**Great Books V – Asian Great Books**

**GSHU 425.01**

**Spring 2010**

**Goals**: This course is designed for students who have completed at least two semesters of the Great Books Colloquium. Using the shared inquiry method, it extends the Great Books conversation to classic great texts and ideas of the East, including literary, philosophical, and religious texts, in English translation. Special attention will be given to the religious traditions of Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism – and, in Endo’s *Silence*, to the encounter between Christianity and Japanese religion and culture. As we encounter and enter into dialogue with these complex works, we will be able to broaden, deepen, and enrich our views of these cultures as they too reflect the universal human search for the true, the good, and the beautiful.

**Instructor**

Don Thompson, 310.506.4831, RAC 132, [thompson@pepperdine.edu](mailto:thompson@pepperdine.edu), <http://dt.pepperdine.edu/>

**Office Hours**

M 1-2, T 1-2, R 1-2, F 9-10

**Reading List & Discussion Schedule**

* ***Mahabharata.* Trans. C.V. Narasimhan. (5)**
* ***Bhagavad-gita*. Trans. Barbara Stoler Miller. (2)**
* ***Mencius*. Trans. D.C. Lau. (2)**
* ***Han Fei Tzu* Trans: Burton Watson*.* (2)**
* ***Tao Te Ching*. Trans. Stephen Addis and Stanley Lombardo. (1)**
* ***Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings*. Trans. Burton Watson. (3)**
* **Kamo-no-Chomei, *Hojoki: Visions of A Torn World.* Trans. Yasuhiko** **Moriguchi and David Jenkins. (2)**
* **Shikibu Murasaki, *The Tale of Genji* (abridged). Trans. Edward Seidensticker. (2)**
* **Matsuo Basho, *The Narrow Road to The Deep North*. Trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa. (1)**
* **Matsuo Basho, *On Love and Barley: Haiku.* Trans. Lucien Stryk. (1)**
* **Natsume Soseki, *Kokoro.* Trans. Edwin McCellan. (2)**
* **Shusaku Endo, *Silence.* Trans. William Johnston. (2)**

**Discussion (10%)**

Each student is expected to be participatory on a daily basis. Make it a consistent habit to be prepared with several interpretive questions daily. Your participation will be graded each day based on the quality, quantity, insight, textual application and knowledge that you offer.

**Class Cancellation Days**

No class on February 4 or March 25. For these days, class will not meet, but I expect you to keep up with the reading.

**Attendance**

You have two free absences beyond the cancellation dates just listed. After that, your final course grade will be lowered 1.5% per absence. Use the two free ones wisely.

**Short Writing Assignments (15%)**

Each short writing assignment is based on a prompt given by the instructor, as a function of the current reading material we are covering. Each paper is to be two pages in length, and is to be turned at the beginning of class on hard copy adhering to basic MLA format. The papers are due on the following dates: January 18; February 1, 22; March 29; April 12, 19. Late papers receive a score of zero. NO ELECTRONIC SUBMITTALS. Be prepared to share your writing with the class – that is, be prepared both to receive and to give constructive criticism.

The nature of each short writing assignment will be determined by the instructor. They each will be one of the following: interpretive/analytic, genre mode, great ideas based, instructor wildcard, or student freestyle. Aim for professional quality writing worthy of publication, wherein there is a distinct thesis, a clear argument, and creative thought. Use text judiciously and with discrimination. Avoid using first person. Be sure to form a definite position that can be explicated via the text. You may only use texts from the Great Books Colloquium reading list. Each paper should be a product of analytical thought and careful analysis presented in a creative form. Each paper will be graded as follows: Title and Opening – 1 point, Thesis – 3 points, Argument – 3 points, Text Selection and Analysis – 2 points, Editing – 1 point. Total – 10 points.

**Extended Writing (75%)**

You must complete three extended writing assignments, in the form of papers that represent a fully developed version of one or more of your biweekly writing assignments.

