Chinese Classics: Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist

Rel 4936 (1764) & Rel 5338 (094E), Fall 2012

Prof. Mario Poceski (Religion Dept., University of Florida)

Class Time & Location

Office Hours & Contact Information
Tue, 12:00–1:40 pm, and by appointment (8/22–12/4); 132 Anderson Hall; tel: (352) 273-2937; email: mpeceski@ufl.edu; webpage: www.clas.ufl.edu/users/mpoceski/.

Course Description
The course is organized around critical reading, analysis, and discussion of principal religious and philosophical texts that over the centuries have exerted notable impact on the religious history of China and the rest of East Asia. The readings, in English translations, include major classical works from each of the three main traditions—Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism—and cover the ancient and medieval periods.

Prerequisites
There are no formal prerequisites, although students will benefit if they have taken relevant courses such as Chinese Religions, Asian Religions, Chinese Buddhism, or Introduction to Buddhism.

Requirements
- Reading of assigned materials, class attendance, and participation in discussions (20% of the final grade).
- Class presentations, reading responses, and leading of discussions (10%).
- Research presentation (5%).
- Bibliography (5%), due by 11/15, 10 am (same time applies to all other deadlines).
- Draft paper and written feedback (each 5%), due by 11/15 and 11/20.
- Research paper (50%), due by 12/2.

Additional Graduate Students Requirements
In addition to the basic requirements, for graduate students there are extra expectations and requirements:
- Longer written assignments (see below).
- Higher expectations in regard to level of academic performance, including depth of critical analysis, clarity of presentation, and quality of writing.

Required Texts
Students need to have their own copies of the first four books on the list. The appropriate selections from the last three volumes will be made available digitally, via e-Learning.


Course Schedule and Discussion Topics (Tentative)

W 1 Aug 23  Introduction [Poceski, Intro.; Ivanhoe, Intro.]

Part 1: Early Religious and Philosophical Traditions

W 2 Aug 28 & 30  Analects of Confucius [Poceski, ch. 2; Ivanhoe, ch. 1]

W 3 Sep 4 & 6  Mengzi [Ivanhoe, ch. 2]

W 4 Sep 11 & 13  Xunzi [Ivanhoe, ch. 6; optional: Poceski, ch. 8]

W 5 Sep 18 & 20  Laozi [Poceski, ch. 3; Ivanhoe, ch. 4]

W 6 Sep 25 & 27  Zhuangzi [Ivanhoe, ch. 5]

Part 2: Medieval Buddhism and Daoism

W 7 Oct 2 & 4  Daoist Scriptures 1 [Poceski, ch. 4; Lopez, ch. 11, 13, & 20]

W 8 Oct 9 & 11  Daoist Scriptures 2 [Kohn, sec. 3, 9, 10, 11, & 12]

W 9 Oct 16 & 18  Movie week (Confucius)

W 10 Oct 23 & 25  Vimalakīrti Scripture 1 [Poceski, ch. 5; Watson, Intro. & ch. 1-6]

W 11 Oct 30 & Nov 1  Vimalakīrti Scripture 2 [Watson, ch. 7-14]

W 12 Nov 6 & 8  Record of Linji 1 [Poceski, ch. 6; Watson, beg. to sec. 18]

W 13 Nov 13 & 15  Record of Linji 2 [Watson, sec. 19 to end]

W 14 Nov 20  Women in Chinese Religions [Wang, sec. 36, 40, 45, 54]

W 15 Nov 27 & 29  Presentation of student research

W 16 Dec 4  Final discussion

Grading

- Final grades will be computed on this scale:
  - A = 100–93%; A- = 92.5–90%; B+ = 89.5–87%; B = 86.5–83%; B- = 82.5–80% ; C+ = 79.5–77%;
  - C = 76.5–73%; C- = 72.5–70%; D+ = 69.5–67%; D = 66.5–63%; D- = 62.5–60%; E = 59.5% or less.
- The final grade will be based on each student’s individual performance and his/her fulfillment of the course requirements, as stipulated in the syllabus.
• Students should take all assignments and other course requirements very seriously. There will be no opportunities to do additional work for extra credit or better grade.

