

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A COURSE IN THE  
GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:  
EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY**

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DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL: History and Philosophy COLLEGE: Arts & Sciences

DEPARTMENT CONTACT: BRIAN BRUYA CONTACT PHONE: 7-0065 \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Subject Code, Number, and Title: PHIL 291 Introduction to Asian Philosophy

2. Credit Hours 3

3. Course Description

This course is an overview of the rich philosophical traditions of South and East Asia. The course will introduce a number of major philosophers, texts, and movements across the Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese/Japanese Traditions.

4. This course is (check one):

an existing course with no revisions (need not go through the input system)

an existing course with revisions (attach this form to Request for Course Revision form)

a new course (attach this form to Request for New Course form)

5. Check the General Education requirement this course is intended to meet. If the course is to be proposed for more than one requirement, submit a separate form for each one.

**Effective Communication**

**Quantitative Reasoning (*QR designation*)**

**Writing Intensive (*WI designation*)**

**Perspectives on a Diverse World**

Global Awareness

U.S. Diversity

**Knowledge of the Disciplines**

Arts

Humanities

Science

Social Science

**Learning Beyond the Classroom (*LBC designation*)**

6. **Rationale.** Provide a concise, clear, jargon-free explanation of why this is a General Education course and how it fits into this specific area of the program. (The rationale should explain to students why they are taking the course. It should address both why it is part of the General Education program and why it fits into the particular category.) This rationale should appear on the general course syllabus provided here and should be included in specific course syllabi given to students.

Rationale for inclusion in Global Awareness: Global Awareness courses are designed to expose students to issues influencing diverse cultures around the world. In this course, we will go beneath specific issues to address the very foundations of cultures. Specific issues within a culture arise within a specific cultural milieu, and this milieu stands on philosophical foundations that distinguish it from other cultures. We will isolate the philosophical presuppositions of a variety of Asian cultures, focusing on their assumptions about the make-up of the world, how human beings fit into this make-up, how knowledge is formed within this framework, what the optimal goals of the human being are, and how, based on these presuppositions, human beings should best act in the world in order to achieve their goals. It will be important to discern how these philosophical foundations can play a role when covering specific contemporary issues and the roles they play when two cultures with contrasting philosophical foundations meet.

Introduction to Asian Philosophy provides students with the opportunity to study the foundational cultures of several Asian societies. These cultures are based on philosophical assumptions that differ radically and in important ways from the common assumptions that people from other cultural traditions bring to living in the world. By understanding these philosophies, student will achieve both a foundational knowledge of the cultures and a sensitivity to diverse points of view. We will directly engage the texts of these traditions, which are broadly: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism.

7. Clearly and concisely explain how this course meets each of the General Education outcomes for the requirement checked in number five (all outcomes should be addressed). To do this, (a) list the General Education outcomes for the requirement and explain how the course meets each outcome; and (b) explain, in general terms, the method(s) of evaluation to be used in the course and how these methods assess the degree to which students have met the General Education outcomes for this requirement

<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>1. Explore specific global issues influencing diverse nations and/or cultures, along with their interrelations within the global community.</b>
(a) The specific global issues influencing diverse cultures that this course explores are those that are the foundational philosophical beliefs of cultures. As diverse cultures meet on a global stage, it becomes paramount that members of one culture have the ability to recognize and negotiate the foundational philosophical beliefs of members of other cultures. For example, in studying the philosophy of the Chinese thinker Laozi, we find an emphasis on order as self-organized harmony rather than order as legal coercion. We explore how this idea informs early Chinese philosophy, providing a basis for other philosophical speculation that pervades the tradition.

(b) Objective examinations and the final paper will test for this outcome. Students can display their understanding of fundamental concepts of the study of the philosophy of life, differing philosophical systems, and their applications, on objective tests. Example of objective test question: *Identify and explain the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha.* They will have to compare and contrast different philosophical systems and their applications to particular issues in the final paper. Example of a guided essay topic: *In regard to Confucianism and Liberalism, what is the significance of the relationship of the individual to the community when considering the universality of human rights?* Term papers will require independent research on issues affecting nations and cultures, and especially how one nation or culture's position affects other nations or cultures.

**2. Explore their own culture and cultural practices and how these relate to the cultures and cultural practices of others in the global community.**

(a) This course takes seriously the idea that each of us is embedded in a culture, and so while students are plumbing the philosophical foundations of other cultures, they are also turning the philosophical microscope on their own beliefs. As they engage in this kind of dialectic, they come to understand the philosophical beliefs of other cultures more clearly while simultaneously bringing their own long-held philosophical assumptions into the light of rational inquiry.

