

# IDS 2935: Selfhood in Asian Traditions

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## Selfhood in Asian Traditions | IDS 2935

Quest 1

### I. General Information

Quest 1; Theme: Identities

Spring 2022

#### Class Meetings

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday, period 6; online via Zoom (links in Canvas)

Discussions: (1) Friday, period 3, Weil 273; (2) Friday, period 6, Rinker 106

#### Instructors

- **Mario Poceski** – mpoceski@ufl.edu
  - Office location: 132 Anderson Hall
  - Office hours: Friday, 2:00-3:00 pm, in person, and by appointment (via Zoom, need to be made one day in advance)

- **Jonathan Edelmann** – jonathanedelmann@ufl.edu
  - Office location: 106 Anderson Hall
  - Office hours: Friday, 10:30-11:30 am, in person, and by appointment (via Zoom, need to be made one day in advance)

## Quest and General Education Credit

*This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed below.*

- **Humanities (H):** Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.
- **International (N):** This designation is always in conjunction with another program area. International courses promote the development of students' global and intercultural awareness. Students examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect communities around the world. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understanding of an increasingly connected world.
- **Writing Designation:** Writing Designation (WR) 2000 words
- **Quest 1: Identities.** How are personal and social identities constructed? How and why do they change? In what ways are such identities personally, socially, or politically significant? A study of how people shape their identities and are identified as belonging to various groups. Topics may include how identities shift with age, position, time, place, and sociopolitical categories (e.g., gender, class, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation); the formation of identities at intrapersonal, interpersonal, and systematic levels; the history of the concept of identities; how self-fashioning, portraits, and the built environment construct identities; how past societies understood the configuration of identity; identities' role in politics and activism; how identities may function to sustain or change relations of power influence.
- A minimum **grade of C** is required for general education credit. Courses intended to satisfy the general education requirement cannot be taken S-U.

## Course Description

How have Asian philosophy and religion conceptualized selfhood? The course explores this essential question by analyzing a range of conceptions of selfhood and their impacts on the constructions of personal and group identities, as articulated by major philosophical and religious traditions in Asia. There is an equal emphasis on classical Indian and Chinese notions of self—covering orthodox Hindu views about an essentialized self, and Buddhist critiques of essentialism—as articulated by major thinkers such as Confucius, Zhuangzi, Nagarjuna, Zhiyi, Shankara, Abhinava, and Jiva.

Through reading of primary and secondary sources, critical reflection, classroom discussion, and written assignments students learn about major models of selfhood and the classical traditions that produced them, which remain immensely influential in the modern world. Additionally, they have opportunities to examine the contemporary relevance of such conceptual constructs, especially in relation to understanding the implicit assumptions and cultural conditionings that shape prevalent constructions of personal and communal identities, and their impacts on the world of everyday reality.

The course adopts a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating perspectives and methodologies from several academic disciplines: religious studies, philosophy, history, Asian studies, anthropology, and sociology. Students learn and reflect on these and other related issues by critically engaging with select readings, lectures, discussions, experiential learning, research, and writing.

