

**Philosophies of the East**  
**REL 3310**  
**MWF 1-1:50**  
**J309**

**Purpose:** This course examines the history and teachings of major Eastern Religions. Emphasis will be placed on the variety of texts, concepts, and thinkers that constitute the multifarious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Discussions on Hinduism will range from the aboriginal Earth-worshipping cultures of the Indus Valley Civilization to the Vedic Age and from the Upanishadic period to the Age of Devotion. Gods such as Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva, concepts such as moksha, maya, and dharma, works from the Rig Veda to the Gita, and thinkers from Shankara to Gandhi will be covered. Examination of Buddhism will begin with Buddha's dismissal of his Brahmin heritage and include his enlightenment and teachings. Variations of Theravada, Mahayana, Tibetan, and Zen Buddhism will be examined, while concepts such as nirvana, Buddha-nature, and the Four Noble Truths and sources from the Dhammapada to the Dalai Lama will be explored. Daoism will be traced from its shamanic Earth wisdom traditions to the Yijing and Daode Jing to the Zhuangzi and the 180 Precepts. Concepts such as Dao, qi, wu-wei, ziran, and yin-yang will be examined and Daoism's relationship to Confucianism will also be explored. Also, we will examine texts and interpretations of those texts as they relate to a variety of contemporary cultural contexts that can be applied viably to practical issues that concern us today.

**Texts:** *Asian Philosophies*, John Koller. Handouts, reserve readings, and online sources.

**Requirements:** Attendance and Participation (10%), two exams (40%), one 2,000 word paper (30%), three personal essays (approximately 800 words each) via Email based on "outside" assignments such as books or movies (15%), and two presentations (5%).

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of the course the student should have knowledge of the ways in which Eastern philosophy and contemporary perspectives share theoretical and practical approaches to the human-nature dialogue. Students will be expected to grasp, discuss, and write about the fundamental similarities in the ways in which Hindu, Buddhist, and Daoist texts, concepts, and rites relate to notions such as the self, nature, and the sacred. Students will be charged with contemplating how those notions mirror the aims of disciplines such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, and ecopsychology. Along with a formal paper and presentation regarding those perspectives, students will be encouraged to discuss passionately and tolerantly many of the issues that concern human purpose in an environmental context. Besides gaining familiarity with major names and concepts involved in the area of study, students will engage their own views and values in regard to the material.

**Topic Schedule:**

**Week One:** Course introductions and discussion of historical perspectives. Chapter 1 of *Asian Philosophies*. We will discuss traditional and contemporary perspectives regarding the relationship between religious traditions and nature, the sacred, and the self. We will also discuss the role and function of religion, symbols and archetypes, and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of religion. We will

examine shamanism and various rituals as well as general patterns in earth wisdom traditions.

**Week Two:** Hinduism, Chapters 2 and 3. We will discuss the evolution of Hinduism in terms of its four major periods (Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic Age, Upanishadic Age, and Age of Devotion), and the major concepts, gods, and scriptures that exemplify the evolution. Focus will be on the Upanishads and will include a discussion of the relationship of Hinduism to Jainism.

**Week Three:** Hinduism, Chapters 4 and 8, and film. After viewing a documentary on Hinduism, we will discuss Bhakti yoga and the Bhagavad Gita, social practices from sati to the caste system, the evolution of the Hindu Trimurti as well as the Age of Devotion.

**Week Four:** Hinduism, Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 10. We will examine the dualistic theory of Samkhya-Yoga, Hindu evolutionary and epistemological theories, and the relevance of Hindu thought for contemporary culture. We will also explore theories and teachings related to Mimamsa, Vedanta, Shankara, Gandhi, Aurobindo, and Radhakrishnan. **First Email essay due.**

**Week Five:** Buddhism, Chapters 11 and 12. We will discuss the life of Buddha and his teachings, and the four schools of Buddhism (Theravada, Mahayana, Tibetan, and Zen) and their major concepts and practices—including their differences and similarities.

