ORIGINS OF GREAT TRADITIONS  
HISTORY 2206  
MAYMESTER 2012

MTWThF 8:00-12:30
Social Science Building 2035

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Office: Social Science Building 4108  
Office phone: 770-423-6728  
Office hours: T, W, Th 12:30-2 or by appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

This course, required of all history majors at Kennesaw State, serves as an introduction to the origins of several of the world’s most important religious and intellectual traditions. It is designed to give exposure to ideas that have molded the past and continue to shape the way peoples across the globe live today. Particular emphasis will be placed on the points of intersection and contrast between these traditions and on the ways in which these modes of thought and belief continue to evidence themselves in the current day.

Our chief means of studying these traditions will be through the careful examination of primary sources. Most of our class time will be taken up with discussion of these texts. The primary task of the student in this class will be to engage in the careful consideration of this material, in both written and spoken form.

Texts:

- Numerous additional readings available on this course’s WEBCT-VISTA site and as hotlinks in the syllabus.

Required work

- Contribution to in-class discussions – 20%
  - The bulk of this course will consist of us as a class discussing texts and reflecting on the traditions that we are considering. It is essential that you come to class prepared to engage in creative and respectful discussion.
  - This grade may also include occasional class presentations and leadership of discussions.
  - You are permitted 1 absence in this course (remember that each day is the equivalent of 1 ½ weeks of class). Each absence beyond 1 will result in the loss of a full letter grade in your final grade. Medical documentation for absences must be submitted within two class days of the absence.
- Daily reading quizzes (7 total; I will drop the lowest grade) – 15%
- Midway exam on 5/18 - 25%
Final exam due on 5/22 - 40%

Grading scale: 90-100=A; 80-90=B; 70-80=C; 60-70=D; 60 & below=F

Missed exams and quizzes may be made up only with a documented medical excuse. There are no extra credit assignments in this course. Any grade appeals must be submitted to me in writing and within a week of receiving the grade.

**GeorgiaView Vista:** The rather cumbersomely named course management program that we use in this class is GeorgiaView Vista, which I will generally call “Blackboard.” As this is a seminar course based primarily on the close readings of texts, our use of Blackboard will be minimal. You can find this syllabus published at this class’ Blackboard site, as well as discussion boards for our reading. I will post directions for writing assignments there and will also from time to time make available items of interest pertinent to our study of these texts. Please also use the Blackboard mail system to ask me questions regarding course content, assignments and expectations.

**Ethical considerations:** I take instances of academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism very seriously – proof of such activity will result in a failing grade for the semester and a referral to the Office of Student Affairs. The bottom line about cheating and plagiarism is this: do not do it. It is not worth it – you can seriously damage your reputation among the faculty, your academic standing at this and other universities and your viability in the professional world. Please read the discussion of academic integrity that follows this syllabus – it includes relevant definitions and discussions of applicable penalties. Ignorance of the guidelines does not excuse violations.

Research has indicated that 40-60% of American college students reported cheating on examinations in college. Over half of the students who reported cheating in college were repeat offenders who used a variety of nefarious techniques to achieve their objective. While we assume the best of all students, we are also well aware of these realities.

Please read the statement on Academic Honesty in the Kennesaw State University Undergraduate Catalog on pages 243-4. 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.

I have questions about the integrity of your work, I will ask to meet with you. If outstanding questions remain, I will adhere to the policies above. **I reiterate: the penalty for cheating**
and/or plagiarism in this course is a failing grade for the semester. I will report all incidents of plagiarism to the Office of Student Affairs, and the incident will become part of your official record.

Accommodations for Disabled Students: A number of services are available to aid disabled students with their academic work. In order to make arrangements for such services, students should visit the Office of Disabled Student Support Services (Student Center 286A) and arrange an individual assistance plan. This must be done at the very beginning of the semester in order for proper accommodations to be made. Please note that appropriate documentation will be required.

Electronic equipment in class: I allow the use of laptops in class, but if you choose to use it for non-class related activities, I reserve the right to ban you from using them. I do not need to give you a warning. I have no objection to the use of recording devices in class – just please let me know if you intend to use them. Text messaging in class is strictly verboten – if I catch you doing so, I will ask you to leave for the rest of the class session. Similarly, should your cell phone ring, I will ask you to leave for the remainder of the class session. If a phone is needed for family or emergency reasons, please let the instructor know before class and set it to silent or pulse.

Student Deportment: I want my classroom environment to be rooted in a spirit of mutual respect. In striving to create a scholarly, collegial and efficient classroom environment for my students, I cannot and will not tolerate rude and obnoxious behavior such as social chatting, use of cell phones, pagers and Blackberries, reading of extraneous material such as newspapers, sleeping, and other antisocial activities. Please do not continue in this course if you intend to do any of these.

Discussing Religion: Please note that this course involves the extensive discussion of religious texts, ideas and beliefs which pertain to a variety of faith traditions. The approach I take will aim to privilege no particular set of beliefs (or disbelief). But I want to stress that the course will take religious faith seriously as a historical reality and as a current commitment of many students. It will also treat religious beliefs as ideas and thus subject to open and honest discussion. At no point, however, will I tolerate the critique of such ideas to become ad hominem attacks on any individual or their commitment to a belief system.

Class and Reading Schedule

NB This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. It is up to the student to stay abreast of any announced changes in the schedule of assignments and readings.

In general, in-class time will be dedicated to the discussion of texts – this means that much of the course content is dependent on students and their degree of preparation. Over the course of the semester, however, I will deliver several lectures that are designed to provide an overview to a course theme. These class meetings are indicated by (L) in the syllabus below.
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Introduction, Reading Primary Sources</td>
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<td>5/15</td>
<td>Ancient Indian Traditions</td>
<td>HR, 40-46, 60-69, 162-168</td>
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<td>5/16</td>
<td>India – the <em>Ramayana</em>; Buddhism in India and East Asia</td>
<td><em>The Ramayana</em> (entire); HR, 69-74, 155-162, 137-143; Zen Buddhist teachings (VISTA)</td>
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<td>Chinese Traditions: Confucius and Dao</td>
<td>HR, 24-32; 82-96, 128-136</td>
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<td>Inventions of the Greeks</td>
<td>HR 46-50, 96-105; “Allegory of the Cave” (VISTA); Excerpts from <em>Nichomachean Ethics</em> and <em>Politics</em></td>
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<td>HR 50-59, 168-174 HR 50-59, 168-174</td>
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<td>Developments in Christianity</td>
<td>HR, 224-231; Apostles’ Creed, Nicene Creed (on VISTA); Philip Jenkins, <em>“The Next Christianity”</em></td>
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