### Required Readings

1. Edelmann, Jonathan. 2017. Seeing in Eternal Return: Hermeneutical Perspectives on Karma and Rebirth. *Religions*, 8 (11), 250, pp.2-9 [total number of pages: 7] <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/8/11/250/htm#>
2. Thibaut, George. Introduction. 1890. In *The Vedānta-sūtras with the commentary of Sankara, Part 1*, translated by George Thibaut, from *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Müller, Vol. XXXVIII. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-9 [9].
3. Menon, Sangeetha. No date. Advaita Vedanta. *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://iep.utm.edu/adv-veda/> pp. 1-20 [20].
4. Edelmann, Jonathan and Satyanarayanan Dasa. 2013. Agency in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Tradition. In *Free Will, Agency, and Selfhood in Indian Philosophy*, edited by E. Bryant and M. Dasti. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 284-303 [19].
5. Edelmann, Jonathan. 2021. Philosophical Vaiṣṇavism. In *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro. Hoboken, NY: John Wiley & Sons, pp.1-5 [5].
6. Pollock, Sheldon. 2016. Abhinavagupta and His School, 1000-1200. In *Rasa: A Reader*, edited and translated by Sheldon Pollock. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. pp.187-205 [18].
7. Lawrence, David P. 2018. Abhinavagupta. In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online*, ed. by Knut A. Jacobsen. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-5019\\_BEH\\_COM\\_9000000097](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-5019_BEH_COM_9000000097), pp. 1-20 [20].
8. Westerhoff, Jan Christoph. 2018. Nāgārjuna. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nagarjuna/>, pp. 1-25 [25]
9. Garfield, Jay. 1995. Chapter XVIII: Examination of the Self and Entities. In *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 245-66 [22].
10. Poceski, Mario. 2009. The Classical Confucian Tradition. In *Introducing Chinese Religions*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 34-59 [25].
11. Slingerland, Edward. 2004. Conceptions of the Self in the Zhuangzi: Conceptual Metaphor Analysis and Comparative Thought. *Philosophy East and West* 54/3, pp. 322-42 [20].
12. Watson, Burton. 2003. Discussion of Making All Things Equal. In *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 3rd edition, pp.31-44 [13].
13. Poceski, Mario. 2007. Mind, Buddha, and the Way. In *Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 157-92 [35].
14. Poceski, Mario. 2020. Disappearing Act: Calmness and Insight in Chinese Buddhism. *Journal of Chinese Religions* 48/1, pp. 1–30 [30].
15. Poceski, Mario. 2020. Mindfulness, Cultural Appropriation, and the Global Diffusion of Buddhist Contemplative Practices. *International Journal for the Study of Chan Buddhism and Human Civilization* 7, pp. 1–15.

Note: All reading materials are available on the Canvas website for this course or by links online.

### Recommended Course Materials

- Struck, William. *The Elements of Style*. Pearson Publisher.
- Materials and Supplies Fees: n/a

## II. Graded Work

### Description of Graded Work

- **Summaries and critical responses** on the weekly readings. Students need to write 10 assignments of this kind; each is worth 5%, for a total of **50%** of the final grade. Each assignment is **due by 9 am on Friday**, in the same week when the reading in question is assigned (see weekly schedule below). The length of each assignment should be around **180 words**. It should consist of three parts: a summary of the reading (100 words), student's critical response and personal reflection (50 words), and a suggested topic for Friday's discussion session.
- Paper **abstract and bibliography**, worth **5%** of the final grade, due **week 11, on Friday, by 5 pm**. The **abstract** and **bibliography** must clearly state the topic and provide provisional title of the final paper. It should contain a short—**200 words**—abstract of the paper and proper bibliographical entries for (at least) 5 titles of academic publications pertinent to the student's research topic.
- **Personal reflection on the practice of mindfulness** (paper based on experiential learning), worth **15%** of the final grade. Due on the **Monday of week 14, by 5 pm; 600 words** long. It should offer a brief introduction to the practice of mindfulness, followed by student's personal reflections on his/her experience with the practice and its relevance to contemporary life.
- **Analytical essay** on a topic related to the course (research paper), worth **30%** of the final grade. Students should choose one of the key topics examined in the course and write a research paper on the topic. The length of the final paper should be around **1,200 words**, inclusive of notes and citations. The final **deadline** is **Tuesday of week 15, by 5 pm**. There should be a bibliography at the end of the paper, which should follow standard academic format.

### Written Assignments

- All written assignments are graded in a wholistic manner, considering all the major elements of good and effective academic writing: demonstrated mastery of the key concepts and ideas, clear articulation of the main argument(s), effective use of relevant evidence, overall quality of writing (including grammar and diction), logical and coherent structure, usage of appropriate academic style, and originality of ideas.
- The written assignments must be submitted in MS **Word** and must follow standard academic format. Use standard font, such as Calibri 12, with 1.5 spacing and 1" margins.
- Do not forget to include paper title, course name, instructor title and name, date, and page numbers.
- The written assignments must be **submitted digitally**, via e-Learning, before the final deadline.
- **No late submissions** will be accepted under any circumstances. Students are encouraged to avoid procrastination and make early submissions, well before the deadline.
- Students are welcome to ask for feedback/advice about their papers, during the office hours.

