Course Description

Taoism (now often written “Daoism”) is a Chinese cultural tradition focused primarily on methods, strategies and communities for individual and socio-political integration with the totality of reality, including its transcendent dimensions. Taoism encompasses a broad array of moral, social, philosophical, religious and cultural ideas, values, and practices. Like other religions around the world, Taoism included some contemplatives, whose orientation often seems attractive to modern people— particularly to Westerners looking for alternatives to their own cultural traditions. In this course, you will learn that Taoism is an ancient and immense tradition of great subtlety and complexity. You will see how its many dimensions evolved to answer the needs of people of different periods and different propensities, and you should learn respect for, and understanding of, the teachings and practices of all those people. Taoism is not some abstract "timeless wisdom" that simply consists of a set of warm, fuzzy ideas. Rather, Taoism is a specific set of cultural traditions that evolved within the historical context of ancient, medieval, and modern China, evolving to meet the spiritual needs of people in specific historical situations. The multi-sources and complexity of Taoist belief systems and ritual practice, and the influence of Taoism upon Chinese thought, religion, art, culture and society will also be covered.

Course Format and Prerequisites

This course is a combination of lectures and discussions. Students are encouraged and expected to engage in class discussions and critical analysis of the course materials, especially during the discussion sessions. There are no formal prerequisites and no knowledge of Chinese language is required.

Course Requirements

Students will be asked to attend regularly, and read the assigned materials for each class meeting. In addition, each student is required to make two presentations (15-20 minutes). Two tests will be given throughout the course. There are also two “Short Papers” (3 pp. each) and one final take-home exam (4-5 pp.). The final take-home exam (4-5 pages) will be due on Monday, April 27, 2015, at 5:00pm. Late submission of the take-home exam will not be read or graded unless permission is given beforehand. It is the student’s responsibility to communicate to me any
special needs and circumstances, as well as to provide written documentation for excused absences.

**Required Texts**

In addition to the textbooks, there are other required readings in the Automating Reserves (Ares, available from Course Reserves under the University of Florida Libraries), or on reserve in Library West. The Ares materials are arranged by authors.

**Course Assignments**
1. Class participation & preparedness (you will be assigned issues to address in the upcoming reading) (20%).
2. Absences: Three “free” absences are allowed for medical and other emergencies. For each subsequent absence, your final grade will be affected.
3. Two tests (30%).
4. Two short papers (3 pp. each) (10%).
5. Take-home final exam (4-5 pages) (20%).

**Grading Scale**
A=93-100%; A-=90-92%; B+=87-89%; B=83-86%; B-=80-82%; C+=77-79%; C=73-76%; C-=70-72%; D+=67-69%; D=63-66%; D-=60-62%; E=below 60%. S is equivalent to C or better.

**Passing Grades and Grade Points**
According to university guidelines, letter grades will convert to GPA as follows: A = 4.0; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.0; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; D- = .67; E = 0; WF = 0; I = 0; NG = 0; S-U = 0

**Students must earn a grade of C or higher to meet their major, minor, or General Education requirements. The S-U option is not counted toward their major or minor degree, nor General Education requirements.**

**Policy for Requesting a Letter of Recommendation**
1. I only write letters of recommendation for top students (B+ and above) in my classes; and
2. I only write letters of recommendation for either the Chinese majors who have taken at least one course with me, or non-majors who have taken two courses with me.

“Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of
Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.”

Short papers
See “Guidelines for Short Papers.”

Discussion
Students are expected to prepare for the reading assignment prior to the date that is marked in the Syllabus, and generate at least one question about the reading for discussion in class. Everyone is expected to actively participate in the discussion.

Course outline (28 class meetings)

Introduction
Wk 1
1/6 Introduction to the course

1/8 Background to Daoism
Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, pp. 1-23;

Foundations
Wk 2
1/13 “The Elders” — The *Daode jing* (*Tao te ching*)
Mair, trans., *Tao Te Ching*, pp. 59-92;

1/15 The Dao that can’t be told (*Daode jing* continued), and Discussion
Mair, trans., *Tao Te Ching*, pp. 93-105, 3-25; 26-55;

Wk 3
1/20 The “Useless words” of Zhuangzi (“Chuang-tzu”)
Mair, trans., *Wandering on the Way*, pp. 3-41;
A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (La Salle: Open Court, 1989), pp. 170-211.

1/22 At ease in perfect happiness (*Zhuangzi* continued), and Discussion

Wk 4
1/27 Health, immortality, cosmos, gods, and governance
Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, pp. 35-50, 91-113;

1/29 Discussion

Formation
Wk 5
2/3 Celestial Master Daoism
Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, pp. 53-77;

Further reading

2/5 Major schools of the middle ages: Shangqing (Highest Clarity), and Discussion
Paul W. Kroll, “Seduction Songs of One of the Perfected,” in ibid., pp. 180-87;

Wk 6
2/10  Major schools of the middle ages: Lingbao (Numinous Treasure)
Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*, pp. 149-83;

2/12  Ethics and community, and Discussion

Wk 7
*2/17  Creation and the pantheon*
*Deadline, #1 written analysis (s-paper) of any theme to date (3 pp.)*