(b) Reflection by the student on relevant cultural practices from the student's own tradition will be required in the final paper. Example of a possible subheading in a final paper: *Martin Luther King, Jr. and a Christian perspective on Non-Violence.* Exam essay questions can be used to test comprehension of both their own and other philosophical systems and how to apply them. Example of an exam essay question: *Explain the Daoist position of humans vis-à-vis nature and whether/how that may be extrapolated to a Daoist perspective on ecological stewardship.* Comparing and contrasting in essay questions shows whether they understand similarities and differences between and among the various philosophical systems.

**3. Explore the social and historical dynamics that create and influence nations, governments, global alliances, and global conflicts.**

(a) Nations, governments, global alliances, and global conflicts are often put into a context only of historical and social proximal causes without an eye to foundational philosophical beliefs within a culture that may significantly influence social organization and historical events over entire epochs. In this course, students will explore how foundational cultural beliefs play a part in a cascading structure of beliefs that end in social organization and historical events. For instance, the foundational philosophical belief of self-organized harmony that pervades the Chinese tradition resulted in a social and political structure that folded human beings into the natural order and prioritized social relations over jurisprudential rigor. This resulted in fairly loosely organized but stable government that was able to encompass enormous distances. This and other philosophical causes combined to produce a society that was largely self-sustaining and tolerant of foreign practices and beliefs rather than engaging in wars of aggression.

(b) This will be best evaluated in essay exam questions and in the final paper. Example of an exam question: *Give a comparative account of how the differences in crime rate vs. capital punishment in the U.S. and Singapore may be influenced by differing cultural and philosophical attitudes regarding the relationship of the individual and the community.* A student may explore this kind of issue in even more depth in a final paper. Example of a final paper topic: *How Hindu was Gandhi's response to Colonialism?* Such a paper might explore not only the background Hindu (and other) influences of Gandhi's Satyagraha philosophy but also philosophical influences that buttressed British colonialism as well as social and historical dynamics that first brought the British and then Indians to South Africa and that later contributed to Gandhi's victories.

**4. Explore the causes and consequences of social, cultural, and racial intolerance in the world.**

(a) Causes of social, cultural, and racial intolerance in the world are many and varied, from ignorance to fear, from greed to pride. Intolerance can also stem from unfounded or suspect metaphysical beliefs, such as the belief that 'some human beings are naturally superior to others,' or 'some people, but not others, will be granted eternal spiritual bliss.' This course will consistently entertain the question of the human being's place in the cosmos and to the social and political implications that can give rise to social, cultural, or racial tolerance or intolerance.

(b) Objective exam questions can be used to test for basic concepts that are relevant to tolerance and intolerance. Example of an objective exam question: What were Gandhi's innovations with regard to the Hindu caste system? Or: Identify an aspect of Buddhism that contributes to greater tolerance toward others. Essay exam questions can yield more in-depth answers. Example of an essay exam question: How can Gandhi's struggle be considered a struggle against intolerance?

**5. Analyze and synthesize information from diverse sources to make informed decisions regarding global issues.**

(a) This course involves analysis and synthesis of information from diverse sources in an effort to make informed decisions regarding global issues. Students explore and attempt to bring coherence to a set of foundational philosophical beliefs underpinning several foreign cultures. This process involves both analysis of discrete concepts and synthesis of these concepts into coherent worldviews. By engaging in this kind of analysis and synthesis, students come to understand not only discrete ideas within a culture but how those ideas come together to form a way of looking at the world.

(b) Objective examinations and essays will test for this outcome as a matter of course. See examples of possible questions in the sections above.

8. Attach a syllabus (1-inch margins and 10-12 pt. font). The syllabus must include the rationale from #6 above and clearly reflect the outcomes and methods of evaluation detailed in #7 above.

**Please submit all materials in electronic form.**

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### Action of the Department/College

#### 1. Department

Vote of department faculty: For 7 Against 0 Abstentions 0

Signed by Linda Schott  
Department Head

2-5-07  
Date

#### 2. College

\_\_\_\_\_  
College Dean

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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### Action of General Education Advisory Committee

Vote of General Education Committee: For \_\_\_\_\_ Against \_\_\_\_\_ Abstentions \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, General Education Advisory Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Approval**

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Associate Vice-President for Undergraduate Studies and Curriculum

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Date

## **PHIL 291 Introduction to Asian Philosophy Syllabus**

### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

An introduction to the major South and East Asian philosophical traditions, such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Material will cover both original sources in translation and perspectives that stem from the traditions as they bear on contemporary global issues.