### Attendance and Participation

- Attendance is expected of all students, starting with the first day of classes. Students who have problems with class attendance or punctuality should think twice before enrolling in the course. (For more on the university's attendance policies, see the Undergraduate Catalog).
- Students are advised to come to each class prepared, stay actively engaged, and take notes. All of these are essential for success with the written arguments and the final grade.
- While weekly attendance and participation are not directly factored in the main grade, students with exceptional attendance and participation performance may be awarded up to 3 bonus points (3% of the

final grade). This bonus is entirely based on the instructor's discretion, and the final assessment considers both the quantity and quality of student's participation in classroom discussions, as well as other elements of coursework.

## Grading

- The final grades are solely 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, from the first day of classes. There are no opportunities to do additional work for an extra credit or a 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 individual student's desires or expectations about grades, are not considered.
- Students should not expect retroactive changes or other forms of grade modification at the end of the semester.
- No incomplete grades are given, except in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the student should contact the instructor no later than a week before the last day of classes.
- Final grades are computed according to the standard grading scheme in Canvas.

## WR Statements and Grading Rubric

- Writing Requirement Guidelines: <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-courses/structure-of-wr-courses/wr-course-guidelines/>
- Writing Requirement Rubric: <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/general-education/gen-ed-courses/structure-of-wr-courses/writing-requirement-syllabus-policy/>

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback, on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course."

### Grading Scale

A	94 – 100%	C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%	C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%	D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%	D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%	D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%	E	<60

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

## III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic & Assignment
W 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>Introduction to the Course</b></li> <li>• Summary: At first, we will go over the syllabus and introduce ourselves. We will also briefly go over the key terms in this course, outlining how Asian thinkers constructed identity. While the focus of this course is on Indian and Chinese thought, students are encouraged to think critically about your own construction of identity, soul, self, or consciousness, as they study and reflect on them. This week also surveys the main questions and topics that form this course, and highlight the multidisciplinary perspectives integrated into the it.</li> </ul>

Week	Topic & Assignment
W 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>What is the nature of karma in Indian philosophy and religion?</b></li> <li>• Summary: The native Indian religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism all espouse some form of doctrine of <i>karma</i> and <i>samsara</i> (rebirth). The view is that the self has been caught in a cycle of reincarnation forever, and that the self experiences pleasure or pain based on deeds from previous lives. This essential construction of identity in Indian thought has influenced China as well.</li> <li>• Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1. Edelmann, Jonathan. 2017. Seeing in Eternal Return: Hermeneutical Perspectives on Karma and Rebirth. <i>Religions</i>, 8 (11), 250, pp. 1-13 [13] <a href="https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/8/11/250/htm#">https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/8/11/250/htm#</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>How does Shankara construct a nondualistic concept of the self, world, and god?</b></li> <li>• Summary: Shankara (eighth century CE) has remained one of the most influential Hindu thinkers in the history of India for many centuries. Throughout his commentaries on Hindu scriptures like the Upaniṣads, the <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i>, and the <i>Vedānta Sūtra</i>, Shankara argued that the seer (or the self) and the seen (or the world and God) are in reality a single, un-conditional, and un-qualified awareness that he called <i>brahman</i>.</li> <li>• Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2. Thibaut, George. Introduction. 1890. In <i>The Vedānta-sūtras with the commentary of Sankara, Part 1</i>, from <i>The Sacred Books of the East</i>, edited by F. Max Müller, Vol. XXXVIII. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-9 [9].</li> <li>○ 3. Menon, Sangeetha. No date. Advaita Vedanta. <i>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>. <a href="https://iep.utm.edu/adv-veda/">https://iep.utm.edu/adv-veda/</a> pp. 1-20 [20] (PDF pages 135-140).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>How does Jiva construct a dualistic and non-dualistic conception of the self, world, and god?</b></li> <li>• Summary: Although Shankara influenced nearly every single Hindu intellectual after him, he was not without critics. Intellectuals like Rāmānuja and Madhva were among early detractors from his nondualism, and as devotional movements developed in India in the fifteenth and sixteen centuries, a set of opposing doctrines emerged. This week we examine the work of Jiva Goswami (sixteenth century), who argued for a type of dualism in his commentaries on Hindu scriptures like the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas.</li> <li>• Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4. Edelmann, Jonathan and Satyanarayanan Dasa. 2013. Agency in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Tradition. In <i>Free Will, Agency, and Selfhood in Indian Philosophy</i>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, pp. 284-303 [19].</li> <li>○ 5. Edelmann, Jonathan. 2021. Philosophical Vaiṣṇavism. In <i>The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion</i>. Hoboken, NY: JohnWiley &amp; Sons, pp. 1-5 [5].</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>



