

Cleveland State University
PHL 255 Non Western Philosophy 4 credits
Professor: Mary Ellen Waithe, Ph.D.
T/TH 1:00-2:50

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Syllabus

Course Description: This course provides an overview of traditional non-western philosophies including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jain, Carvaka, Vedantic, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Moism, Taoism, Shinto, Zen, Ibo, Akan, Massai, Baswara, Aboriginal, Koyukon, Ojibway, Mayan and Islam.

Gen Ed Requirements met: Arts & Humanities
Skill Areas Writing, Critical Thinking

Text: Bonevac, Daniel, Understanding Non-Western Philosophy McGraw-Hill, 2005 reprint of 1993 edition.

Course Requirements: 40% of your grade is based on class participation that provides evidence of critical thinking; 60% of your grade is based on written work that provides evidence of critical thinking and writing competence. Participation requires attendance, participation in class discussions including group work and worksheets that indicates that assigned readings have been completed prior to class and have been given your thoughtful attention as indicated by your questions and comments that go beyond a mere memorization of reading content. You are expected to cultivate insight into the material, analyze it, recognize its relevance and usefulness. Papers topics will be assigned and the assignment distributed on the last day we discuss philosophies of particular civilizations. Students must complete any 3 of the 5 writing assignments. The first four are papers requiring research. The fifth is a take-home final exam that, while philosophically more sophisticated than the papers, does not require outside research. All writing is expected to analyze and synthesize philosophical theories, comparing theories to each other, and applying those theories to the assigned contemporary issue. I NEVER accept late papers, diskettes, pdf files or email attachments. Papers must be submitted as hard copy in class, typed, and electronically as MSWord files to turnitin.com. Papers must follow the guidelines in the How to Write a Philosophy Paper (emailed) as well as answer the assigned questions relative to the assigned philosophies. Choose which papers you wish to write based on the due dates and the philosophies that are of most interest to you.

- #1 2/7 Ancient African philosophy
- #2 3/4 Indian philosophy
- #3 4/8 Chinese & Japanese philosophy
- #4 4/24 Aboriginal, Koyukon, Ojibway & Mayan

#5 Final Exam date: Medieval African and Middle Eastern Islamic analytic philosophy

- T 1/15 Introduction, overview of course content and requirements. Handout: Baswara worksheet.
Film: *The Gods Must be Crazy*.
- Th 1/17 Bring completed Baswara Worksheet to class. Discussion of philosophical perspectives in film.
- T 1/22 Emailed: Akan and Ibo philosophical thought.
- Th 1/24 Emailed: Massai philosophical thought.
- T 1/29 Egyptian & Ethiopian thought. Bonevac text: Conversation between a Man and his Baa
- Th 1/31 Bonevac text: The Instruction of Any
- T 2/5 Persia: Emailed: Excerpts from Zoroaster
- Th 2/7 **Paper #1 Ancient African thought DUE.** Class discussion: Indian thought:
Emailed: Jain
- T 2/19 Bonevac text: Hindu philosophy
- Th 2/21 Bonevac text: Indian Buddhist philosophy
- T 2/26 Bonevac text: Caravaka skepticism
- Th 2/28 Review of Indian philosophies. Q&A and discussion.
- T 3/4 **Paper #2 Indian thought DUE. Introduction to Chinese philosophies. No assigned reading**
- Th 3/6 Bonevac text: Chinese Buddhism
- T 3/18 Bonevac text: Confucianism
- Th 3/20 Bonevac text: Taoism
- T 3/25 Bonevac text: Moism
- Th 3/27 Emailed: Shinto, Mayahana, Tendai basic concepts and terminology.
- T 4/1 Bonevac text: Zen; review of Chinese & Japanese philosophies
- Th 4/3 Aboriginal thought. Emailed: readings courtesy of Doug Morgan, Ph.D., University of South Australia.
- T 4/8 **Paper #3 Chinese & Japanese thought Due!**
Aboriginal Thought: dreamings lecture and exercises.
- Th 4/10 Ojibway thought: Bonevac text: "The Woman who married a Beaver" and other legends
- T 4/15 Koyukon thought: Emailed: Basic concepts, terminology.
- Th 4/17 Mayan Cosmology.
- T 4/22 Bonevac text: Al Farabi
- Th 4/24 **Paper #4: Aboriginal, Koyukon, Ojibway & Mayan thought DUE!**
- T 4/29 Bonevac text: Al Kindi
- Th 5/1 Ibn Sina: ECR: excerpt from the logic

Final Exam Date: Take home final paper (#5) DUE in our classroom.

Gen Ed Requirements:

Arts and Humanities: Criteria

1. Courses must be offered at the 100/200 level in an arts and humanities discipline including but not limited to English, History, Philosophy, Art History, Music History, Religious Studies, or Modern Languages. Courses offered in other disciplines may be approved if they meet the other conditions indicated below.
2. Courses must provide students with background knowledge and analytical skills that will allow them to:
 - a. Demonstrate understanding of how human beings interpret, translate, and represent diverse experiences of the world through language, literature, the historical record, philosophical systems, images, sounds, and performances.
 - b. Apply that understanding to the study of the human condition, cultural heritage, cultural artifacts, creativity, and history.

****Additional criterion for courses NOT specifically focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa or the Middle East:**

Courses must be survey courses that provide an overview of a broad topic or field of knowledge.

****Additional criteria for courses focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa and/or the Middle East:**

1. The primary focus of the course must be on a society or societies in Asia, Latin America, Africa and/or the Middle East. Courses that compare these societies to those of North America and/or Europe may be approved only if the majority of the course material concerns the first group of societies and the principal purpose of the course is to improve students' understanding of those societies.
2. Content must be presented from the perspective(s) of the societies being studied, not simply European and/or American perceptions of those societies.

This course meets the Writing Skill criteria:

To qualify in the skill area of writing a course must:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of writing.
2. Include writing assignments that directly relate to the course goals.
3. Include instruction in writing-to-learn and/or writing-to-communicate. While writing-to-learn emphasizes the student's

experience, writing-to-communicate highlights the reader's experience. Both are necessary to produce a thoughtful text that observes academic writing's conventions.¹

4. Require that students write a total of 2,000 words (8 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in multiple assignments.
5. Assign writing throughout the semester.

This course meets the Critical Thinking Skill criteria:

To qualify in the skill area of critical thinking a course must:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.
2. Require students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring:
 - a. higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation); **OR**
 - b. skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g. finding information to solve a problem); **OR**
 - c. the recognition of the importance and usefulness of knowledge and skills gained in the course (e.g. recognize the ability to and importance of working with others to solve intellectual problems).

To qualify in the skill area of critical thinking a course must:

3. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.
4. Require students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring:
 - a. higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation); **OR**
 - b. skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g. finding information to solve a problem); **OR**

¹ Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.

c. the recognition of the importance and usefulness of knowledge and skills gained in the course (e.g. recognize the ability to and importance of working with others to solve intellectual problems).