

Introduction to the Asian Intellectual History/History of Asian Philosophy

Professor: Viren Murthy

Meeting Time: Monday 3:30-5:25 pm

Location: This class will meet on-line until further notice

Email: vmurthy2@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Thursday 4:00-6:00 or by Appointment

Office Hours will be online through Blackboard Collaborate. Students can access this through Canvas. If you have any question please contact the instructor.

New Course Policies During Pandemic

Given that we are experiencing a pandemic and UW-Madison wants to ensure general safety, we require the following measures, if this class moves to be in-person at some point during the semester.

While on campus all employees and students are required to correctly wear appropriate and properly fitting face coverings while present in any campus building (or outdoors when physical distancing is not possible) unless working alone in a laboratory or office space.

Practice physical distancing (staying at least six feet apart from others), in both indoor and outdoor spaces, including when entering and exiting building and instructional spaces.

The Instructor will halt class if any student is not wearing a properly fitted mask or is not practicing physical distancing.

We also require students to wipe down their seats and desks after using them, so that they are ready for the next class. These will be provided in the class.

Students and the instructor are also required to leave the class as quickly as possible after the class.

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize our collective health and safety to keep ourselves, our campus, and our community safe. As a university community, we must work together to prevent the spread of the virus and to promote the collective health and welfare of our campus and surrounding community.

Accommodations for Students with Disability

Please notify the instructor during the first week of the semester if you have a documented requirement for accommodation in this course. If you have any questions about this or require any assistance, feel free to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center at 263-2741.

Credit Hours and Policy

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Course Description:

Is there philosophy in Asia? How is it different from “Western philosophy”? This course introduces the fundamental texts of Asian philosophy or Asian Intellectual History, while discussing the controversial nature of the question of whether we should read ancient and modern texts as philosophy or as intellectual history. Consequently, in addition to learning about the content of classics in Chinese, Indian and Japanese philosophy, students will inquire into parallels between Asian and European philosophy. Students will also get a sense of the difference between treating a text as philosophy and reading it as intellectual history.

To facilitate a historical understanding of Asian thought, the course will be divided into three parts. We will begin by reading texts, including Confucius' *Analects* (551-479BC), the *Laozi* (fl. 600 BC), among others. Through these texts, students will become familiar with certain basic concepts, including the Way (*Dao*), ritual, benevolence, Brahman and nothingness.

The second section of the course will examine how these and related concepts were reinterpreted by Asian thinkers in specific historical junctures. Scholars' reading and teaching Western philosophy often refer to conceptual shifts that took place during the modern period, (with philosophers, such as Descartes, Spinoza and Hume). In this course, we will ask whether we can speak of similar shifts in Asian intellectual history. This part of the course asks whether we can speak of an indigenous modernity in Asia and what the significance of such a modernity might be.

The final section of the course will move to the twentieth century and the contemporary period and examines the manner in which various scholars mobilized Asian thought against modernity and Western imperialism. In this context, we will examine Gandhi, Mao and the Kyoto School of philosophy.

Learning Objectives:

1. To provide students with a general introduction to and understanding of philosophy across cultures and regions and to gain a transnational perspective.
2. To provide students with the tools to ask questions about philosophy as having a history, which could be different in various parts of the world.
3. To help students to gain critical thinking and writing skills. In order to develop students' views on these issues, it is important to understand the difference between good and bad arguments, and to have the ability to critically and carefully analyze the arguments of others. This course should help students to write more sharply organized, focused and effective arguments.
4. This course will encourage people to use arguments to support one's own position after having understood the arguments and ideas of the various figures we study. Throughout the

class, students must carefully consider and examine arguments on their own terms and also be aware of different methods of persuasion.

Assignments:

In oral assignments students will convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.

Oral Assignment 1 and 2: Students will be required to present two readings in class and lead the discussion by asking questions. This will be good training for taking some complex ideas in the texts we read and making them relevant for us. These presentations should grasp the argument of the text and also articulate their own position with respect to this text.

Oral Assignment 3: Students give a longer oral presentation on their final paper. In addition to learning to present their own ideas orally, this presentation will allow them to receive feedback from both the instructor and other colleagues.

