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DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, CSUN
OFFICE HOURS: TUES/THURS 11:15-12:15 & 3:20-3:50

RS380: ASIAN RELIGIONS Fall 2017

ASIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS, AND THE TEXTS WHICH PRESENT THEM, ARE RICH IN THEIR VARIETY. SPANNING THE DIFFERENCES IN THESE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS ARE THE DIVINE AND HUMAN FIGURES, SO IF RELIGIOUS FIGURES ARE COMPARED A BASIS FOR ANALYSIS IS ASSURED. COMPARING THESE HUMAN AND DIVINE FIGURES WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE APPLICATION AND MODIFICATION OF STUDENT GENERATED FIGURE MODELS BASED ON THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF PRIMARY TEXTS. CATEGORIES OF THE MODELS COULD INCLUDE CHARACTERISTICS, MOTIVATIONS, METHODS, MESSAGES, GOALS AND RULES OF LIFESTYLE (I.E. RITUALS, ACTIONS, AND PRACTICES). FIGURES MODELS FOR COMPARISON WILL BE GENERATED FROM CAREFUL READING AND DISCUSSION OF THE PRIMARY TEXTS OF THE TRADITIONS. THE TEXTS WILL BE COMPARED A-HISTORICALLY TO EXAMINE RELIGIOUS FIGURES. RELIGIOUS FIGURES WILL BE EXAMINED IN THE TEXTS FIRST AS FIGURES, THEM IN RELATION TO THE SPECIFICS OF THE CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND FINALLY IN COMPARISON. THE FURTHER STIPULATION THAT ONLY INDIAN, CHINESE, AND JAPANESE FIGURES FROM PRIMARY WRITTEN TEXTS WILL BE USED, REDUCES CULTURAL REPRESENTATION TO LITERATE, COSMOPOLITAN, AND OFFICIALLY PRESERVED TRADITIONS. THROUGH A CROSS CULTURAL FIGURE ANALYSIS THE COURSE SEEKS TO DISCOVER FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITY AND DIVINITY AND THEREBY SHOW CULTURAL SPECIFICITY. IT SEEKS AS WELL TO UNDERSTAND THE SIMILARITY IN WHICH ALL ASIAN CULTURES, AND IN FACT GLOBAL CULTURES, CONCEPTUALIZE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY. THIS INTRODUCTION SHOULD SERVE TO INDUCE CURIOSITY FOR FURTHER IN-DEPTH STUDY OF THE VARIOUS CULTURES. THEORIES AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS ARE USED TO COMPARE AND CONCLUDE. THESE METHODS AND THEORIES, THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER STUDIES AND DISCIPLINES, WILL BE THE PRIMARY SKILLS LEARNED. [G.E.S5]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

CLASS WORK-- PREPARATION, PUNCTUALITY, ATTENDANCE *[all absence must be legitimized with "proof"]*, **DISCUSSION, ARGUMENT, AND INTERPRETATION ARE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE GRADE. Grades will be recorded after each weekly class. Mere attendance is NOT sufficient. "Preparation, Punctuality, etc." [as above] are required for a weekly class grade MID-TERM EXAM QUIZZES=40%**

MODELS -- MODELS OF INTERPRETATION AND COMPARISON MUST BE DONE FOR EACH CLASS. THESE MODELS WILL BE COLLECTED. =10%

PAPER [10-15 PAGES] IN WHICH THE THEORETICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE TEXTS & METHODS OF COMPARISON ARE PUT TO WORK. (LATE PAPERS ARE NOT POSSIBLE) =50%

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY ABIDE BY UNIV. CATALOGUE STATEMENT

ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE SILENT AND OUT OF SIGHT/REACH BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOM. ANY VIOLATION WILL SERIOUSLY AFFECT YOUR GRADE.

GRADING -- THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS COMBINE TO FORM THE GRADE. PLUS + / - MINUS GRADING WILL BE USED. CR/NC GRADING MUST BE DISCUSSED.

READING REQUIREMENTS:

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA TRANSLATED BY BARBARA STOLER MILLER [ISBN 0-55-321365-2 *only* !]
CHUANG TZU: BASIC WRITINGS TRANSLATED BY BURTON WATSON [ISBN 0-231-10595-9 *only* !]
ZEN AND JAPANESE CULTURE EDITED BY DAISETZ T. SUZUKI [ISBN 0-69-101770-0 *only* !]
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29 AUG INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE STUDENT RESPONSE
INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORIES, METHODS AND PROBLEMS

READ ENTIRE BHAGAVAD-GITA FOR SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION BY THE 5th
*****SPECIFIC FOCUS PAGES WILL BE ASSIGNED CLASS BY CLASS*****

5 SEPT INITIAL REACTIONS AND PROBLEMS
COMPARE DIVINE FIGURES

12 STUDENT THEORIES OF DIVINE FIGURES
COMPARISON OF TEXTS AND THEORIES OF DIVINE FIGURES

19 MODELS OF DIVINE AND HUMAN FIGURES *********** PAPER ASSIGNED**
MODELS OF FIGURES

26 COMPARE HUMAN & DIVINE FIGURES - STUDENT THEORIES
COMPARISON OF TEXTS AND THEORIES

READ ENTIRE CHUANG TZU FOR SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION BY THE 3rd
*****SPECIFIC FOCUS WILL BE ASSIGNED CLASS BY CLASS*****
(BE PREPARED TO USE THE OTHER TEXT)

3 OCT COMPARISON OF TEXTS AND FIGURES **********IN CLASS MID TERM

10 COMPARISON OF TEXTS AND FIGURE MODELS
CREATION OF FIGURE MODELS

17 COMPARISON OF FIGURE MODELS ************PAPER DUE IN CLASS**

24 COMPARE TEXTS
COMPARISON OF FIGURE MODELS

READ ENTIRE ZEN & JAPANESE CULTURE FOR SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION BY THE 31st
******SPECIFIC FOCUS WILL BE ASSIGNED CLASS BY CLASS******
(BE PREPARED TO USE THE OTHER TWO TEXTS)

31 COMPARISON OF TEXTS

7 NOV COMPARE TEXTS
COMPARE FIGURE MODELS

14 COMPARE FIGURE MODELS *********FINAL REWRITES OF PAPER DUE IN CLASS

21 COMPARE FIGURE MODELS

28 FINAL COMPARISONS AND FORMULATIONS
5 DEC FINAL CONCLUSIONS

RS SLOs: [*objectives met by…]*
To learn the history, major symbols, sacred texts, rituals, and practices of Asian Religions [*class lectures & discussions, reading & research, assignments]*
To learn the principal beliefs, concepts, and terminology of the religions studied [*class lectures & discussions, reading & research]*
To acquire the skill of interpreting Asian religious texts and practices [*weekly assignments, paper]*
To increase awareness of how religion affects culture and shapes values [*class lectures & discussion, reading & research]*

G.E SLOs: Comparative Cultural Studies/ Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies and Foreign Languages
Goal: Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.
Student Learning Outcomes
Students will:
1. Describe and compare different cultures;
2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;
3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion , sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;
4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society;
5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.