### **RATIONALE**

Rationale for inclusion in Global Awareness: Global Awareness courses are designed to expose students to issues influencing diverse cultures around the world. In this course, we will go beneath specific issues to address the very foundations of cultures. Specific issues within a culture arise within a specific cultural milieu, and this milieu stands on philosophical foundations that distinguish it from other cultures. We will isolate the philosophical presuppositions of a variety of Asian cultures, focusing on their assumptions about the make-up of the world, how human beings fit into the world, how knowledge is formed within this framework, what the optimal goals of the human being are, and how, based on these presuppositions, human beings should best act in the world in order to achieve their goals. It will be important to discern how these philosophical foundations can play a role with regard to specific contemporary issues, especially when contrasting perspectives from two different cultures collide.

Introduction to Asian Philosophy provides students with the opportunity to study the foundational cultures of several Asian societies. These cultures are based on philosophical assumptions that differ radically and in important ways from the common assumptions that people from other cultural traditions bring to living in the world. By understanding these philosophies, students will achieve both a foundational knowledge of the cultures and a sensitivity to diverse points of view.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The major objectives of this course can be summarized as follows:

- To achieve an awareness of the philosophical presuppositions of the Eastern traditions.
- To gain a familiarity with the foundational philosophical tenets of Hindu philosophy in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Bhagavad Gita*.
- To understand the core theories of the major ancient South Asian schools of thought, including Jainism, Nyaya-Vaisesika, Samkhya-Yoga, Mimamsa, and Vedanta.
- To gain a familiarity with the key texts of Hindu philosophy.
- To gain a thorough understanding of the foundational philosophical tenets of Buddhist philosophy as expressed in the early sutras.
- To gain a familiarity with the key texts and philosophers of the Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, and Zen traditions within Buddhism.
- To explore the foundational issues of Chinese philosophy to be found in Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi.
- To understand how these foundational issues played out in subsequent thinkers of the Confucian, Legalist, Buddhist, and Neo-Confucian traditions.
- To gain a familiarity with the key thinkers and texts of the Chinese traditions.

- Examine global issues influencing diverse nations and/or cultures, along with their interrelations within the global community.
- Examine the philosophical foundations of our own culture and bring them up for critical examination.
- Explore the social and historical dynamics that create and influence nations, governments, global alliances, and global conflicts.
- Explore the causes and consequences of social, cultural, and racial intolerance in the world.
- Analyze and synthesize information from diverse sources to make informed decisions regarding global issues.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

John M Koller and Patricia Koller. *A Sourcebook in Asian Philosophy*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1991.

And

Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell. *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

Or

N. J. Girardot. *Daoism and Ecology: Ways Within a Cosmic Landscape*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001

Or

Joan Valerie Bondurant. *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

**WEEKS 1-3\* Jain and Hindu Traditions**

Vedas, Upanishads, Samkhya-Yoga, Nyaya-Vaisesika, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Jainism

Readings: selections from Koller and Koller, pp. 5-142: may include *Rig Veda*, *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, *Chandogya Upanisad*, *Taittiriya Upanisad*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Samkhya Karika*, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, Anambhatta's *Tarkasamgraha*, *Mimamsa Sutra*, Sankara's *A Thousand Teachings*, Ramanuja's *A Summary of Vedic Teachings*, *Sutrakrtanga*, *Acaranga Sutra*, *Syadavadamanjari*

**WEEKS 4-6 Buddhism**

**Early Buddhism, Rise of Mahayana, Madhyamaka, Yogacara, Zen**

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\* Lengths of units are approximate. Texts listed may be supplemented with other texts. For instance if choosing Bondurant's book in a semester, the Jain/Hindu unit may be slightly extended at the expense of Buddhism and Chinese philosophy, and Bondurant may be supplemented with such relevant texts as Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Non-Violence and Racial Justice" (*The Christian Century* (6 February 1957):165-167).