Week	Topic & Assignment
W 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>How does Abhinava use Indian aesthetics (rasa) to construct a concept of self?</b></li> <li>• Summary: Since at least the beginning of the third century AD, Indian thinkers became interested in providing a formal account of the human experience of poetry, drama, music, myth, dance, and other forms of art. In the tenth century AD, the Kashmiri thinker Abhinava Gupta used these accounts to construct a concept of the self and the way it experiences aesthetic rapture via the beauty of art.</li> <li>• Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 6. Pollock, Sheldon. 2016. Abhinavagupta and His School, 1000-1200. In <i>Rasa: A Reader</i>. New York, NY: Columbia University Press. pp. 187-205 [18].</li> <li>○ 7. Lawrence, David P. 2018. Abhinavagupta. In <i>Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online</i>. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-5019_BEH_COM_9000000097">http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2212-5019_BEH_COM_9000000097</a> , pp. 1-20 [20].</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>How does Nāgārjuna articulate that the self and identity are empty?</b></li> <li>• Summary: In the third century AD, the Buddhist thinker Nāgārjuna undertook a project to reevaluate the philosophy of earlier Buddhist traditions and to articulate a new philosophy centered on the doctrine of emptiness, which postulates that all things lack an eternal, unchanging, and essential nature. His views would spread into Tibet and China, and reshaped Buddhism henceforth. We will place Nāgārjuna and his ideas in their historical context, and examine them from both religious and philosophical perspectives.</li> <li>• Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 8. Westerhoff, Jan Christoph. 2018. Nāgārjuna. <i>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy</i>. <a href="https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nagarjuna/">https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nagarjuna/</a>, pp.1-25 [25].</li> <li>○ 9. Garfield, Jay. 1995. Chapter XVIII: Examination of the Self and Entities. In <i>The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way</i>. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 245-66 [22].</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>Library visit and discussion</b></li> <li>• Summary: This week will focus on an experiential learning experience at Library West. It will feature instruction from library faculty about using library materials, which provides an opportunity to explore the UF's holdings to further your understanding of the course content and to facilitate self-reflection on related topics.</li> </ul>



