Instructor: Dr. Amy K. Donahue  
Temporary Assistant Professor  
Office: Social Sciences Building, Rm. 4092  
Phone: 770.423.6624  
Email: adonahu3@kennesaw.edu

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00pm — 3:15pm, or by appointment. I’m very willing to meet, in person or electronically, whenever my schedule allows.

Prerequisites: ENGL 1102 with a minimum grade of C

Catalogue Course Description: The course is a survey of the major texts, figures and schools in the philosophies of India, China and Japan. Texts include the Vedas, Upanishads, Analects and Zhuangzi. Major figures include Shankara, Patanjali, Confucius, Mencius, Dogen and Nishida.

Instructor’s Course Description: In this class, we will gain introductory familiarity with Taoist, Vedic, Confucian, and Buddhist philosophies through close readings of select parts of four canonical primary texts — the *Tao Te Ching*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Analects*, and the *Satipatthana Sutta*. We will pay particularly close attention to teachings that address the nature of the self, ultimate reality, personal relationships, personal and social development, and duty. Students will be encouraged in discussions and assignments to compare and contrast the teachings of these philosophical texts with each other, rather than primarily through reference to Western philosophical traditions, and to examine their relevance to contemporary issues.

Required Texts:
Select online materials and handouts.
**Instructional Methods:** The course will emphasize “active” rather than “passive” learning methods. As much as is logistically and pedagogically possible, small group exercises and group discussions will take priority over lectures. The course aims to introduce students to the notion of philosophy, critical thought, and philosophical reading as interpersonal practices.

**Learning Outcomes:** For a grade of “B” or better, students must fulfill the following learning outcomes for this course:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of metaphysical and ethical teachings of select canonical non-western primary texts through weekly online textual responses, active classroom participation, two textual summaries, a midterm paper, an oral presentation, and a final paper.
- Write one five to seven page midterm paper that examines the implications of Taoist, Vedic, Confucian, or Buddhist teachings for each other, and that demonstrates direct and subtle engagement with the primary texts.
- Prepare and deliver one ten minute presentation in which the student examines how select teachings of at least one Taoist, Vedic, Confucian, or Buddhist text that we have studied might help to respond to and/or diagnose of some contemporary practice or concern.
- Write one eight to ten page final paper that accurately and subtly represents select teachings of at least one Taoist, Vedic, Confucian, or Buddhist text that we have studied and shows how these teachings might inform responses to and/or diagnoses of some contemporary practice or concern.
- Actively engage with fellow students’ live and online class contributions. Assist them with their thoughts and pose relevant, informed, and on-topic critical questions.

**Course Requirements:** Students must attend classes, read course materials, bring appropriate texts to class, and complete assignments unless there are exceptional circumstances that they can document. Each student is expected to treat other members of the class with respect, to arrive promptly to class, and to actively participate in class assignments, exercises, and discussions.

**Grading:**

- Weekly Online Textual Responses — 14%
- Two 2-page textual summaries — 16% (8% each)
- Midterm Paper — 20%
- Oral Presentation — 10%
- Final Paper — 25%
- Class participation — 15%

**Grading Scale:**

- 100 – 90 = A
- 89 – 80 = B
Weekly Online Textual Responses: One post is required each week, from Weeks 2 — 15, on the class’ online discussion board. Your posts are due by 10pm on the night before the week’s first class. Each post is worth 1 per cent of your final grade.

Each 75—150 word online textual response should be written in conversational English and should demonstrate your direct, personal familiarity with, if not expertise in, the assigned reading for the upcoming class. Responses should highlight a specific part of the text that interests, concerns, or puzzles you and offer an interpretation of its meaning and implications. I will moderate the board primarily to ensure that students are actively and appropriately engaging the relevant primary texts and to non-intrusively identify areas of student interest, concern, or confusion that I may address later in class. The discussion board is also meant to serve as a place for students, including those who find live class interactions awkward, to raise questions or concerns about textual concepts and philosophical perspectives, and to try to answer or address classmates’ questions or difficulties. So, although you are required to post online textual responses once per week, you are also welcome to respond to and engage other students’ posts. Doing so will contribute to your class participation grade. Online textual responses will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

1 point — The response is posted on Blackboard by 10pm on the night before the week’s first class, it is written in intelligible if not grammatically perfect English, it demonstrates direct and subtle engagement with the assigned reading material (e.g., through citations and/or direct textual quotes), it offers a cogent, if not expert, interpretation of the text’s meaning and implications, and it does not appear to the professor to substantially repeat an earlier student post.

0 points — Either the response is not posted by 10pm before the week’s first class, or it isn’t written in intelligible English, it does not demonstrate direct and subtle engagement with the assigned reading material, it does not offer a cogent interpretation of the text’s meaning and implications, or it appears to the professor to substantially repeat an earlier student post.

Textual Summaries: Approximately two weeks before your midterm and final papers are due, you are required to submit a two page, text-based summary of one philosophical teaching that we have read and studied in class. Each written textual summary should be double-spaced, with 12 point Times New Roman font and 1” margins, and should follow MLA citation guidelines (see http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/). Your summaries must accurately represent and explain 1) a particular teaching or claim of a particular philosophical text we have read, and 2) an elaboration of related textual concepts that you believe inform the meaning of the teaching. Your summaries should reference the assigned primary text in detail (not simply class notes, and certainly not unassigned sources in print or online that you have discovered on your own), and
do so in ways that demonstrate that your representations and explanations are textually accurate and responsible. Think of these summaries (as well as your weekly online posts) as part of the drafting process for your midterm and final papers. You will be welcome to include them verbatim in these papers.