In written assignments, students will present original ideas in clearly expressed, persuasive arguments and narratives.

Writing Assignment 1: Students will be required to respond to the readings and post their comments on Canvas. These comments should be approximately 250 words. This assignment is not graded and is primarily for your own benefit. However, I will give students credit for doing these assignments. In these comments or posts, you are to identify the point of a given author and give reasons for why you agree or disagree. The assignment is due every Sunday evening by 5pm. It is important that you turn in your posts on time because the second part of this assignment requires every student to comment on one other student's post. This comment should be about 100 words and should engage with a point that the post is making. This second comment is due by 11 am on Monday. This should prepare us well for class discussion.

Writing Assignment 2: Students will write one short paper (5-7 pages) critically analyzing the readings during the first few weeks of the course.

Potential Topics: How does early modern thought relate to classical texts in Asian thought (you may choose China, Japan or India for your case study)?

How do Daoism and Confucianism deal with the problem of ethics and nature?

Students can also develop their own topics, but must have them approved by the instructor.

This is due on March 15

Written Assignment 3: Students will write a final paper (10-15 pages) on a topic of their choice related to the course and approved by the instructor. Students should have a draft or a substantial outline of the paper ready for peer review by April 15.

The final paper is due on May 3 by 5pm.

Graduate Student Option

Upon consulting with the instructor, students can opt to write one longer 20-25 page paper at the end of the semester instead of the two papers. I call this the graduate student option because

many graduate courses only require one seminar paper. However, I am open to extremely motivated undergraduates pursuing this option. In either case, the student must consult with the instructor.

Academic Misconduct:

We deal with academic misconduct severely. Papers with any plagiarized content will receive an “F” with no chance for a rewrite. If you directly copy more than five words in a row without citing their source, or if you include interpretations and conclusions that are not your own without citing their source, you are committing plagiarism even if you paraphrase. These principles must guide you whether your source is from printed or electronic sources and whether an author’s name is listed or not.

Meet the Professor Requirement:

Each Student is required to visit my office hours or make an appointment to see me twice during the semester. Before the second meeting, the might want to submit either an outline or a draft of their paper for discussion. The first meeting will take place during the fifth and sixth weeks. The second meeting will take place during the eleventh and twelfth weeks.

Grading:

Attendance, Participation, in Class Assignments and Weekly Reading Response and reply to peers comment 30 %

(A 200-250 word reading-response will be due on the Sunday by 5pm of every week. A reply or comment to a peer’s post is due by 11 am on Monday)

In-class Presentation #1 10%

In-class Presentation #2 10%

Oral Presentation of paper 10%

Mid-term paper 20 %

Final Paper 20%

(alternatively, a longer final paper will count for 40%)

Grading Scale:

94-100 A

90-93 AB

83-89 B

80-83 BC

73-79 C

70-73 CD

60-70 D

Below 60 F

Reading Schedule:

The texts for the course will all be found on campus. However, feel free to purchase the relevant material you would like.

PART I: Close Reading of Asian Philosophical Classics

Week I Jan. 25. Introduction: Assessing Asian Philosophy

John McCumber, "Hegel and China"
Roger Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics* (Introduction)

Optional:

David Hall and Roger Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Week 2 Feb. 1 Ritual and Morality: Confucius

Confucius, *Analects*, D.C. Lau trans. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1992. (May use another translation) Chapters 1-7
Zhou Li, *A History of Ancient Chinese Thought*, "Confucius"

Optional:

Mencius, *Mencius*, D.C. Lau trans. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984.

Week 3 Feb. 8 Contemplating the Way: Daoist Philosophy (1)

Laozi, *Dao De jing*, D.C. Lau trans. New York :Penguin Books, 1963. (May use another edition)
Steve Coutinho, *An Introduction to Daoist Philosophies*, New York :Columbia University Press, 2014. Chapter on Laozi
Wong, "Hegel's Critique of the Laozi"

Week 4 Feb. 15 Nature and Morality: Daoist Philosophy (2)

Zhuangzi. *Chuang-Tzū: the Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-Tzū*. London ; Boston :Allen & Unwin, 1981. Chapters 1-3

Coutinho, Chapter on Zhuangzi
Parkes, Lao-Zhuang and Nature

Optional:

Thomas Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*. Honolulu :University of Hawaii Press, 1985[1981].