• The same course rules and expectations apply equally to all students—no student is entitled to special consideration or unique treatment. Other extraneous or irrelevant factors, including student’s personal desires or expectations about grades, will not be taken into account.

• No incomplete grades will be given, except in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the students should contact the instructor no later than a week before the last day of classes.

**Online e-Learning System**

The syllabus and other course materials are posted online via UF’s e-Learning system [lss.at.ufl.edu].

**Attendance**

• **Attendance is mandatory** for all students, starting with the first day of classes. Students who have problems with class attendance or punctuality should think twice before enrolling in this course.

• Absences from class will have adverse effect on the final grade. After missing two (2) hours of instruction (unexcused), each subsequent unexcused hour will lead to an automatic **2% reduction** of the final grade; there is no limit to this kind of grade deduction (i.e. student can fail the course due to a poor attendance record).

• Valid excuses for missed classes must be submitted in writing and in a timely manner, along with pertinent documentation (such as note from a doctor). Written excuses for planned absences—participation in athletic meetings or religious observances, for example—must be submitted in advance.

• Coming late, leaving early, being inattentive, and other forms of disruptive behavior can be counted as unexcused absences. For more on the university’s attendance policies, see the Undergraduate Catalog.

**Guidelines for Written Assignments**

• When students are responsible for leading weekly discussion, they have to prepare a 300-400 word response to the assigned reading(s). The **reading response** must be posted on e-Learning by 8 pm on Monday, the day before the pertinent class discussion. It should contain a brief summary of the relevant reading(s), critical response, and two topics for class discussion.

• The **bibliography** should contain at least 10 titles (15 for grad students) of academic publications pertinent to the student’s research topic. It must also clearly state the topic—i.e. provide provisional title—of the final paper.

• Students must submit a **draft** of their final paper by the due date. They also have to provide written response/feedback on the draft paper of another student.

• For undergraduate students, the **final paper** should be 3,000 words, inclusive of notes and citations. Graduate papers should be 50% longer.

• All written assignments must follow standard academic format. Use standard font, such as Calibri 11 (or 12), for all assignments, with 1.5 spacing and 1” margins. Do not forget to include paper title, course name, instructor name, and date.

• Each written assignment must be submitted digitally, via e-Learning, before the final deadline.

• There will be **bonus points** for early submissions of the final paper: 3 points if submitted by Nov 25, 2 points by Nov 27, and 1 point by Dec 1 (10 am cutoff time for all three).

• No late submissions will be accepted under any circumstances. Students are encouraged to avoid procrastination and make early submissions, ideally at least a week before the final deadline.
• Students are welcome to bring early drafts of their papers and ask for feedback/advice, but they have to do that in person during office hours.

**Office Hours and Communication**

• Students are encouraged to come to office hours, especially if they have questions or need help with the course materials. The instructor will also be glad to discuss all relevant topics that, due to time constrains, are not covered in class in much detail.
• Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor directly and in person, preferably during office hours.

**Extracurricular**

• The assigned readings and other seminar requirements, as described in this syllabus, are a basic minimum. Students (especially graduate students) are encouraged to take personal initiative to further broaden their knowledge and improve their academic skills by doing additional readings, including materials written in classical Chinese.

**Other Notices**

• A student who has a documented disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor at the beginning of the course so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Note that the student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor, as early as possible. All arrangements for changes pertaining to the exams must be made at least one week in advance.
• Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties. For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure (posted online by the Dean of Students Office).
• Students are expected to be courteous and abstain from disruptive behavior in the classroom that adversely affects others and is contrary to the pursuit of knowledge. Examples of such behavior include talking with someone, making late entrances or early exits from the classroom, displaying active disinterest in the class (e.g. sleeping or inappropriate computer use), or putting down others. Offending students will be asked to leave.
• Registration in the course implies that each student enters a contractual agreement with the instructor, whereas he/she is accountable for fulfilling all course requirements and adhering to the course policies.
• Students are responsible for knowing and following all schedules and instructions contained in this syllabus, as well as any other instructions given in class (remember, attendance is not optional).
• Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor, preferably in person. Pleading ignorance or lack of common sense are not valid excuses for failures to fulfill requirements or abide by course policies.