Week	Topic & Assignment
W 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>What are the primary sets of interpersonal social relationships that serve as grounds for moral cultivation in the Confucian tradition, and what are the main interpretations of human nature that underline them?</b></li> <li>• Summary: Among the main ideas associated with Confucius and his followers are the notions of personal improvement and self-realization, via a program of moral cultivation that takes place within the context of social interactions and interpersonal relationships. While later Confucian thinkers agreed with the basic notion of human perfectibility, they disagreed in the basic assessment of human nature. For Menzi, human nature was fundamentally good and imbued with all the main virtues, while for Xunzi human nature was inherently “evil” and virtues were something that had to be acquired or learned. We will examine these developments and ideas from historical, political, religious, and philosophical perspectives.</li> <li>• Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 10. Poceski, Mario. 2009. The Classical Confucian Tradition. In <i>Introducing Chinese Religions</i>. New York and London: Routledge, pp 34-59 [25].</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>What are the metaphorical conceptions of the self, as described in the <i>Zhuangzi</i>?</b></li> <li>• Summary: <i>Zhuangzi</i> is among the best-known classic of pre-modern Chinese literature, renowned for its philosophical insights and beautify language. Adopting literary, philosophical, and religious perspectives, we will explore the conceptions of self that are presented in the text, primarily by using the contemporary metaphor theory.</li> <li>• Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 11. Slingerland, Edward. 2004. Conceptions of the Self in the Zhuangzi: Conceptual Metaphor Analysis and Comparative Thought. <i>Philosophy East and West</i> 54/3, pp. 322-42 [20].</li> <li>◦ 12. Watson, Burton. 2003. Discussion of making all things equal. In <i>Zhuangzi: Basic Writings</i>. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 3rd ed., pp. 31-44 [13].</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>In what ways was the idea of “mind is buddha” interpreted in classical Chan texts, and how it that relevant to understanding both the essentialist and non-essentialist interpretations of the Buddha nature theory?</b></li> <li>• Summary: Among the main philosophical and religious standpoints of Chinese Buddhism is the notion of universal buddha nature, which implies the immanence of buddhahood in all beings. Within that theoretical framework, the universal buddha nature is construed as the true identity or real nature of each person. In this section, we look at some of the ways the buddha nature theory was deployed and problematized within the Chan/Zen tradition, with a focus on “mind is buddha,” the famous adage articulated in classical Chan literature.</li> <li>• Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 13. Poceski, Mario. 2007. Mind, Buddha, and the Way. In <i>Ordinary Mind as the Way: The Hongzhou School and the Growth of Chan Buddhism</i>. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 157-92 [35].</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>Instructions and discussion of the analytical paper</b></li> <li>• Summary: This week will focus on formulating a paper topic, formatting a paper, developing a thesis and structure for your paper, and writing an abstract.</li> <li>• Assignment: abstract and bibliography, 50 points</li> </ul>

Week	Topic & Assignment
W 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Topic: What is the fundamental insight into the nature of the self and phenomenal reality that serves as a foundation for the various contemplative practices articulated by the main traditions of Chinese Buddhism?</b></li> <li>• Summary: The Middle Way doctrine of emptiness, initially formulated by Nagarjuna in India, was transmitted and expanded in China. That influenced the creation of uniquely Chinese schools of Buddhism such as Tiantai and Chan (Zen). In this section we explore how philosophical ideas about the absence of self, in persons and things, were recast in term of contemplative practices, which constituted a sophisticated program of self-cultivation and self-transformation. This also serves as an example of a fusion of philosophical and religious perspectives, within the historical context of Chinese culture, that still remain relevant to contemporary concerns.</li> <li>• Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 14. Poceski, Mario. "Disappearing Act: Calmness and Insight in Chinese Buddhism." <i>Journal of Chinese Religions</i> 48/1 (2020): 1–30.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>Mindfulness practice</b> (experiential learning)</li> <li>• Summary: Experiential learning is an important part of the course. This week students learn firsthand about the practice of mindfulness. In addition to receiving background information about the practice and its place withing the Buddhist contemplative traditions, students engage in two guided sessions of mindfulness practice. Additionally, during the Friday discussion session, they can share their personal experiences and reflections on the practice.</li> <li>• Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15. Poceski, Mario. "Mindfulness, Cultural Appropriation, and the Global Diffusion of Buddhist Contemplative Practices." <i>International Journal for the Study of Chan Buddhism and Human Civilization</i> 7 (2020): 1–15.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assignment: weekly discussion paper, 50 points</li> </ul>
W 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>Review and Discussion</b></li> <li>• Summary: This week we will focus on discussing the final paper, by reviewing the course content, clarifying methods of citation and organization, and addressing any remaining questions or concerns.</li> <li>• Assignment: Experiential learning report, 150 points</li> </ul>
W 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic: <b>Personal reflections and final discussion</b></li> <li>• Summary: The semester ends with a general discussion of the main questions that frame the whole course, about notions of self and identity formations. Students will also be able to share the findings of their research and their reflections on the topic, considering their personal backgrounds and experiences, and in the relation to life in contemporary America.</li> <li>• Assignment: Analytical essay, 300 points</li> </ul>

## IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the Quest and General Education learning outcomes as follows:

- **Content:** *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

- Students learn how to identify, describe, and explain the construction of selfhood with other formulations of being in relation to classical Indian and Chinese philosophy and religion, and students learn how to identify, describe, and explain the construction of selfhood with other formulations of being in relation to classical Indian and Chinese philosophy and religion (Q1, H, N).
- Students acquire knowledge about the construction of selfhood with other formulations of being in relation to classical Indian and Chinese philosophy and religion (Q1, H).
- Students learn how to identify, describe, and explain the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that generated concepts of selfhood (Q1, H, N)
- **Critical Thinking:** *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*
  - By careful reading, critical analysis, thoughtful reflection, and open discussion of the course materials and the topics about selfhood and identity formation presented in them, as well as by conducting independent research with Experiential Learning, students receive valuable training in critical thinking and effective analysis. (Q1, H, N).
  - Students learn how to analyze or evaluate complex issues, such as selfhood, or the intricate intersections of philosophical and religious identities, from a multiplicity of perspectives (Q1, H).
  - Students learn how to identify, describe, and explain the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that generated concepts of selfhood (Q1, H, N)
- **Communication:** *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*
  - Students develop important writing communication skills that enable them to intelligently identify and discuss key issues in selfhood, explaining them clearly and logically, with a sense of nuance and from a multiplicity of perspectives (Q1, H, N).
- **Connection:** *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*
  - Students reflect on some of the central issues that shape life in contemporary and ancient Asia, such as conceptions of selfhood. The course topics lend themselves to critical self-reflection about issues of central import that affect us all, in a manner that is meant to stimulate critical thought and engagement on the self. That (hopefully) will have lasting effects on the students intellectual and personal developments, at UF and beyond, as they enter the professional world and participate constructively in America's and Florida's multicultural society and democratic system of governance (Q1, H, N).

## V. Quest Learning Experiences

### 1. Experiential Learning Component

Experiential learning is an important element of learning that is closely integrated into the regular schedule of the course. There is a whole week dedicated to it, during which the students learn and gain firsthand experience in the practice of mindfulness. First, students receive background information about the practice and its place withing the Asian contemplative traditions. Then, the main part: students engage in two guided sessions of mindfulness practice, given by the instructor. Additionally, during the Friday discussion session, they share their personal experiences and reflections on the practice. This is followed by their writing of a short paper, which contains personal reflections on the practice of mindfulness and its relevance to contemporary life.

## 2. Self-Reflection Component

Throughout the course, students are encouraged to think deeply and have ample opportunities for self-reflection. Given the pervasiveness of religion and the importance of identity creation for individuals and communities, the very topic and contents of the course lands themselves readily to thoughtful reflection and self-examination. Students can reflect on their own identities, along with the assumptions that are embedded in them and the implications of that for their understanding of others and the worlds they occupy. Additionally, the course facilitates students' enhanced understanding and appreciation of other religions and cultures, which can serve as constructive conceptual framework for reflecting on their own social mores and cultural norms. The self-reflection component is embedded in all aspects of the course: reading the assigned texts, listening to the lectures, the Friday discussions, research, and writing. In terms of specific graded assignments, self-reflection is incorporated in the weekly reading summaries and responses, the personal reflection essay on the experiential component, and the analytical paper. In essence, the various aspects of the course provide fecund grounds for thoughtful reflection on key issues related to the perennial human quest for identity and meaning, in a contemporary American context that is relevant to the personal life and civic engagement of each student.

## VI. Required Policies

### Attendance Policy

- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

## Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

## The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

## In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.