Further reading

2/19  Daoist messianism and imperial adaptations, and Discussion
Richard Mather, “K’ou Ch’ien-chih and the Taoist Theocracy at the Northern Wei Court

Further reading

Wk 8
2/24 Daoist Canon

Development
2/26 New texts and cults: Foundation of later Daoism

Further reading
Livia Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture*, pp. 171-85;

Wk 9 Spring Break

Wk 10
3/10 Test 1 (not covering the session “Development”)
3/12 Quanzhen (Complete Perfection) order


Wk 11
3/17 *Seven Taoist Masters: A Folk Novel of China*

3/19 *Seven Taoist Masters: A Folk Novel of China*, and Discussion

Wk 12
3/24 Zhengyi (Orthodox Unity) order

Chen Yaoting, “Zhengyi (Orthodox Unity; Correct Unity),” in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. Fabrizio Pregadio, v. 2, pp. 1258-60;


3/26 No class – take-home assignment


Wk 13
3/31 Celestial Master institution, and Discussion


Further reading

4/2 Daoism and society, and Discussion

*Deadline, #2 written analysis (s-paper) of any theme to date (3 pp.)*

Further reading

Wk 14
4/7 Ritual activities (DVD: Taiwan jiaodian 臺灣醮典, 35 mins.)

Further reading

4/9 Sacred space: (DVD 2296 series 7, v. 6)
Anderser and Florian C. Reiter, pp. 233-52;
Kristofer Schipper, The Taoist Body, pp. 100-12.

Further reading

Wk 15
4/14 Test 2
4/16 Daoist life: (DVD 2296 series 7, v. 6), and Discussion
Kristofer Schipper, The Taoist Body, pp. 20-31, 44-71;

Wk 16
4/21 Daoist art, and Conclusion

*Monday, April 27 at 5:00pm is the deadline for the take-home exam. Place a copy under my door or in the mailbox next to my door (Pugh Hall 359). Do not email your paper.

GUIDELINES FOR SHORT PAPERS

Short papers:
Two short papers are required. They are to be written about reading assignments that have not yet been discussed in class. They may be handed in anytime prior to the due date that is marked in the Syllabus; they must be submitted before that homework assignment is discussed in class. You may consult me at anytime about a good topic for the short paper. Readings outside the required texts are not expected for the s-papers. The topics of your r-papers and your presentations should be different.
Length Each s-paper must be 3 full pages in double-spaced type. Margins all around not to exceed 1.00 inch. If you find it necessary to quoted extensively from the text, make a corresponding addition in your analysis of the material (paper not to exceed 4 pages total).

Method Analysis of the reading or phenomenon is the main part (2 ½ pages or more). Address the question HOW? in this part. Begin with a general statement or hypothesis, then support it by referring to specific features of the text. For example, HOW is a certain theme developed through historical development or a group of texts? HOW does the author define his standpoint through explicit statements? HOW does he compare with someone else who deals with similar subject matter, etc. A sensible start for the opening hypothesis is a critical comment from the textbook. Or you can use ideas that have come up in previous class discussions. Give a carefully reasoned interpretation of the author/text, based upon specific details of the reading. The reaction papers are supposed to be critical and analytic instead of descriptive and subjective.

You could choose any readings we haven’t covered in class, that is, some readings labeled as “further readings” or future readings (whose topics we haven’t covered yet). Or, you could identify some theme(s) we haven’t covered in class. If you choose an article/chapter (or a couple of articles/chapters) as the basis of your reaction, you may not want to summarize it too much because your paper is too short. You can summarize it to a certain extent, then analyze it, and then make your own argument (agree or disagree, why). The main point of the s-paper assignment is that I want to see your original idea regarding your readings, or your reflective feedback to the readings (again with your own understanding or idea). By analyzing an article/chapter (or articles/chapters), your paper demonstrates your understanding or your view of Daoism. If you choose to write a consistent theme in the readings, then you may want to summarize the general features of this theme(s), then do the rest of the things as I have just explained.

GUIDELINES FOR THE TAKE-HOME EXAM

Take-home exams papers are 4-5 pages in double-spaced type; 12 font. The last page should be reserved for “Endnotes” (at least three endnotes are required) and the “Bibliography” with at least three references. For the concrete form of the endnotes and bibliography, consult either the Chicago Manual of Style or the MLA Handbook. Writing the reaction papers should help you form your academic writing style you’d like to explore more fully. The take-home exam should be primarily analytical. Focus on the HOW of a text or group of texts.

Reference for Further Reading: (Most in the Automating Reserves or on hard copy reserve at Library West)


Goossaert, Vincent. “Bureaucratic Charisma: The Zhang Heavenly Master Institution and Court
“Seduction Songs of One of the Perfectged.” In Religions of China in Practice, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr., pp. 180-87.


______. “What is Taoism?” In ibid., pp. 265-90.


Raz, Gil. “Daoist Sacred Geography,” in Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of


______. “Visualization and Ecstatic Flight in Shangqing Taoism,” in Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques, ed. Livia Kohn, pp. 159-90;