The first paper, worth 15%, is to be 4 -5 pages in length, and is to be based solely on **Mahabharata & Bhagavad-gita**. This paper is due **January February 13 at 11:59 p.m.**

The second paper, worth 30%, is to be 8-9 pages in length, and is to be based on **all of the Chinese works**. This paper is due by **March 20 at 11:59 p.m.**

The last paper, worth 30%, is to be 8-9 pages in length, and is to be based on **all of the Japanese works.** This paper is due by **April 29 at 11:59 p.m.**

Each extended writing submittal is graded on the following basis:

Thesis

Thesis Statement 10

Well Structured Plan 10

Analysis

Thesis Execution 10

Logical Completeness 5

Logical Flow 5

Text

Appropriately Chosen 10

Sufficiently Explained 10

Risk/Interest

Interesting Reading 10

Creativity 5

Strong Conclusion 5

Language

Mature Vocabulary 5

Varied/Interesting

Sentence Structure 5

Mechanics

Punctuation 5

Spelling 5

**Total 100**

**Anonymity**

All writing is to be submitted with no name. Instead, affix your College Wide ID to the paper on the back page, after the "Works Cited" section. This will ensure that I evaluate your writing objectively and honestly.

**Rough Drafts**

Rough drafts are always welcome and may be submitted up to 24 hours prior any paper deadline. Please submit these anonymously and electronically.

**Requirements**:

1. ***Attentive reading and re-reading***

When you read the works in this class, read attentively with pen in hand. Mark passages that seem to you especially striking; from time to time, write summary or analytical comments in the margin of your book. Before class, re-read the passages that we will be discussing in that class. As you know, especially from previous classes in Great Books, classic works manifest new and deeper meanings upon each re-reading. You are encouraged to make connections between these classic Asian texts and the books and ideas you have encountered so far in other courses in the Great Books Colloquium.

1. ***Punctual attendance***

You are expected to attend every class, and to arrive on time. If you must miss class because of illness or a family emergency, please e-mail or otherwise notify us before class. A late arrival disperses the focus of the class – and focus is essential to good conversation. Unexcused absences will lower your grade in the course.

1. ***Thoughtful and attentive participation in class conversation***

As you know from past Great Books classes, collaborative inquiry requires some habitual practices to achieve focus and bear fruit. When you arrive at class, greet your fellow students and instructor, and then open your books to the passage we will be focusing on that day, and a copy of your Blackboard posting. Thus prepared, you should plan to speak in every class. From time to time, one of us will call on students to respond to a question we have asked you to think about beforehand, and perhaps have written about on Blackboard. (If you are not prepared on a given day, please give us a note before class alerting us of this and we will strive not to call on you that day.) More often, however, you will be responding to each other, and not only to your professors. When you begin to speak, look at the fellow student you are addressing, and address her or him by name. Occasionally, before you articulate your own idea, summarize your fellow student’s point; this will demonstrate your respect for and understanding of that point. Refer to specific passages in the text to support your points. Take notes during class or, when your memories are fresh and attention is focused, right after. In an essay on conversation, David Tracy summarizes a set of imperatives. He writes:

Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it. . . . In a sense [these rules] are merely variations of the transcendental imperatives elegantly articulated by Bernard Lonergan: ‘Be attentive, be intelligent, be responsible, be loving, and, if necessary, change.’”

(David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987, 19.)

Let us strive to make these imperatives our own in our discussions together.

1. ***Timely completion of assigned essays***

As each of you knows, writing can be an arduous task; it requires drafting, writing, and revision. But there is no better way to achieve clarity of thought of service and benefit to others. Before your first graded essay, consult the Essay Checklist (attached here) which clarifies our expectations for your writing. Write essays that address an interesting issue or problem and that present a precisely worded and significant thesis in response to that problem. In the body of your essay, unify your paragraphs around a precise point sentence, judiciously chosen textual illustrations, and clear explanation as to how these illustrations advance your argument. Sentences should contain no errors in grammar or spelling. You will find on-line grammar handbooks to be an invaluable resource, both for grammatical questions and for ways to achieve unity, coherence, and clarity in your prose. Please know that either of us is delighted to meet with you to discuss and assist you with your writing, as are the tutors of the Writing Center (CAC 121).

1. ***Final exam***

On April 25 you will bring to class a 5 page, integrative, take-home final examination essay. This will be your opportunity to remember and weave together the works and ideas we have talked and written about in the course of the semester.

# **Grades**

Your numerous assignments will, of course, be evaluated, and your final grade will be determined as follows:

* Class discussion: 10%
* 5 page essay on *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad-Gita* due February 1: 20%
* 5 page essay on Confucian and/or Taoist thought due March 1: 20%
* 5 page essay on Buddhist thought and/or Japanese literature due April 16: 20%
* 5 page take-home integrative final exam due Wednesday, April 25, 10:30-1:00: 20%