

**GSHU 425.01**  
**Asian Great Books**  
**Spring 2013**

**Course Goals**

This is a seminar course devoted to close reading and discussion of classical works of Asian civilizations. This course also gives students extensive practice in critical and thoughtful writing. This singular goal or learning outcome will be achieved by close reading of each text, thoughtful discussion – both in listening and speaking, and by disciplined effort in writing interpretive analyses of the great ideas presented in each work. But, all of this is only possible if you are willing to work hard and learn to think, read, and write in the landscape of the great ideas. Learning is a discipline, whose first step is mastery of your volition. Since this is the final great books course in the (Asian) colloquium, each student is expected to be full participatory and desirous of perfecting their abilities as excellent writers, thinkers, speakers, and knowledge experts on the subject at hand. Raise the bar for yourself.

The primary objectives of this seminar course for each student include the demonstrated ability to:

- Read and analyze text.
- Produce writing that is creative and primarily analytical in nature
- Participate in class discussion so as to demonstrate an honest dedication to an accurate understanding of the text as well as a propensity to discuss the works as based on interpretive questions.
- Critique peer writing.
- Demonstrate the ability to listen to peer statements during discussion and thoughtfully analyze and respond to their content.

All of these objectives work toward the goals of general education – which emphasize critical thought, clear oral and written communication, lifelong learning, theological understanding, a heart for service, and empathy for other cultural perspectives. .

This course is designed for all students. Using the shared inquiry method, it extends the Great Books conversation to classic great texts and ideas of the East, including literary, philosophical, and religious texts, in English translation. Special attention will be given to the religious traditions of Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. As we encounter and enter into dialogue with these complex works, we will be able to broaden, deepen, and enrich our views of these cultures as they too reflect the universal human search for the true, the good, and the beautiful.

- This course fulfills the Non-Western General Education Requirement because of its coverage of classic Asian texts and because it challenges the student's critical thinking and writing expertise as well as their ability to integrate the philosophy and literature of other traditions into their own.

### **University Mission**

By reading the great books, you will grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, thus helping to fulfill the university's mission of gaining preparation for a life of purpose, service, and leadership.

### **Instructor**

Don Thompson Phone: 310.506.4831 Office: RAC 121 E-mail: [thompson@pepperdine.edu](mailto:thompson@pepperdine.edu)

### **Office Hours**

M 2-3, R 2-3, and by appointment.

### **Texts:**

- The Ramayana: Trans. R.K. Narayan. Penguin. ISBN-13: 9780143039679
- Hindu Myths. Wendy Doniger. Penguin Classics. ISBN-10: 0140449906
- The Bhagavad-Gita. Krishna's Counsel in Time of War. Trans. Barbara Stoler Miller. Bantam. ISBN-10: 0553213652
- The Analects of Confucius (Translations from the Asian Classics). Burton Watson. Columbia University Press. ISBN-10: 0231141653
- Tao Te Ching. Lao-Tzu. Trans. Stephen Addiss and Stanley Lombardo. Hackett. ISBN-10: 1590305469
- Chuang Tzu – Basic Writings. Burton Watson. Columbia U. Press ISBN-10: 0231105959
- Buddhist Scriptures. Donald Lopez. Penguin Classics. ISBN-10: 014044758X
- The Iron Flute – 100 Zen Koans. Nyogen Senzaki. Tuttle Publishing. ISBN-10: 080483248X
- The Tale of Genji. Murasaki Shikibu. Transl. Edward G. Seidensticker. Vintage Classics. ISBN-10: 0679729534
- On Love and Barley – Haiku of Basho. Trans. Lucien Stryk. Penguin. ISBN-10: 0140444599
- Hojoki – Visions of a Torn World. Kamo-no-Chomei. Trans Yasuhiko Moriguchi & David Jenkins. Stone Bridge Press. ISBN-10: 1880656221

### **Punctual attendance**

You are expected to attend every class, and to arrive on time. If you must miss class because of illness or a family emergency, please e-mail or otherwise notify us before class. A late

arrival disperses the focus of the class – and focus is essential to good conversation. Unexcused absences will lower your grade in the course.

### **Grades**

Your numerous assignments will, of course, be evaluated, and your final grade will be determined as follows:

- Class discussion: 10%
- 5 page essay on Ramayana, Hindu Myths and Bhagavad-Gita due February 9: 20%
- 5 page essay on Confucius, Tao Te Ching, & Chuang Tzu due March 9: 20%
- 5 page essay on Buddhist Scripture and Zen Buddhism due April 6: 20%
- 5 page essay on Genji, Basho, and Hojoki due April 25: 20%
- In class writing: 10%

Each 5 page essay is due at 11:59 p.m. via email attachment.

Class Cancellations: Class will not meet on February 21 or March 14.

### **Initial Schedule for Reading and Writing:**

Ramayana (3), Hindu Myths (2), Bhagavad-Gita (2), Analects(2), Tao Te Ching (2), Chuang Tzu (2), Buddhist Scriptures (3), Iron Flute (2), Genji (3), Basho(2), Hojoki (2).

### **Plagiarism:**

May result in an automatic failure in the class. It is plagiarism if you (1) borrow a paper from another student, (2) turn in a paper written by any other person, (3) take material (pages, paragraphs, sentences, or ideas) from any printed source without giving credit. See <http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/academicintegrity>.

### **Disability Services**

Any student with a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Main Campus, Tyler Campus Center 264, x6500) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit <http://www.pepperdine.edu/disabilityservices/> for additional information.

### **Help on writing:**

Take advantage of my availability for help on writing your papers. You may submit rough drafts in advance of the due date for any paper. Do this by anonymous e-mail attachment by setting up a generic account with a commercial e-mail provider (gmail, yahoo, ...). We also have an excellent writing center located in CAC 123, x4097. See <http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/writingcenter/>

**Recommended**

The website: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html> contains critical information on the citation of textual quotations. This is the MLA (Modern Language Association) standard.

As you design a course, course goals guide the selection of material and the learning objectives impact the methods used to assess student learning. Course goals are broad, general statements of what you want your students to learn. These are larger, overarching descriptions of outcomes for which verbs like “appreciate” and “understand” are appropriate. Note that learning objectives apply to the course as a whole, while class objectives are smaller, more immediate objectives for each individual course meeting. 2 Draft your course goals. Write at least 2-3 goals to shape your ongoing course design. Here, we give you some questions that will help you plan your course goals: “In this course, I will emphasize in” “The main themes learners will go through are” “The big picture I want to promote through this course is” Suitable verbs to use to set goals are shown below. “Through this course, you will” 3 Design Learning Objectives. Using the table above, design your Learning Objectives.