**Week Six:** Buddhism Chapters 13, 14, and 15. We will discuss certain Buddhist texts such as the Dhammapada, and view a film. We will continue with the four schools and examine notions related to Interdependent Arising, Mindfulness, and the wheel of becoming, teachings of the Sarvativadins related to abhidharma, and Diamond Sutra and the Perfection of Wisdom Tradition.

**Week Seven:**

Buddhism, Chapters 16, 17, and 18. We will discuss Madhyamaka and the teachings of Nagarjuna, Yogacara and the relationship of being and consciousness, and Zen—including its major concepts and teachings. We will end with an overview of a number of scholars who have shown the contemporary relevance of Buddhism for Western culture, including its environmentally sound worldview and practices. **Second Email essay due.**

**Week Eight:** Presentations, **Paper Outline due**, Review, and **Midterm Exam.**

**Week Nine:** Chinese Philosophies, Chapters 19 and 20. We will examine Chinese thought, including its shamanic origins, and explore Confucian humanism—including its major concepts and interplay with Daoism throughout Chinese culture. Handouts on the evolution of key concepts such as Dao, yin and yang, qi, and wu-wei.

**Week Ten:** Daoism, Chapters 21. We will discuss the evolution of Daoism from the earth wisdom tradition of the *Yijing* to philosophy of the *Daode jing* along with relevant names, practices, concepts, and time periods. We will continue our contrast Taoism and Confucianism. Also emphasized will be the historical and thematic relationship between the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*, and the overall aim of both—including Zhuangzi's description of the perfect time of nature before distinction and his utilization of animals as key figures in his work.

**Week Eleven:** Daoism, Chapter 23 and handouts. We will continue with the nature of Daoism and discuss its teachings regarding nature's patterns as they relate to acupuncture, feng shui, alchemy, martial arts, and the spiritual in the natural.

**Week Twelve:** Handouts regarding an overview of ways in which ecology and Daoist themes overlap in terms of epistemological and spiritual truth claims. We will also explore wu-wei and its applicability to ways of healing the West's dysfunctional environmental relations; the role of environmental ethics and deep ecology in determining textual resonance within Daoist texts; and conclude with views regarding Daoism and contemporary culture. **Third Email essay due.**

**Week Thirteen:** Student presentations.

**Week Fourteen:** Student presentations.

**Week Fifteen:** Student presentations.

**Week Sixteen:** Review, **Final Exam, and Paper Due.**

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If you have special needs or a disability for which accommodations may be appropriate to assist you in this class, please contact Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), [dss@uwf.edu](mailto:dss@uwf.edu), (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

The schedule, requirements, and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of unusual or extenuating circumstances. In such cases, students will be provided with written notice sufficient to plan for and accommodate the changes. If the college closes for inclement weather or other emergency, any exams, presentations or projects or papers due during the closure period will automatically be rescheduled for the first regular class meeting held once the college re-opens.

Expectations for Academic Conduct/Plagiarism Policy:

Academic Conduct Policy: (Web Format) / (PDF Format) / (RTF Format)

Plagiarism Policy: (Word Format) / (PDF Format) / (RTF Format)

Student Handbook: (PDF Format)

## Word Bank for Taoism and Ecology

Romanizations of Chinese terms follow the Pinyin system except for those marked by an asterisk (\*), which follow Wade-Giles

### Terms

animism  
anthropocentrism  
biocentrism/ecocentrism  
Being/Not-Being (*you/wu*)  
biophilia/bioempathy/topophilia  
calabash, or bottle gourd  
Confucianism  
*Dao*  
*Daojia*  
*Daojiao*  
*de*  
Deep Ecology  
dialectic  
dualism  
ecofeminism  
ecology  
ecosystem  
environmentalism  
*fengshui*  
hermeneutics  
hieros gamos (world parents) myths  
*hsiang sheng\**  
*K'un and Ch'ien\**  
*li*  
*neidan* (internal alchemy)  
*q i (chi\*)*  
*qigong*  
return to the beginning  
*shamanism*  
*Shangqing* (Highest Clarity)  
syncretism  
*Taiji (Tai chi\*)*  
*Ti*  
*Tien*  
uncarved block  
water (as a metaphor for Dao)

