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ENG 3110-002: Cultural Foundations II: India, China and the Middle East

Dannie Otto
Eastern Illinois University

Michael Loudon
Eastern Illinois University

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Cultural Foundations II: India, China and the Middle East

Course Description: This course introduces students to the cultural foundations of India, China and the Middle East through literary, philosophical and sacred texts that have helped shape and define these civilizations. In the first segment on India, we shall consider the Upanishads to discuss Brahmanism and the development of Hinduism, then continue with an introduction to the epic *Mahabharata* and follow with a close reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*. From classical Hinduism, we shall consider the basic doctrines of Buddhism, with a particular emphasis on Zen practice and approaches to Buddhism. The second segment examines Chinese civilization through the study of Confucius and his ideals of self and humanity and through the study of Taoism as reflected in the works of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. The final segment focuses on the civilizations of the Middle East by first considering Arab culture and the dawn of Islam through substantial excerpts from *The Qur'an*. Next, we shall turn to Sufi spiritualism through short readings from Rumi, Lalla, Hafiz and Kabir.

Course Format: As instructors in a team-taught interdisciplinary course, we shall provide introductory contexts for our readings through lectures and responses that we hope will provoke your questions and comments so that discussion can become an integral aspect of our time in class. Exploring these traditions in reference to Western philosophical issues and literary themes whenever appropriate, we encourage you to relate your questions and perceptions to your own experiences and beliefs by focusing on differences and similarities. What are the implications for these systems of thought? Do these cultural ideas and traditions help illuminate current socio-political and cultural events?

Course Texts:

Reza Aslan, *No god but God*
W. T. Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*
N. J. Dawood, *The Koran* (5th ed. 1990)
E. Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita*
Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, Victor H. Mair, ed.
W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*
Rumi, *The Essential Rumi*, Coleman Barks, trans.

Prerequisite: All students must have completed ENG 1002C, 1092 or the equivalent.

Course Requirements and Grading: Requirements and Grading:

The course format will be informal lecture and exploratory discussion; course requirements will consist of three essay examinations (20% each, including the final) and two five-to-six page essays (15% each) [90%] as well as participation (10%)—consisting of discussion, quizzes and written responses to reading assignments.

To encourage preparatory reading, regular (on average, once a week) short writing assignments on the assigned reading or short quizzes will be given. These will be several paragraphs in length and will address some aspect of the reading assignment, will be due (or

given) at the beginning of class and will not be accepted on a make-up basis. Quizzes will generally consist of one or two paragraphs on a straightforward question based on the assigned reading. Both will be returned marked with a check to show acceptable performance or an X to indicate unacceptable performance. These assignments/quizzes will not be factored directly into the final grade percentage, except as an element of participation. They are, however, a *required* part of the course, and a student who does not complete them *will not have met the course requirements*. Students will be allowed three missed assignments or inadequate quizzes.

All course materials to be graded will be divided equally between the instructors, rotating sets for subsequent assignments until the end of the term. (Group 6 in the English Department requirements.)

Please note that adjustments to the *syllabus* will be ongoing, and students (if absent) may check changes and download handouts from WebCT. You can access the WebCT site for this course by clicking on WebCT at www.eiu.edu. This course is listed as PHI3110GDLO—Cultural Foundations II. (See the menu under "College of Arts and Humanities.")

Office Hours: Dannie Otto Phone: 581-6947 Office: Lawson 319
(or at home and leave a message: (217) 365-9674)
TR 11:00-12:00; 3:30-4:30; or, by appointment
Email: dlotto@eiu.edu

Michael Loudon Phone: 6312 Office: CH3361 (314D)
TR 1:00-2:00; or, by appointment; Email: mdloudon@eiu.edu
In African American Studies, Blair 3165; Phone: 581-5719
or 581-6433; MW 10-12; 3-4; or, by appointment.
**(Please check before coming unannounced: frequent meetings
require missing office hours, unexpectedly, too often.)**

General Policies:

Grading Standards: We shall follow the EIU English Department Guidelines, distributed in class. In all cases, we shall use a plus and minus system to distinguish, say, a high *B* from a low one.

Attendance: We do take roll, and we evaluate attendance only indirectly in the context of your participation in the course.

Conferences: These are at your request unless we ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don't wait until the last couple of weeks of class.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number. Exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an *A* essay due on Friday will be an *F* by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see one of us.

Plagiarism:

The English Department Policy

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If we discover an act of plagiarism, we shall exercise the right to the fullest extent possible. (See *The Blair Handbook* (4th ed), pp. 505-518, for a further discussion of what constitutes plagiarism and how to integrate properly your material from sources.)

Academic Dishonesty:

Obviously, any act of cheating other than plagiarism will also carry an academic penalty, that to be determined by Judicial Affairs, depending upon the dishonest act and the circumstances.

Information for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

English/Philosophy 3110G

Spring 2007

Section 002: Dannie Otto/Michael Loudon

TR 1400-1515 CH2731

Syllabus--Cultural Foundations II: India, China and the Middle East*January*

T 9: Course Introduction and Organization

R 11: **Hindu and Buddhist Thought**Kena and Katha *Upanishads* from Radhakrishnan and Moore, A
Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy, pp. 41-50.Radhakrishnan and Moore, "The Mahabharata" (pp. 99-100; 164-171)
(handouts)T 16: *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. E. Easwaran: "Introduction"; chapters 1-2

R 18: (continued); chapters 3-7

T 23: (continued); chapters 8-12

R 25: (continued); chapters 13-18

T 30: W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught**February*

R 1: (continued)

T 6: (continued)

R 8: The Japanese expression of Buddhism: Zen
"The Story of My Hut" (handout)T 13: **Essay examination (#1) on Hinduism and Buddhism**R 15: **Chinese Thought** (Dr. Lee)Confucius, from W. T. Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*:
"The Great Learning" (pp. 84-94); "The Doctrine of the Mean" (pp.
95-114); "The Humanism of Confucius" [*The Analects*] (pp. 14-48)

T 20: (continued)

R 22: (continued)

T 27: (continued)

*March*R 1: Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, V. H. Mair, trans. **Essay #1 Due**

T 6: (continued)

R 8: (continued)

Spring Break (March 12-16)

T 20: Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, V. H. Mair, trans.

R 22: **Essay examination (#2) on Confucianism and Taoism**

T 27: **Arabic and Islamic Thought**

[Please note that a mandatory field trip will be scheduled during this segment; the date and details are pending and will be announced. Further, detailed readings in this segment will be added in a revised syllabus.]

R 29: Early Arabic poetry

April

T 3: The Five Pillars of Islam

R 5: video: *The Five Pillars of Islam*

T 10: *The Holy Qur'an* (suras 1, 5, 9, 12, 74, 89, 92, 93, 106, 114)

R 12: (continued)

T 17: Sufism and Sufi poetry; video *Rumi*

R 19: (continued)

T 24: Women in Islam

R 26: **Essay Examination (#3) on Islamic Thought**
Essay #2 Due

There is no final examination.

*****Please note:** We may—from time to time—alter slightly the above syllabus, so please be sure that you keep abreast of developments in the class.