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Department: History

Course No: 1800 [106]

Credits: 3

Title: The Roots of Traditional Asia

Contact: Nancy Shoemaker

Content Area: CA1 Arts and Humanities and CA4 Diversity and Multiculturalism- International

Catalog Copy: The Roots of Traditional Asia Either semester. Three credits.

A survey of the early development and staying power of the traditional cultures from which the major societies of modern Asia have evolved.

Course Information: This course introduces students to features of the cultures of South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Given the diversity of these cultures and the length of their existence, it is impossible to undertake a comprehensive survey of their histories. The course focuses instead on the cultural and religious impact of similarities across Asia and striking differences, and to an understanding of traditions in the past and how they are reformulated in the present.

Course requirements include six quizzes and short paper assignments (40%) in addition to one midterm exam (25%) and one final examination (35%).

Major themes of the course are Asian religions and philosophies and their social and cultural manifestations, patterns of Asian economies, and political structures.

Meets Goals of Gen Ed: The course meets to various degrees all seven goals of general education. The four goals that are particularly integrated in the course are: 2. Acquire intellectual breadth and versatility; 4. Acquire moral sensitivity; 5.

Acquire awareness of their era and society; 6. Acquire consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience. Asian religions and thoughts, institutions and practices are often misunderstood and misrepresented. This course requires students to read both secondary literature and primary sources on Asia and thus expands students' intellectual horizon (2). Asian societies are often thought repressive by some; Asian people are portrayed particularly hardworking by others. Students are encouraged to discuss these controversial issues and thus become morally sensitive to different ways of solving social problems by peoples of different cultures (2 and 6). This course is on ancient Asia. In all class assignments, students are asked to provide historical settings of events and social institutions (5).

CA1 Criteria: The course meets two arts and humanities criteria, namely 1.) Investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experience; and 2.) Inquiries into philosophical and/or political theory. This course gives students an opportunity to critically investigate three ancient Asian civilizations: India, China, and Japan. Students are asked to read original religious and philosophical documents such as Confucius' Analects and the Law of Manu (India). They are also required to write analytically about how ideas are reflected in social and political institutions and practices.

CA4 Criteria: This course teaches students about cultures that are vastly different from their own. Course lectures and readings all put emphasis on varieties of human experiences, perceptions, thoughts, values, and/or modes of creativity even among different Asian civilizations (goal 1). On the other hand, students are also encouraged to find similarities among different cultures and to analyze the differences between cultural diversity and cultural determinism (goal 3).

Role of Grad Students: Graduate student assistants help with grading and discussion.

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