

Instructor	Year	Semester	Course Title	Course #	Section
Dr. Matthew Crippen	2023	Spring	World Culture & Religions	GS35780	01

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Office Hours: Daily by Appointment

1. Course Description & Objectives

Certain preoccupations are primary in human existence and thus a part of people's experience no matter where they are in the world. For such reasons, mythologists have argued that stories, artistic works, religious practices and philosophical systems from varying cultures exhibit recurring themes or archetypes. In this course, we will seek commonalities between traditions around the world, while recognizing the uniqueness of each and the separate histories that have led to different cultural experiences. We will also consider how an understanding of world traditions can help us in everyday communication, business, political situations and other areas of life.

We will start with New World ideas, attending to the imprint that the original inhabitants of the Americas left on political and moral thinking. We will closely examine the cosmological significance of land and related archetypes, how this relates to concepts of mind and self, with American indigenous outlooks in fact sharing a lot with African and Asian perspectives. We will then continue on to the philosophy of Africa and its diaspora, focusing on conciliatory aspects of these ways of thinking and how they may offer practical solutions to social, economic, environmental and even management problems. Bridging into the next unit, we will move to North African and Middle Eastern ideas about reality and human existence, also pondering the relevance to current geopolitical situations. North Africa and the Middle East were part of the Silk Road and mingled with ideas there. The last part of the course will follow the Silk Road into South and East Asia to look at insights on issues ranging from self and mind to social relations to harmony of contraries and the general nature of reality. We will try to connect these philosophical threads to Asian ways of communicating and comporting oneself in everyday life and business, also looking at specific details such as the Korean concept of *uri* or "we-self." Throughout, we will ponder archetypal themes that differentiate and unite different traditions.

The overarching aim is to foster appreciation for the value and diversity of human legacies, while building bridges of shared understanding. Here one might consider the synthesis of multiple traditions in South Korea, which also has the unusual distinction of celebrating its religious-philosophical heritage on its currency, its flag and in its system of linguistic characters. An argument made throughout is that the severing of spiritualism from other intellectual and practical concerns removes us from lived realities, which can be understood from either religious or non-religious standpoints. To offer an analogy, it is like we have the map-based knowledge of a geographer, which is important, but are losing touch with mountains and streams on which maps are based.

It is hoped that pursuing the stated goals will bring you into touch with core human realities that we often lose sight of, also helping you see the practical implications of ideas considered in political sphere, economics, cognitive sciences and other areas. It is also hoped the class will promote tolerance and cross-cultural appreciation, personally enriching you and preparing you for professional life in the global environment.

2. Texts

Almost all readings are public domain, and will be distributed to students by the instructor.

3. Requirements & Grading

Grading

1. Tests x 2 + final (25%), (25%), (30%) = (80%). Main purpose is to encourage you to absorb materials deeply.
2. Online written assignments, quizzes, presentations and in-class and/or online participation (20%) are not meant to be onerous, but are intended to encourage you to keep up with assigned work, and should, if taken seriously, prepare you for tests. The idea behind short online writing assignments is to allow the professor to give ample and repeated feedback, and also to practice the art of communicating effectively and diplomatically in public forums since posts and comments on them will be public.

Attendance, Late Assignments and Missed Tests

This course may switch from offline to online. If offline, attendance is expected with more than five absences resulting in failure. If online, it is essential to keep up with the weekly schedule and participate in live Zoom sessions, and in order to encourage this, there will be weekly small assessments such of quizzes and/or short written assignments. Instructions will be posted regularly and emailed to you. Major tests will be held during regular class hours and you are required to take them then.

Missed tests and assignments **will be graded 'F.'** Exceptions will be made in the case of bereavement, medical emergency or for other serious reasons, but **supporting documentation may be required.**

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is "submitting material that in part or whole is not one's own," or submitting "work without properly attributing the correct sources of its content." Cheating is defined as "using unauthorized notes, aids, or information on an examination; altering graded work prior to its return to a faculty member"; or "allowing another person to do one's work." Plagiarism, cheating and other breaches of academic integrity **will not be tolerated.** All suspected cases **will be** reported to university authorities, and all verified incidents, no matter how small, will result in failure for the entire course. It is your responsibility to know and adhere to the standards of academic integrity.

Students with Disabilities

Please contact me if you have special needs because of a learning or physical disability or because of a medical or psychological challenge. If you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating the classroom or building in an emergency, please make me aware so that the university can develop a plan to assist you.

