

History 2206: Origins of Great Traditions
Summer 2017

Dr. Ryan Ronnenberg

Social Science 3019

Tuesday/Thursday at 11 am

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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:

Tutuola, Amos, *The Palm Wine Drinkard and My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, New York: Grove Press, 1994.

Andrea, Alfred J. and Overfield, James H., *The Human Record: Sources of Global History, Vol. I: To 1700*, Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 2005. More recent editions are acceptable.

Assessment:

This course will assess your knowledge and skills in three, equally-weighted essay examinations. Attendance and participation will decide marginal cases.

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.

Attendance is mandatory. Success in the course will largely depend upon regular attendance and participation in class.

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 (May 30, June 1st)

Introductions, What is it that Historians do, anyway?, Tradition?

Readings: Herodotus, T.S. Eliot

Week Two (June 7, 9)

Defining Religion, Introducing South Asian Traditions

Reading: Clifford Geertz; Rig Veda, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads (*Human Record*)

Week Three (June 13, 15)

India (Continued), Buddhism, Introducing China, Confucius

Readings: (*Human Record*) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Law, The Poison Arrow, Confucian Analects

Week Four (June 20, 22)

China (Continued), Daoism, Legalism

Readings: (Human Record) Selections from the Dao de Jing, The Two Handles

First Midterm Exam

Week Five (June 27, 29)

Introducing the Religions of the book, Judaism, Christianity

Readings: Human Record: Genesis, Deuteronomy, Gospel of Matthew, Paul's Epistle to Romans

Week Six (July 4 [No Class], 6)

Christianity Continued, Islam

Readings: Find collected readings online

Second Midterm Exam

Week Seven (July 11, 13)

Introducing 'African' Cultural Traditions, Social structure, spirituality

Readings: *Palm Wind Drinkard*

Week Eight (July 18, 20)

Hellenic Thought

Reading: Human Record: Homer's *The Odyssey*, Plato's Apology, Pericles' Funeral Oration, The Bacchae

Final Exam