Readings: selections from Koller and Koller, pp. 193-371: may include Setting in Motion the Wheel of Truth, The Fire Sermon, Universal Love, Blessings, Getting Rid of All Cares and Troubles, The Foundations of Mindfulness, The Words of Truth (*Dhammapada*), The Last Words of the Buddha, *Milindapanha*, *Vissudhi Magga*, *Mahanidana Sutta*, *Visuddhi Magga*, *Samyutta Nikaya*, xxii, 90, *Visuddhi Magga*, *Mahanidana Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikaya*, Sutta 72, *Majjhima Nikaya*, Sutta 63, *Ashtasahasrika*, *Vajradhvaja Sutra*, *Sagaramati Sutra*, *Pancavimsatisahasrika*, *Vajracchedika*, *Sikshasamuccaya*, *The Sutra on the Heart of the Transcendent and Victorious Perfection of Wisdom*, Prasastrasena's *Commentary on the Heart Sutra*, *The Diamond Sutra*, Nagarjuna's *Treatise on the Fundamentals of the Middle Way*, Candrakirti's *Guide to the Middle Way*, Tsong Khapa's *Speech of Gold*, Asanga's *On Knowing Reality*, Vasubandhu's *Discussion of the Five Aggregates*, Vasubandhu's *Twenty Verses and Commentary*, Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses*, Dogen's *Shobogenzo*, Shibayama's commentary on the *Mumonkan*

## **WEEKS 7-9 Chinese Philosophy**

### **Daoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism**

Readings: selections from Koller and Koller, pp. 407 – 554: may include *The Analects of Confucius*, *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *Lao-tzu Tao Te Ching*, *Chuang-tzu*, *Mo-tzu*, *Han Fei-tzu*, *Mencius*, *Hsun-tzu*, Fa-tsangs' *Hua-yen Treatise*, Hui-neng's *Platform Sutra*, I-hsuan's *Recorded Conversations*, Chou Tun-i's *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate*, Shao Yung's *Great Ultimate*, Cheng Hao's *I-shu*, Cheng Hao's *Reply to Master Heng-ch'u's Letter on Calming Human Nature*, Cheng Yi's *I-ch'uan Wen-ji*, Cheng Yi's *Learning and Principle*, multiple selections from Chu-hsi, Wang Yang-ming's *Inquiry on the Great Learning*

## **WEEKS 10-14**

### **Asian Philosophy and Global Issues**

Readings may include:

From Bondurant:

Satyagraha: It's Basic Precepts"

Satyagraha as Applied to Socio-Political Action

Hindu Tradition and Satyagraha: The Significance of Gandhian Innovations

Conservative or Anarchist? A Note on Gandhi and Political Philosophy

The Ghandian Dialectic and Political Theory

from Bauer and Bell:

Inoue Tatsuo, "Liberal Democracy and Asian Orientalism"

Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Asian Values: A Defense of 'Western' Universalism"

Amartya Sen, "Human rights and Economic Achievements"

Onuma Yasuaki, "Toward an Intercivilizational Approach to Human Rights

Charles Taylor, "Conditions of an Unforced Consensus on Human Rights"

Suwanna Satha-Anand, "Looking to Buddhism to Turn Back Prostitution in Thailand"  
Joseph Chan, "A Confucian Perspective on Human Rights for Contemporary China"  
Yash Ghai, Rights, Social Justice, and globalization in East Asia  
Kevin Y. L. Tan, "Economic Development, Legal Reform, and Rights in Singapore and Taiwan"  
Dorothy J. Solinger, "Human Rights Issues in China's Internal Migration: Insights from Comparisons with Germany and Japan"  
Mab Huang, "The Anti-Nuclear Power Movement in Taiwan: Claiming the Right to a Clean Environment."

from Girardot:  
Jordan Paper, "'Daoism' and 'Deep Ecology': Fantasy and Potentiality"  
Joanne D. Birdwhistell, "Ecological Questions for Daoist Thought: Contemporary Issues and Ancient Texts"  
Michael LaFargue, "Nature" as Part of Human Culture in Daoism"  
Terry F. Kleeman, "Daoism and the Quest for Order"  
James Miller, "Sectional Discussion: What Can Daoism Contribute to Ecology?"  
Liu Xiaogan, Non-Action and the Environment Today: A Conceptual and Applied Study of Laozi's Philosophy  
Russell B. Goodman with James Miller, Sectional Discussion: What Are the Speculative Implications of Early Daoist Texts for an Environmental Ethics?  
Zhang Jiyu, A Declaration of the Chinese Daoist Association on Global Ecology  
Livia Kohn, Change Starts Small: Daoist Practice and the Ecology of Individual Lives  
Jonathan R. Herman, Daoist Environmentalism in the West: Ursula K. Le Gum's Reception and Transmission of Daoism

**EVALUATION:**

Exams with objective and/or essay questions 75%

Term Paper 25%

**Grading Scale**

A: 92-100	A-: 90-91	B+: 88-89	B: 82-87
B-: 80-81	C+: 78-79	C: 72-77	C-: 70-71
D+: 68-69	D: 62-67	D-: 60-61	E: 59 and below

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