Non-Discrimination

The instructor does not discriminate against any student because of age, gender, ethnicity, appearance, religion, political view, disability, national origin or lifestyle choices. The same is expected from students. We want to create a space for open and respectful intellectual exchange.

Note on Grading

Please note that grades are awarded on the basis of merit, not need. I accordingly ask you not to tell me what grade you need, and insist that you do not ask me to arbitrarily raise your grade. Little worth doing is easy, so you should be prepared for a demanding course. Please note at the same time that I encourage you to set up office appointments for help achieving the grade that you want; and that I gladly give high grades when warranted, and if you put the requisite effort in, there is no reason you should not do well.

Course Topics

4. Tentative Schedule (some topics will be dropped depending on interest and pacing!)		
	Unit 1: Indigenous Thought and New World Experiences	
Week 1	Thinking Tools + Transcendentalists and Revolutionary Thinkers	
Week 2	Indigenous American Thought: Historical Introduction to Indigenous Matters + Chief Red Jacket: Libertarian Values?	
Week 3	Indigenous American Thought: Chief Joseph: Oppression, Land and Natural Law	
Week 4	Indigenous American Thought: Ancestors, Land, Mind and Recent literature and film Art (Crippen, "Psychological Expanses of Dune: Indigenous Philosophy, Americana, and Existentialism.") + Black Elk (excerpts) on Primal Realities, Mythic Archetypes and Loss of Pragmatic Faith + Indigenous Art and Music: Looking at Cross-Cultural Similarities.	
Week 5	Discussion: Indigenous Influences in Korea and the World + Review for Test 1.	Test 1 (25%)
	Unit 2: The African Diaspora, Africa and the Middle East	
Week 6	African American Thought and Natural Law, Douglass, "What, to the Slave, is the Fourth of July?" + excerpts from first autobiography + blues/Jazz examples (look for archetypes and differentiated features)	
Week 7	African American Thought and Pragmatic Faith: Du Bois, excerpts from <i>The Souls of Black Folks</i> (consider in contemporary context of race relations, police violence and refugee treatment) + blues and Jazz examples (look for archetypes and differentiated features)	

Week 8	Pre-Colonial Sub-Saharan Ideas: Nussbaum, "African Culture and Ubuntu": Self and World + contemporary sub-Saharan music examples (look for archetypes and differentiating features)	
Week 9	Recent Sub-Saharan Moral-Political-Economic Ideas: Amaeshi and Idemudia, "Africapitalism: A Management Idea for Business in Africa?" + excerpt from Crippen's, "Africapitalism, Ubuntu and Sustainability" + Koopman, "Transcultural Management: Allowing Employees to Be Enterprising—Democratically" (very short and easy) + contemporary sub-Saharan music examples (look for archetypes and differentiating features)	
Week 10	Jewish and Islamic Traditions in North Africa, the Middle East and along the Silk Road: Being, Nothing, Light and Dark – "Book of Wisdom" (anon.), Rumi and Suhrawardi + North African and Middle East Musical Examples (look for archetypes and differentiating features)	
Week 11	Discussion: Geopolitics + Review	Test 2 (25%)
	Unit 3: Silk Road Philosophy and Religion	
Week 12	Hinduism: <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> . Seeking Being and Overcoming Maya, Brahman, Atman and Oceanic Being + Indian music (look for archetypes and differentiating features)	
Week 13	Buddhism: <i>Dhammapada</i> and Nagarjuna: No-Self, Mutual Co-Determination and impermanence + Buddhist chanting (look for look for ideas about social compartment, leadership, the nature of self and reality + archetypes and differentiating features).	
Week 14	Taoism: <i>Tao Te Ching</i> : Harmonizing Contraries + Taoist music (focus on ideas about social compartment, leadership and the nature of self and reality + archetypes and differentiating features).	
Week 15	Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism and East Asian Business Ethics (excerpts from Chan, Lai and Provis) + Yayue music (look for archetypes and differentiating features). + Korean notion of <i>uri</i> ("we-self") and its relevance social compartment and communication (optional excerpts, Hye Young Kim).	
Week 16	Discussion: Cross-Cultural Intersections. (Movie: God + Crippen and Yeung, "Silkroad and Transatlantic Paths from Family to Solitude")	Test 3 (30%)