

Eastern Philosophy

Philosophy 393G - Spring 2021 Syllabus¹

Basic course information

Instructor: Justin Mooney
Email: jmooney@umass.edu
Office: South College E410
Office hours: by appointment

Course dates: Feb 1 – May 4, Spring 2021
Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays
Time: 2:30pm – 3:45pm
Room: fully remote course (Zoom)

Course description and objectives

In this course we will survey some of the philosophical ideas found in Eastern religious and philosophical traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. We will analyze their key concepts and evaluate arguments for and against their central claims. Topics will include karma, rebirth, personal identity, mystical experience, and the nature of ultimate reality.

As we think through topics such as these, we will be working to develop and hone philosophical skills such as analyzing concepts, constructing and critiquing arguments, and evaluating philosophical theories.

Assignments

Assignments in this class will include readings, discussion posts, and two papers.

Reading assignments: In the course schedule below, each reading is listed next to the date that we will discuss it in class, and should be completed by the start of class on that date. It is important that you come to class prepared to discuss the reading for that day, since your participation in class discussion will affect your participation grade.

Discussion posts: For each reading assignment you will have an opportunity to post a short, written reaction to the reading in a discussion thread on our course Moodle page. A minimum of 20 posts throughout the course are required, but they should be short: aim for about one paragraph. Some of them may be replies to other students' posts.

Papers: You will be asked to write two papers, each of which should be 3-5 pages in length, and should critically evaluate one of the arguments that we have discussed in class. More instructions about these two papers will be provided as the class proceeds.

¹ This is a modified version of the syllabus I used when I taught this course in Spring 2021.

Grades

Your final grade in this class breaks down as follows. The 20 discussion posts will be worth 40% of the final grade (2% each); the first paper will be worth 20% of your final grade; the second paper will be worth 30% of your final grade; and the remaining 10% will be based on class participation, which includes attendance and contribution to class discussion.

This class will use a standard grading scale:

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	65-66%
B-	80-82	F	0-65%
C+	77-79%		

Policies

Attendance: Regular attendance is expected. However, students are permitted three unexcused absences with no penalty. More than three unexcused absences may result in a deduction of points from the student's final grade.

Extensions: Extensions may be granted in special circumstances. Otherwise, assignments will be deducted by 1/3 letter grade for each day they are late (e.g. a B+ paper drops to a B paper if it is one day late; it drops to a B- if it is two days late; etc.). Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted.

Class Discussion: There will be opportunities for discussion during this course, including both live discussion on Zoom and virtual discussion on the course Moodle site. Students are expected to be respectful and kind in these discussions.

Academic Honesty: As always, academic honesty is expected. The University policies regarding academic honesty will be followed in this class. For more information, see: <https://www.umass.edu/honesty/>

Accessibility: I intend this class to be accessible to all students. Students who need or would benefit from relevant accommodations should talk to me and also register with disability services. For more information, see: <https://www.umass.edu/disability/>

Required Texts

There are two required texts for this course:

1. Harrison, Victoria S. (2019). *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics (Second Edition)*. New York, NY: Routledge.
2. Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli and Charles A. Moore (1989 [1957]). *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Please purchase a copy of these two books (electronic versions are fine). All other readings (see below for a complete list) will be provided via the course Moodle page.

List of Readings

- Analects*. Available online via The Chinese Text Project at: <https://ctext.org/analects>
"Condemnation of Music." From the *Mozi*. Available online via the Chinese Text Project at: <https://ctext.org/mozi/condemnation-of-music-i>
- Daodejing*. Available online via The Chinese Text Project at: <https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>
- Frazier, Jessica (2013). "Natural Theology in Eastern Religions." In *The Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology* (R. R. Manning, ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, Victoria S. (2019). *Eastern Philosophy: The Basics*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Mengzi (1963). *The Book of Mencius* 6.1 in Wing-Tsit Chan, ed., *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 51-60.
- Nāgārjuna (1995). *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. (Trans. Jay Garfield). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli and Charles A. Moore (1989 [1957]). *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Reichenbach, Bruce (1990). *The Law of Karma*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.
- Stoeber, Michael (1990). "Personal Identity and Rebirth." *Religious Studies* 26(4): 493-500.
"Universal Love." From the *Mozi*. Available online via The Chinese Text Project at: <https://ctext.org/mozi/book-4>
- Xunzi (1963), "The Nature of Man is Evil" in Wing-Tsit Chan, ed., *Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 128-135.
- Zhuangzi (2006). "Working Everything Out Evenly." Book 2 of *The Book of Chuang Tzu [Zhuangzi]*. Translated by Martin Palmer. Penguin Publishing.

Class Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1

- Feb 2 No reading (class intro).
- Feb 4 Harrison, Introduction (pp. 1-33).

UNIT 1: INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Week 2

- Feb 9 Harrison, Chapter 1, "Reason" (pp. 34-60).
- Feb 11 "On God's Not Being the Creator of the World" (*Sourcebook*, pp. 498-505)

Week 3

- Feb 16 *Nyāya Sūtra*, Book 1, chs. 1-2 (*Sourcebook*, pp. 358-365)
- Feb 18 "The First Sermon" & "The Synopsis of Truth" (*Sourcebook*, pp. 274-278)

Week 4

- Feb 23 Harrison, Chapter 2, "Reality" (pp. 61-90)
- Feb 25 Frazier, "Natural Theology in Eastern Religions"

Week 5

- Mar 2 "The Non-Dualism of Śaṅkara" (*Sourcebook*, pp. 509-521)
- Mar 4 "The Qualified Non-Dualism of Rāmānuja" (*Sourcebook*, pp. 543-555)

Week 6

- Mar 9 Nāgārjuna, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* (selections)
- Mar 11 Vasubandhu, *The Thirty Verses* (*Sourcebook*, pp. 333-337)

Week 7

- Mar 16 Harrison, Chapter 3, "Persons" (pp. 91-120).

Mar 18 *Milindapañha* II.i.1 (*Sourcebook*, pp. 281-284).

Week 8

Mar 23 Reichenbach, "Metaphysical Presuppositions of the Law of Karma"

Mar 25 Stoeber, "Personal Identity and Rebirth."

First Paper Due Mar 26 at 5pm

UNIT 2: CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Week 9

Mar 30 Harrison, Chapter 4, "Virtue" (pp. 121-150)

Apr 1 Confucius, *Analects* (selections)

Week 10

Apr 6 *Mengzi* (selections)

Apr 8 *Xunzi* (selections)

Week 11

Apr 13 *Mozi* (selections)

Apr 15 *Mozi* (selections)

Week 12

Apr 20 no class (Wednesday schedule)

Apr 22 Harrison, Chapter 5, "Authenticity" (pp. 151-175)

Week 13

Apr 27 *Daodejing* (selections)

Apr 29 *Zhuangzi* (selections)

Week 14

May 4 Harrison, Chapter 6, "Mind" (pp. 176-202)

Second paper due May 12 at 5pm

There is no final exam in this class.