drops by 1/3 of a grade after the 2nd unexcused absence). Each of these is 20% of your grade. At the end of the term there will be a number between 0 and 100 in each column: I will add them up and divide by 5 and that will be your grade. There is no "extra credit" for this class, if only because I do not understand the concept of "extra credit." Grades are assigned based on quality, not quantity: if you consistently do C work, then your doing more C work will still result in a final grade of C; doing a lot of C work does not result in a B. You are not shoveling sand (i.e., more = better), you are demonstrating understanding (i.e., clearly articulating concepts that have been deeply meaningful for millions of people for thousands of years).

How to read in academia:

For the reading each week, first skim the appropriate chapters or pages in order to identify the main points, events, and individuals. Then re-read those chapters or pages in order to determine how examples are used to support those points, events, and individuals. Pay attention to chapter titles and subheadings to help guide you. As you read (just as when you listen in class), do so with pen or marker in hand so you can note or highlight those key points, events, ideas, themes, patterns, and individuals in the margins. Do not underline or highlight everything. Teach yourself to discriminate between important information (including analyses and conclusions) from unimportant information; practice determining why something is important, in the short run, in the long run, and on other places, people, and events. Note causes, effects, and results. Review these notations regularly as you read the assigned pages. Reviewing in this fashion should enable you to see the direction a chapter (or lecture) is taking; it should also help to improve your concentration. With practice you should improve.

Class 01: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), xi-xvii (Introduction)

Class 02: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 1-10 (*Analects* chs.1-3)

Class 03: Robert Louden, “‘What Does Heaven Say?’: Christian Wolff and Western Interpretations of Confucian Ethics” in Bryan Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 73-93.

Class 04: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 10-30 (*Analects* chs.4-10)

Class 05: Philip Ivanhoe, “Whose Confucius? Which *Analects*?” in Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays*, 119-133.

Class 06: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 31-54 (*Analects* chs.11-20)

Class 07: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 59-76, 90-94 (*Mo Zi* chs.8, 11, 16, 26)

Class 08: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 115-117, 144-157 (*Meng Zi* chs.6, 7)

Class 09: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 255-266, 298-306 (*Xun Zi* chs.1, 2, 23)

Class 10: In-class exam on Ruism

Class 11: Ziporyn’s online Zhuangzi essay on “dao” see his ZZ translation

Class 12: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 161-180 (*Lao Zi* chs.1-37)

Class 13: Bryan Van Norden, “Method in the Madness of the *Laozi*,” in Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip Ivanhoe, eds., *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 187-210.

Class 14: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 181-203 (*Lao Zi* chs.38-81)

Class 15: Paul Goldin, “A Mind-Body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?” in Scott Cook, ed., *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 226-247.

Class 16: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 207-224 (*Zhuang Zi* chs.1-2)

Buddhism Digital narrative groups assigned (by me)

Class 17: Scott Cook, “Harmony and Cacophony in the Panpipes of Heaven,” in Scott Cook, ed., *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the Zhuangzi* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003), 64-87.

Class 18: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 224-235 (*Zhuang Zi* chs.3-5)

Class 19: Harold Oshima, “A Metaphorical Analysis of the Concept of Mind in the Chuang-tzu,” in Victor Mair, ed., *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 63-84.

Class 20: Ivanhoe & Van Norden (2001), 235-250 (*Zhuang Zi* chs.6, 7, 12-14, 17-20, 22-24)

Class 21: Buddhism introduction

Paper on Daoism due:

Deadline to choose/be assigned a Buddhism Digital narrative topic

Class 22: Yampolsky (1967), 1-22 (Chan, the Lankavatara school)

Buddhism Digital narrative concept map due

Class 23: Yampolsky (1967), 23-57 (Shenhui)

Class 24: Yampolsky (1967), 125-141 (*Platform sutra*)

Class 25: Yampolsky (1967), 141-162 (*Platform sutra*)

Buddhism Digital Narrative storyboards due

Class 26: Yampolsky (1967), 162-183 (*Platform sutra*)

Class 27: Student presentations: 7 of 30

Class 28: Student presentations: 7 of 30

Class 29: Student presentations: 7 of 30

Class 30: Chinese syncretism