History 2206: Origins of Great Traditions  
Spring 2013  
Dr. Ryan Ronnenberg  
Social Science 2033 Mon/Wed 8-9:15 am  
Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1 pm to 3 pm  
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Course Description

“A systematic examination of five centers of civilization in Afro-Eurasia during their defining moments. The course focuses on the historical contexts that gave rise to China’s classical philosophies, India’s transcendental world view, the Judeo-Christian-Islamic synthesis, African mytho-religious systems of thought and the emergence of Latin-European culture in the West. Content emphasizes cross-cultural influences and connections.”

Course Objectives:

This course is, at its core, an attempt to convey a sense of both the enormous diversity of, and extensive common ground between, some of world history's most prominent religious and philosophical traditions. We will explore South Asia's Hindu and Buddhist traditions; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the Levant; thematic coherence in African traditions south of the Saharan Desert; and the Hellenic tradition and its modern legacies. We will do so through close investigation of primary documents, thereby introducing students to historical close reading techniques.

Required Texts:


Assessment:

Your grade for this course will be determined by a combination of in-class participation, written assignments, and take-home examinations. The percentage valuations are listed below.

Attendance, Participation, Quizzes 10%
Primary Source Paper One 20%
Midterm Exam 25%
Primary Source Paper Two 20%
Final Exam 25%

Grading Scale
A...89.5-100%
Academic Integrity Statement:

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

Tentative Course Schedule

Week One (January 7-11)
-Expectations and Introductions
No Readings

Week Two (Jan. 14-18)
-History, Tradition, Religion
Readings: Essays from Eliot and Geertz

Week Three (Jan. 21-25)
-January 21 [No Class]
-Introducing South Asian thought
Readings: Early Vedic writings

Week Four (Jan. 28-Feb. 1)
-Hinduism Discussion
Readings: Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita

Week Five (Feb. 4-Feb. 8)
-Introducing Buddhism
-Buddhism Discussion
Readings: Selections from the Analects, The Poison Arrow

First Writing Assignment Due

Week Six (Feb. 11-Feb. 15)
-Foundations of East Asian Philosophical traditions
-Initial discussion of Confucius
Readings: Zhou Dynasty readings
Week Seven (Feb. 18-Feb. 22)
- Taoism discussion
- Legalism
Readings: Selections from the Dao De Jing, Writings of Han Fei

Midterm Exam Posted Online

Week Eight (Feb. 25-March 1)
- Class debate
- Introduction to the religions of the book
No Readings

Midterm Exam Due

Week Nine (Mar. 4-Mar. 8)
Spring Break-No Classes

Week Ten (Mar. 11-Mar. 15)
- March 13th Last withdrawal date without academic penalty
- Judaism Introduction
- Discussion Judaism
Readings: Selections from Genesis and Exodus

Week Eleven (Mar. 18-March 22)
- Introducing Early Christianity
- Christianity Discussion
Readings: Selections from the Gospel of Matthew, Romans

Week Twelve (Mar. 25-March 29)
- Introducing Islam
- Islam Discussion
Readings: Selections from the Qur'an, the Hadith

Second Writing Assignment Due

Week Thirteen (April 1-April 5)
- Introducing Themes in African Thought
- The Palm Wine Drinkard discussion
Reading: The Palm Wine Drinkard

Week Fourteen (April 8-April 12)
- African Diaspora and New World Religion
- Principles of Hellenic Thought
Readings: Selections from Plato's Apologia

Week Fifteen (April 15-April 19)
- Greek Rationality
- The Limits of Reason
Readings: Pericles' Funerary Oration, Writings of Hippocrates, Euripides' The Bacchae
Week Sixteen (April 22-April 26)
-Rediscovery of Hellenic Thought in European History
-Classical Greece, the Renaissance, Enlightenment discussion
Readings: Selected works of art (images online)

Week Seventeen (April 29-May 3)
-Review and Class Debate
**Final Exam Posted**
May 1-Last Day of Classes
Final Exam-May 8 at 8:00 am
May 11 (Grades Due)