Dogen, *Shobogenzo* [The Eye and Treasury of the True Law], edited by James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, John C. Maraldo. *Japanese Philosophy: a Sourcebook*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011.

Week 5 Feb. 22 Hinduism—From Vedanta to Modernity

Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedanta*
Ramanujan, *Speaking of Siva*, Penguin, 19-67.
Jonarden, *Philosophy in Early Modern India*, 1-11

Optional:

The Upanishads, introduced & translated by Eknath Easwaran; afterword by Michael N. Nagler. Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press, 2007.

Eliot Deutsch & Rohit Dalvi eds., *The Essential Vedanta: A New Source Book of Advaita Vedanta*. Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004.

Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Mind, Language, and World: the Collected Essays of Bimal Krishna Matilal*. New Delhi; New York :Oxford University Press, 2002. (selected chapters)

PART II EARLY MODERNITY IN ASIAN PHILOSOPHY

Week 6 March 1 The Emergence of the Heavenly Principle: Neo-Confucianism and Early Modernity in China

Peter Bol's book *Neo-Confucianism*, Chapter 5
Li Zehou, Chapter on Neo-Confucianism

Optional:

Zhu Xi [Chu His] and Lü Zuqian [Lu Tsu-ch'ien] comp., Chan Wing-tsit trans., *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Ivanhoe, Philip J. (trans.), 2009, *Readings from the Lu–Wang School of Neo–Confucianism*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.

Li Zhi, *A Book to Burn and a Book to Keep (Hidden)*, edited and translated by Rivi Handler-Spitz, Pauline C. Lee and Haun Saussy. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Mizoguchi Yuzo, “China as Method” and “The Philosophical Transformation of the Ming and Qing Dynasties.”

Week 7. March 8 Nature and Artifice: Early Modern Thought in Japan

Maruyama Masao, Maruyama Masao, *Studies In the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*. Princeton, N.J.:Princeton University Press, 1974.

Frederico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan*,

Optional

Ogyu Sorai, “Bendo”, and “Benmei”, in *Tokugawa Political Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Motoori Norinaga, “The Spirit of Renovation” in *Readings in Tokugawa Thought*, Chicago: Center for East Asian Studies, 1998.

PART III Asian Philosophy and Modernity

Week 8. March 15 Modernity in Japan—Rethinking Asia and Kyoto School

First Paper Due

Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Outline of the Theory of Enlightenment*

Nishida Kitaro, “New World Order”

Feenberg, “Nishida and Modernity”

Optional:

Murthy, Okakura, Fukuzawa and Hegel

The Kyoto School's Takeover of Hegel

Harootunian and Najita, “Japan’s Revolt Against the West”

Nishitani Keiji, *Religion and Nothingness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Harry Harootunian, *Overcome By Modernity: History, Culture, and Community in Interwar Japan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.

James W. Heisig, & John C. Maraldo eds., *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995. (selected articles)

Week 9. March 22 Gandhi and Postcolonialism

M.K Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (the main text)

Ajay Skaria, book on Gandhi, Preface and Introduction

Week 10 March 29 Mao, the Dialectic and the Chinese Revolution

Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction"
Pang Laikwan, "Mao and Dialectical Materialism"
Fabian Heubel, "Beyond Murderous Dialectics"

Optional

Maurice Meisner, *Intellectual Biography of Mao*,

Week 11 April 5. Indigenizing the Dialectic: Chinese Responses to Hegel

Peter Button on Shiyong Zhang
Zhang Shiyong, "Rational Kernel in Hegel's Dialectic"
Stephen Houlgate, *The Opening of the Logic*, Selections

Week 12 April 12. Rethinking World Order: Wang Hui and Zhao Tingyang

Zhao Tingyang, *Redefining Philosophy for World Governance*
Wang Hui, "Twentieth Century China as Object of Thought"

April 15: Rough draft or outline of paper to be given to peer.

Week 13 April 19.

Presentations

Week 14 April 26.

Presentations

May 3, Final Paper Due by 11:59 pm