SALEM STATE COLLEGE

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION OF THE EASTERN WORLD

PHL 310N

FALL SEMESTER, 2004

Dr. Krishna Mallick

Mondays/Wednesdays: 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.
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Wednesdays/Fridays, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
and by appointment at other times

2. Bhagavad Gita, by Barbara Stoller Miller, Bantam Classic

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are: 1. To broaden one's knowledge about Eastern philosophical views; 2. To understand how Eastern views are different from Western views; 3. To explore the question, if there is anything that West can learn from the East; and 4. To apply some of the Eastern concepts to our life.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

TEST: Three pre-announced tests. First test will be given after completing the discussion on Understanding Religion and Hinduism. Second test will be given after completing the discussion on Chinese-Japanese religions. Third test will be given after completing the discussion on Buddhism. Total 45 points, each is worth 15 points

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GROUP DISCUSSION: Each group will select any topic related to the Eastern philosophy/religion and/or culture, which can include the social issues of these Eastern cultures, any prominent figure of these cultures, practical experience like meditation/yoga etc. It cannot be on any topic that we are discussing in class. Each group will prepare a 20-30 minute presentation to be made to the class. It has to be a cooperative effort with each person in the group sharing the responsibility. Each team will be responsible for leading a class discussion after the presentation. Total 20 points, group grade 10 points, individual grade, 10 points

Possible topics for Group Discussion

Dowry system of India
Sex-determination test in India
Abortion in India or China or Japan or any other Asian countries
Women’s status in India or China or Japan or any other Asian countries
China’s transition towards democracy
China and its Human Rights issue
Religious Pluralism
Rammohan Roy
Mother Teresa
Phoolan Devi, Bandit Queen of India
Parsi religion in India
Sikh religion in India
Buddhism as practiced in an Asian country
Hinduism or Jainism or Taoism or Buddhism and Ecology/Environment
Practice of Yoga
Tai Chi

Students can choose any other topic related to the Eastern countries/people.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Individual project. This will involve presentation and critical analysis of contemporary group in the Boston area having its roots in Eastern Philosophy along with a written report from each group. The focus of the paper has to be on book/chapter/articles that this particular organization follows as its religious scripture. Total 35 points, individual presentation grade, 15 points and paper grade 20 points. Presentation dates will be given in class later.

For extra credit, students can visit an organization based on the religions studied in this course, interview the head of the organization and write about that in the paper along with the critical analysis of a book/chapter/article.
Following is the list of some of the groups in the Boston area though the student is not restricted to these two groups only:

1. Ramakrishna Vedanta Society  
   58 Deerfield Street  
   Boston, MA (Kenmore Square)  
   Swami Sarvagatananda  
   Swami Tyagananda  
   Thursday evenings, 8:00 p.m.; Sunday service, 11:00 a.m.  
   (617) 536-5320

2. International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
   72 Commonwealth Avenue  
   Boston, MA  
   Sunday evening, 5:00 p.m.  
   (617) 247-8611

More directions will be given for the final exam individual project as the class progresses.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is required for this course. Attendance will be taken regularly. Any more than 3 unexcused absence will lower your final grade. If you have an excused absence, inform the instructor on the following class. Anyone having too many unexcused absences will get an 'F' for the course.

If all the above course requirements are not fulfilled, the student will get a grade of "I" (Incomplete).

Teaching method is very little lecture, lot of interactive dialogues, videos and Powerpoint presentations. Possibility of having guest speakers in class.

**READING AND CLASS ASSIGNMENT**

Before the class, students are required to read the assigned chapters/handouts for that class. Depending on the progress of the class, class assignment is subject to change.

**TOPIC: HINDUISM**

9/8/04 Wednesday- Introduction to the course. What is Eastern Philosophy?  
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9/15/04 Wednesday- See the video, volume 2 of Long Search series, "Hinduism: 330 million Gods" (52 minutes) in class followed by discussion.

9/17/04 Friday- Read from The First Teaching to The Sixth Teaching from Bhagavad Gita. Discussion in class. Be prepared to explain at least three verses from this section.

9/22/04 Wednesday- Read from The Seventh Teaching to The Twelfth Teaching from Bhagavad Gita. Discussion in class. Be prepared to explain at least three verses from this section.

9/24/04 Friday- Read from The Thirteenth to The Eighteenth Teaching from Bhagavad Gita. Discussion in class. Be prepared to explain at least three verses from this section.

9/29/04 Wednesday- Continuation of discussion of Eighteenth Teaching. Be prepared to explain at least three verses from this section.

10/1/04 Friday- Read the handout on the schools of Indian Philosophy.

10/6/04 Wednesday- Read the handouts on Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda and Gandhi. Show PowerPoint presentation on Gandhi in class.


10/13/04 Wednesday- Continuation of discussion of Hinduism and review of test # 1.

10/15/04 Friday- **Test # 1** on all the materials covered on Hinduism.

**TOPIC: BUDDHISM**

10/22/04 Friday- Group discussion of Group 1.


10/29/04 Friday- Group discussion of Group 2.

11/3/04 Wednesday- Discussion of Thich Nhat Hanh’s Creating True Peace.

11/5/04 Friday- Group discussion of Group 3.

11/10/04 Wednesday- Continuation of discussion of Creating True Peace. Get approval of the Final Exam Project.

11/12/04 Friday- Test # 2 on Buddhism.

**TOPIC: CHINESE RELIGION: CONFUCIANISM & TAOISM**


11/19/04 Friday- Continuation of discussion of Taoism. Short 30 minutes open book test # 3 on Confucianism and Taoism

T H A N K S G I V I N G   B R E A K

12/1/04 Wednesday- First Final Exam Presentation in class.

12/3/04 Friday- Second Final Exam Presentation in class.

12/8/04 Wednesday- Third Final Exam Presentation. Last day of class.

**Instructions for the Final Exam. Project:**

You will present your paper in class in the last three classes of this semester, Wednesday, December 1, Friday, December 3 and Wednesday, December 8, 2004. Presentations will take place alphabetically by the student’s last name with 3-4 presentations each of the above days.
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For the presentation you can use audiovisual materials, do it in the format of workshop or any other way you prefer. You should do a 15-20 minute presentation in class. And a written paper is due on the same day of your presentation. In your paper, you will give a brief analysis of the organization, what is their mission, how they achieve their mission. Major part of your paper will be critical analysis of a book/scripture that this particular organization believes in. In your critical analysis of the book, state the positive and negative aspects of the book, what you have learnt from it.

Get your organization and the book that you will be analyzing approved by the instructor by Wednesday, November 10, 2004. Make an appointment with the instructor to talk about this before November 10. Following are some websites you might want to check to make the decision on the organization that you would like to write and present your paper on:

www.bsu.edu/web/jcorbett/relig/world.htm (For all Eastern Religions)

www.buddhanet.net (For Buddhism)