*wuwei*  
*yin/yang*  
*wuxing*  
*ziran (tzu-jan\*)*

### Texts

*Baopuzi*  
*Huainanzi*  
*Liezi*  
*Taiping jing*  
*Daode jing*  
One Hundred and Eighty Precepts  
*Yijing (I Ching\*)*  
*Zhuangzi*

### Mythological figures

Fu Hsi and Nu Kua\*  
*Huangdi (yellow emperor)*  
*Huang-Lao*  
*Hundun*  
Laozi  
Shu and Hu  
*Zhuangzi*

### Related authors

Roger Ames  
Thomas Berry  
J. Baird Callicott  
Bill Devall  
Norman Girardot  
Ge Hong  
Ursula K. Le Guin  
Aldo Leopold  
Arnae Naess  
George Sessions  
Alan Watts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Taoism and Ecology Midterm

### I. Fill in the blanks (2 points each).

1. The Chinese term for the philosophical (as opposed to the religious) tradition in Daoism is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The term “\_\_\_\_\_”, coined by Ernst Haeckel in 1866, refers to the branch of science that studies the distribution of living organisms and especially their interactions with their environment.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ is the Daoist art of “site orientation methods [that] purport to locate and characterize qi in the physical plane”.
4. Sought as the ultimate goal of Ge Hong’s alchemical practices, \_\_\_\_\_ (the Chinese term for ‘immortality’) could be achieved by “ingesting the marvelous”.
5. “Cultural strip mining” and “confrontational” describe two kinds of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The contemporary deep ecologist, \_\_\_\_\_ “maintain[s] that Daoism is the ideology we need if we are to save the environment”.
7. One who has ‘returned to the beginning’ achieves a primordial state of unity that precludes all distinctions, a condition known as “\_\_\_\_\_”.
8. The Chinese term, “\_\_\_\_\_” might be translated as ‘doing without doing’ or ‘non-action’.
9. Characterized as feminine, dark, and mysterious, \_\_\_\_\_ complements \_\_\_\_\_, the male, rational side of the Daoism’s most well-known symbol of nature’s bipolarities.
10. According to chapter 6 of the *Daode jing*, “The valley has a spirit that will never die; it is called the primal \_\_\_\_\_.”
11. The legendary Yellow Emperor, known as \_\_\_\_\_, wrote the *Yinfu jing*.
12. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a collection of rules that includes a number of environmental proscriptions such as “You should not dry up wet marshes.”
13. \_\_\_\_\_ and Fu Hsi are the world parents in Daoist mythology.
14. Qi flows through meridians called in Daoist mythology “\_\_\_\_\_”.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ is said to have written the *Daode jing*.

II. **Minor Essay (20 points)**. With an eye to examining both the elements of the Daoist tradition as well as current ecological value, interpret **ONE** of the following verses from the *Daode jing*:

1. Chapter 42. *Dao gave birth to the One. The One gave birth to the Two. The Two gave birth to the Three. And the Three gave birth to the ten thousand things. The ten thousand things carry yin on their backs and wrap their arms around yang. Through the blending of qi they arrive at a state of harmony.*

2. Chapter 28. *Know the male, yet keep to the female: Receive the world in your arms. If you receive the world, the Dao will never leave you, and you will return to the state of infancy. Know the white, yet keep to the black: Be a pattern for the world. If you are a pattern for the world, virtue will be yours, and you will return to the simplicity of the uncarved block.*

III. **Major Essay**—answer **ONE** of the following (**50 points**).

1. Describe the evolution of Daoism and its ecological foundations in terms of the World Parents myth, shamanic practices related to health and ‘immortality’, and the divination practices of the *Yijing (I Ching\*)*.