**Papers:** Your midterm and final papers should be formatted with double-spacing, 12 point Times New Roman font, and 1” margins, and follow MLA citation guidelines (see [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/)). Please review KSU’s policies on academic integrity and plagiarism before submission. Time permitting, I will be happy to review paper drafts before assignments are due and to work with students to improve their academic writing. Graded papers are normally returned no more than two weeks after their due date. I will distribute a grading rubric for your written assignments before assigning your papers.

**Oral Presentations:** The majority of the last three class sessions will be reserved for student oral presentations. Each presentation should consist of roughly 10 minutes of prepared remarks and materials. A final portion of these classes will be reserved for group discussion and clarification of concepts. Students are encouraged to present on topics that they address in their final 8-10 page papers.

**KSU Academic integrity policy:** No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. *When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged.* No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s).

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to provide a reasonable, documentable explanation for class absences. After three unexcused absences, students lose a full letter grade, to be deducted from class participation, with *each additional unexcused absence.* Repeated failure to arrive punctually to class will be deducted from your class participation grade.

**Disabilities** — I will be happy to work to meet the access needs of any student who requires reasonable accommodations because of the impact of a physical or mental disability.
Tentative Course Schedule
(read assignments and activities are subject to revision)

Week 1:
8/20 — Class introductions, welcome, discussion of syllabus, and discussion of popular representations/appropriations of Taoist, Vedic, Confucian and Buddhist concepts, such as “yin,” “yang,” “karma,” “samsara,” “respect for elders,” “ritual,” “sacrifice,” “nirvana,” and so on. Introduction to the Tao Te Ching.

8/22 — Reading — Tao Te Ching, preface and introduction excerpts (pp. ix — 22, 40 — 43). Class discussion.

Week 2:
8/27 — Online textual response due. Reading — Tao Te Ching, chapters 1-6 (pp. 51-71). Class discussion.

8/29 — Reading — Tao Te Ching, chapters 7-15 (pp. 72-93). Class discussion.

Week 3:
9/3 — LABOR DAY — No Class.

9/5 — Online textual response due. Reading — Tao Te Ching, chapters 16-24 (pp. 94-116), and Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” and “Dahomey” (uploaded to Blackboard). Class discussion.

Week 4:

9/12 — Reading — Bhagavad Gita, Appendix I — The Story of the Gita (pp. 292-293), and chapters 1 & 2. Class discussion. Compare and contrast with the Tao Te Ching.

Week 5:
9/17 — Online textual response due. Reading — Bhagavad Gita, Šri Aurobindo’s introduction, and re-read chapters 1 & 2. Class discussion

9/19 — Reading — Bhagavad Gita, chapters 3 & 4. Class discussion.
Week 6:


Week 7:

10/1 — Online textual response due. Reading — Bhagavad Gita, chapters 14 & 15. Class discussion.

10/3 — Reading — Bhagavad Gita, chapters 17 & 18. Class discussion.
Comparative study of the teachings of the Tao Te Ching and Bhagavad Gita. Clarification of concepts. In what ways might these teachings guide responses to and diagnoses of contemporary concerns? In what ways do their messages differ?

Week 8:

10/8 — Online textual response due. No new reading. Class discussion.
Comparative study of the teachings of the Tao Te Ching and Bhagavad Gita. Clarification of concepts. Introduction to Ames and Rosemont’s critique of “substance-based” metaphysics.

10/10 — Reading — The Analects, preface and introduction (pp. ix — xi, 1 — 65). Review of basic concepts. To what extent, if any, might Krišna’s teachings about the ultimate nature of self and reality, and the inferior status of the sensible realm, rest on a quirk of Indo-European languages? Is transcendence of the sensible realm desirable or possible?

10/12 — Last day to withdraw without academic penalty

Week 9:

10/15 — Online textual response due. Re-read The Analects, preface and introduction (pp. ix — xi, 1 — 65). Class discussion, and examination of concepts.

10/17 — **MIDTERM PAPER DUE.** Reading — The Analects, Books 1 & 2 (pp. 71 — 81). Class discussion.

Week 10:


Week 11:  

Week 12:  
11/7 — Reading — *Satipaṭṭhāna*, chapters 9-10, and 12. The five hindrances, the five aggregates, and the four noble truths. What is *dukkha* and what might the cessation of *dukkha* mean? Class discussion.

Week 13:  
11/14 — Reading — *Satipaṭṭhāna*, chapters 3 & 4. What is mindfulness and how might it relate to the five aggregates and *dukkha*? Class discussion.

Week 14:  
11/21 — SECOND ARGUMENT SUMMARY DUE. Fall Break. No class.

Week 15:  
11/28 — Oral presentations.

Week 16:  
12/3 — Oral presentations  
12/5 — Oral presentations. Last day of class.

FINAL PAPER: DUE ELECTRONICALLY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7, BY 12PM THROUGH BLACKBOARD.