

## Monks, Warriors and Courtesans: An Introduction to Asian Cultures

Meeting: M 5:30-8:15

TLC 3205

This is an introductory graduate seminar to Asian cultures, through the exploration of three civilizations: India, China and Japan. Through the textual traditions of India, China and Japan, we will explore key features of these three civilizations: the philosophical and religious traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism); the military traditions (soldiers, samurais, rebels and military strategists) and the social-entertainment realm of courtesans and their clientele.

Special emphasis in this course will reside in our use of texts in the construction of historical knowledge. We will further delve into an exploration of how to literary and fictional texts in understanding a culture and civilization. Finally, we will consider these texts as pedagogical tools to be used in the classroom.

Course delivery: Each week we will prepare readings for class. After a brief introductory section by myself, we will discuss the assigned readings. Following our break, we will continue our discussion of the book, ending up in a discussion on how the book can be used in teaching in a variety of scenarios.

### Learning Objectives

- Introduce three major cultures from Asia (India, China and Japan) and examine these cultures through key aspects of their political, religious, social and philosophical approaches through a comparative framework examining military, religious/philosophical and courtesan groups.
- Formulate and defend a historical argument in Standard English.
- Examine in detail the use of textual (primary source) materials in understanding historical development in these three civilizations
- Demonstrate a familiarity with the historiographical arguments concerning aspects of each civilization

### Required Books

Author/Translator	Title	Publisher
Tenzin Chogyil,	Life of the Buddha	Penguin
Easwaran, Eknath	The Bhagavad Gita	Nilgiri press
Valmiki/ A. Sattar	<i>Ramayana</i>	Penguin (India)
Umrao Jan Ada	The Courtesan of Lucknow	Orient
Ivanhoe and Van Norden	<i>Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.)	Hackett

Dawson, Raymond	<i>Sima Qian: The First Emperor</i>	Oxford
Idema, Wilt and Stephen West	<i>Records of the Three Kingdoms in Plain Language</i>	Hackett
Yu, Anthony	<i>The Monkey and the Monk.</i>	Univ of Chicago Press
Hanan, Patrick	<i>Courtesans and Opium</i>	Columbia UP
Tyler, Royall	<i>Tale of Genji</i>	Penguin
Mckinney, Meredith	<i>Kenko and Chomei – Essays in Idleness and Hojoki</i>	Penguin
Keene, Donald	<i>Chushingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers)</i>	Columbia UP
Sayo Masuda	<i>Autobiography of a Geisha</i>	Columbia UP

### Grades/Evaluation

Analyses (2-3 pages) 12x2, 1%	25%
Essays (5-6 pages) 3x10%	30%
Discussion	20%
Final Paper (14-16 pages)	25%

Short **analyses** are to be submitted at the start of class on the day that the readings have been assigned. The analyses will offer intellectual insight into the work, with the writer examining some feature or aspect of the document. No secondary readings are required in preparing these analyses, and you might want to think of these exercises as ways of exploring the text. In addition to the main part of the text, you are required to sketch up to a page description of how to use this work in a classroom.

Students will also write a short **essay** at the end of each of the three sections of the course. The due date will be on the Friday of the week we completed discussion of the geographical section. Students will select any topic they so wish to, engaging with as many of the works as we read in the section.

**The Final paper** is a substantial work in which students engage with a topic that they find relevant across each of the three civilizations. Students will examine some secondary research in creating a backdrop for their paper, but the emphasis in the paper should be close readings of the documents from the course.

This paper will be developed over the semester, with specific steps in the creation of the paper due throughout the semester. (Please see schedule for specifics of dates). At the end of the first section of the course, you will submit your selected topic with a preliminary list of primary and secondary sources. The second step for your essay will be a write-up of your topic with a refinement of your bibliography. The third step will be a rough draft of your paper – it may or may not include the Japanese component of the paper. This will be

due the next to last week, allowing me to return your draft in the final class. The last step is submission of your final draft.

**Discussion** will be based on your general participation in discussion of the books assigned. To help prepare for this, you should prepare a couple of questions for the discussion portion of the class. (This does not have to be written down or submitted – but it helps focus your attention...) Our pedagogical section will also allow you a chance to shine in class...

### **Attendance policy.**

Attendance is mandatory. You may miss one class without penalty, but each class missed after that will result in a reduction of a full letter grade from your final grade.

### **Common information at UWG:**

Please carefully review the following information at this link:

<https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

This link contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

### **Student Conduct and Netiquette**

Our course is conducted at the University of West Georgia and should follow all rules of conduct that the College adheres to. In addition to these governing rules, I would like to stress that the class discussion are a shared space and thus must take into account that we do not all share the same sensibilities and outlooks. Using good judgment and proper language in our discussions is essential. That we should be challenged in our opinions and ideas is part of the classroom experience, but we should balance that in the manner in which we make these challenges. So, please be courteous and professional to me and your classmates in your emails.

### **Academic Honesty – Plagiarism**

Plagiarism or any form of academic dishonesty will incur serious penalty in this class. Plagiarism, the use of improperly sourced materials passed off as one's own, is a serious matter. As this is a graduate class, I think that it is most appropriate to give any student who plagiarizes an F on the course and report them to the Department and the University. Both the History Department and the University of West Georgia take these matters seriously, and expulsion from the program and the university are potential consequences. As a matter of principle, I use Turnitin plagiarism detector on all submitted assignments.

## Brief Schedule – See Separate Full schedule for further dates

### Schedule

#### Part I – India

August 14	Introduction
August 21	Buddhism: <i>The Life of the Buddha</i>
August 28	Hinduism I: A Philosophical Introduction – <i>Bhagavad Gita</i>
September 4	<b>No Class</b>
September 11	Hinduism II: The Hero – <i>Ramayana</i>
September 18	<i>The Courtesan of Lucknow</i> (Umrao Jan Ada)
September 22	Short Essay on India due

#### Part II - China

September 25	How to Govern China: Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi
October 2	How to Live (and govern): The Daoists: Laozi and Zhuangzi
October 9	Building and Destroying Empires: Han Feizi Sima Qian's <i>Record of the Historian</i> <i>Records of the Three Kingdoms</i>
October 16	Buddhism comes to China: <i>Monkey and the Monk</i>
October 23	Qing China: <i>Courtesans and Opium</i>
October 27	Short Essay on China due

#### Part III – Japan

October 30	Heian Japan – Court and Aesthetics: <i>The Tale of Genji</i>
November 6	Medieval Japan and Monastic Culture: <i>Kenkō and Chōmei – Essays in Idleness and Hōjōki</i>
November 13	Tokugawa – <i>Chushingura: A Puppet Play</i>
November 20	<b>No Class</b>
November 27	Modern: <i>Autobiography of a Geisha</i>
December 1	Short Essay on Japan due
December 4	Discussion of Final Paper
December 8	Final Paper due