2. Discuss the hermeneutical concerns pertinent to addressing Daoism through an ecological lens. Address the complexity of Daoism, its exploitation in academia and popular culture, and the need for recognizing our roles as interpreters and shapers of cultural narratives.

3. Discuss the ecological themes found in two of the following texts: the 180 Precepts, the *Taiping jing*, the *Baopuzi neipan* (by Ge Hong), and the *Yinfu jing*. Include in your discussion the role of human beings in the cosmic ecology, the spiritual ecology of the inner landscape, and the Daoist religious problematic of the human transcendence of nature and our implication in it.

4. Describe the relationship between ecological and Daoist contexts and concepts in terms of survival through cooperative adaptation, mutualism and identification, and survival through benefiting our hosts. Include in your discussion folk ecology, bioempathy, the philosophy of qi, and the metaphor of the garden.

The branch of Buddhism which treats the Buddha as a deity and promotes devotional reverence to him is called \_\_\_\_\_ Buddhism.

## Word Bank

### **Terms**

*Tao/Dao*

*te/de*

*tzu jan/ziran*

*wu-wei*

*wuxing*

*hsiang sheng/xiang sheng*

*yin/yang*

*ch'i/qi*

*li*

*yi*

*jen*

complementarity of opposites

facelessness

return to the beginning

alchemy

shamanism

acupuncture

Traditional Chinese Medicine

*fengshui*

*Hsiao/xiao*

100 Schools

Confucianism

Ten-thousand things

relativity of distinctions

primordial paradise

uncarved block

*Tai chi/taiji*

*Qian*

*Kun*

### **Texts**

*Zuangzi/Chuang Tzu*

*Tao Te Ching/Daode jing*

*I Ching/Yijing*

*Lun Yu (Analects)*

### **Related Figures**

Fu Xi/Fu Hsi

Nu Gua/Nu Kua

Zhuangzi/Chuang Tzu

Confucius

Lao Tzu/Laozi

Alan Watts

Fritjof Capra



## Word Bank for Philosophies of the East

### **Hinduism**

#### **yogas**

jñana  
raja  
dharma  
bhakti  
tantric

#### **gods**

Shiva  
Vishnu  
Kali  
Krishna  
Brahman  
Durga  
Prithivi  
Agni

#### **varnas**

Brahmin  
kshatriya  
vaishya  
shudra

#### **major concepts**

maya  
moksha  
ahimsa  
samsara  
karma  
dharma  
tat tvam asi  
guna  
prakriti  
purusha  
atman  
samadhi  
dvaita  
advaita  
vishistadvaita  
bodhisattva

#### **texts**

Vedas  
Upanishads  
Bhagavad Gita

#### **philosophical schools**

Nyaya-Vaisheshika  
Samkhya  
Mimamsa  
Vedanta

#### **Four Ages of Hinduism**

IVC  
Vedic Age  
Upanishadic Age  
Age of devotion

#### **Major figures**

Gandhi  
Aurobindo  
Radhakrishnan

### **Buddhism**

#### **major figures**

Siddhartha Gautama  
Nagarjuna  
Dogen  
Thich Nhat Hanh

#### **major concepts**

dukkha  
the Four Sights  
Four Noble Truths  
The Eightfold Path  
mindfulness  
dhamma  
nirvana  
arhat  
tathata  
sunyata  
bodhisattva

pratitya  
samutpada/interdependent  
arising  
Abhidharma  
Tathagata  
koan  
haiku

#### **Four Branches of Buddhism**

Mahayana  
Theravada  
Vajrayana/Tibetan  
Zen

#### **philosophical schools**

Sarvastivada  
Madhyamaka  
Perfection of Wisdom  
Yogacara

#### **Texts**

Heart sutra  
Diamond sutra  
Dhammapa