History 2206: Origins of Great Traditions  
Spring 2014  
Dr. Ryan Ronnenberg  
Social Science English 241  
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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:

This course will consist of four chief components:
1) Attendance, Participation, Quizzes=10%
2) 2 Midterm Exams (Take-home) 2X30%=60%
3) 1 Final Exam (Take-home) 30%

Grading Scale
Students are evaluated on the following scale:
A - (89.5% and up)
B - (79.5-89.49%)
C - (69.5-79.49%)
D - (59.5-69.49%)
F - (59.49% and below)

I—Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when the student has done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond his/her control is unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair’s office.

Note: Late written work of all kinds will result in a 10% grade reduction, increasing by 10% weekly. Quizzes may not be made up.

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 Schedule

Week One
Jan 8 Introductions

Week Two
Jan 13 What is it that Historians do, anyway?
Reading: Herodotus (Online)
Jan 15 Tradition?
Reading: T.S. Eliot (Online)

Week Three
Jan 20 (No Class)
Jan 22 Defining Religion
Reading: Clifford Geertz.
Week Four
Jan 27 Introducing Indian Religious Traditions
Reading: Online, P. 44 (Rig Veda)
Jan 29 India (Cont.)
Reading: Human Record, P. 71 (Bhagavad Gita), P. 68 (Upanishads)

Week Five
Feb 3 India (Cont.)
Reading: HR P. 71 (Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Law), P. 77 (The Poison Arrow)
Feb 5 Introducing Chinese Philosophical Tradition
Reading: HR P. 92 (Confucian Analects)

Week Six
Feb 10 China (Cont.)
Reading: HR P. 90 (Laozi)
Feb 12 China (Cont.)
Readings: The Two Handles (Online)

Week Seven
Feb 17 Class Debate Exercise
Readings: Review Prior Readings
Feb 19 Introducing the “Religions of the Book”
Readings: No Readings

First Midterm Exam

Week Eight
Feb 24 Judaism
Reading: HR P. 56 (Genesis), P. 60 (Deuteronomy)
Feb 26 Judaism (Cont.)
Readings: Review

Week Nine
Mar 3 Christianity
Readings: HR P. 198 (Gospel of Matthew), P. 200 (Paul’s Epistle to Romans)
[Last Day to Withdraw Without Academic Penalty]
Mar 5 Christianity
Readings: Review

Week Ten
Mar 10 Islam
Readings: Online
Mar 12 Islam (Cont.)
Readings: Online

Week Eleven
Mar 17 Religions of the Book Review Exercise.
Mar 19 In class film

**Second Midterm Exam**

Week Twelve
Mar 24 In Class Film
Mar 26 Film Discussion

Week Thirteen
Spring Break Mar 29-Apr 4
Mar 31 (No Class)
Apr 2 (No Class)

Week Fourteen
Apr 7 Introducing ‘African’ Cultural Traditions.
Apr 9 Social structure, spirituality…some general trends in African History

Week Fifteen
Apr 14 *Palm Wine Drinkard: A Primer*
Readings: *Palm Wine Drinkard*
Apr 16 Discuss *Palm Wine Drinkard*
Readings: *Palm Wine Drinkard*

Week Sixteen
Apr 21 Hellenic Thought
Reading: HR P. 49 (Homer’s *The Odyssey*)
Apr 23 Hellenic Thought
Readings: Online (Plato’s Apology)

Week Seventeen
Apr 28 Hellenic Thought
Readings: Online (Pericles Funeral Oration)
Apr 30 Hellenic Legacies
Readings: HR P. 106 (The Bacchae)

Exam Week May 1-7
**Final Exam**