

Eastern and Transpersonal Psychologies

PSYC 4130-01

(subject to revision)

University of West Georgia

Spring 2018

MW 3:30 pm – 5:20 pm

Pafford 305

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Office Hours:

T 5:00 – 6:00 pm

W 2:15 – 3:15 pm

R 12:45 – 1:45 pm

& by appointment

Bring your syllabus to class!

Course Description

This course examines the philosophies, histories, and practices of the major Eastern religious traditions—Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism—and prominent ideas in the field of transpersonal psychology. Study of the Eastern traditions provides insight into the nature of mind, the person, and the processes of psycho-spiritual transformation, while the study of transpersonal psychology reveals the ways in which Western theorists have attempted to integrate these insights into a broadened understanding of human psychology. Owing to the broad scope of this course, we will seek a thematic rather than comprehensive understanding. In complementation to the theoretical material, we will engage in a wide variety of meditation practices aimed at focusing on our mind's internal states in order to deepen both conceptual and personal understanding.

The course will be structured in three parts. First, we will introduce the field of transpersonal psychology and its relationship to Eastern thought. Second, we will consider each of the four major Eastern traditions in turn, which will constitute the bulk of the course. Finally, we briefly will consider how these various traditions can be construed as elucidating a “perennial philosophy” and “secular ethics.” At various times during the semester, we will view short films in order to provide visual and audio images of the subjects at hand.

Required Texts

The following texts are required. You must purchase a copy to use during this course. You may purchase an electronic copy of Mitchell's book, but must purchase a print copy of Thich Nhat Hanh's book.

Mitchell, S. (2009). *Tao te Ching: An illustrated journey*. New York: Francis Lincoln.

Thich Nhat Hanh. (1988). *The heart of understanding: Commentaries on the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Additional required articles and book chapters will be placed on Course Den. You are required to print these out and bring them to class during the weeks they are assigned. See the Course Outline below for details.

Recommended Texts

The following texts are recommended for those seeking a richer and more in-depth understanding of the material.

Ricard, M. (2010). *Why meditate?* Carlsbad, California: Hay House.

Walsh, R. N. (1999). *Essential spirituality: The 7 central practices to awaken heart and mind*. New York: J. Wiley.

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

- Define, name, and recall the basic principles of each of the Eastern systems of thought and their applicability to human psychology.
- Explain and illustrate the basic ideas of transpersonal psychology and how they are informed by Eastern traditions.
- Demonstrate the ability to consider various personal, social, and ethical problems from an Eastern perspective and to integrate such understandings into your own philosophical and/or spiritual framework.
- Use personal reflection to demonstrate insight into the nature of mind gained through the study and practice of meditation.
- Use personal reflection to demonstrate deepened understanding of the human condition and your own place in it.

Course Format

Classes will consist of lectures, large and small group discussion, student presentations, and occasional video presentations. Weekly reading assignments are provided in the Course Outline below. I will provide specific dates by which readings should be completed. *You are required to bring a hardcopy of each reading to class on the day it is assigned.* Doing so is essential to the lecture process, which largely will comprise commentary on the readings themselves. You will need to refer to specific passages of the readings in class. (You are strongly encouraged to mark your texts to indicate important passages as you read them and as we go over them in class.) In other instances, lectures will be delivered in Power Point format. When we engage in formal group work, you will be asked to assign roles to each member and report your findings to the class as a whole.

Course Requirements and Grading System

Participation/Class Citizenship	20%
Unit I Exam	25%
Unit II Exam	40%
Individual Presentation & Paper	<u>15%</u>
	100%

Participation & Class Citizenship (20%):

- (1) Participation: Attendance and active participation are required for this course. You also must abide by the principles of good class citizenship as will be discussed in class and posted on Course Den. High grades are reserved for those who are regular in attendance, punctual, prepared, respectful of classmates and the professor, and actively engaged in learning. Violations to the class citizenship policy will lower this grade. See also “Course Expectations” below.
- (2) Attendance policy: You are allowed three absences for the semester, no questions asked. *Beyond these three absences (for any reason), each additional absence will reduce your participation grade by ten percent. Two instances of being late to class will be counted as one absence. Each violation of the cell phone policy (see “course expectations” below) will be counted as an absence.* Therefore, please be on time and save your absences for genuine emergencies or illnesses.
- (3) Reading Assignments: It is essential that you complete assigned readings on time and come to class prepared to discuss the material and ask questions. *Please bring assigned readings to class* (see accepted media below in Course Expectations). Many of our readings require a contemplative attunement and/or a critical eye, so please devote sufficient time to them.
- (4) Written assignments: There are three kinds of written assignments that will be counted toward your participation grade.
 - a. In-class assignments: You may be asked to write something in class and turn it in. These typically will not be returned to you. These assignments cannot be made up, so be sure to come to class and have notebook paper available.
 - b. Homework assignments: Periodically, you will be assigned an activity and/or brief paper to complete at home prior to class. Homework assignments must be typed, printed, stapled, and turned in either at the beginning or end of class. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. No exceptions.
 - c. Class Citizenship Checklist: A checklist for class citizenship will be posted on Course Den. Periodically, I will ask you to print, complete, and submit this form.
- (5) In-class brief presentations: You may be asked to come to the front of the class to present on something from the course material or from your personal reflections. You will be given advanced notice. In my experience, these exercises often are highlights of the course. It is an opportunity to get to know one another in a fun and supportive way.
- (6) Course Expectations: For additional principles and guidelines constituting good class citizenship, see the list of “Course Expectations” below.

Exam Unit I (25%):

On **February 14**, you will take an in-class exam on the first unit on Transpersonal Psychology. You must bring a green- or bluebook (preferably the smaller of the two sold on campus). This exam will be in multiple-choice format. A study guide will be provided at least one week in advance.

Exam Unit II (40%):

On **April 11**, you will take an in-class exam on the second unit on Eastern Psychologies. Unlike the first exam, this exam's format will include multiple-choice, short answer questions, and possibly an essay. A study guide will be provided at least one week in advance.

Individual Presentation & Paper (15%):

On one of the last two days of the semester (**April 25** or **April 30**), you will give a 4-minute presentation of the three themes that were most significant for you this semester. The day that you present, you will submit to me a paper on this topic. Your grade will be based on the quality of both your presentation and paper. More details will be forthcoming in class.

Department Policy: If you miss your final exam without having made prior arrangements, you will receive a grade of '0', which may significantly affect your final grade in the class. If you miss your exam due to an emergency, please contact the Psychology office at (678) 839-6510 or go to Melson Room 123 as soon as possible in order to complete the application entitled "Missed Final Exam: Verification of Emergency." This form will need to be approved by the department chair in order to receive an incomplete grade, which may allow you the time to make up your exam or complete your final assignments. This application will require documentation and authorization from you to verify your emergency.

Course Expectations

1. Punctuality. Please arrive at the classroom on time. Our class begins at 3:30 pm (not any time after) and ends at 5:20 pm (not any time before).
2. Personal responsibility: You should accept responsibility for your own work and assignments. When you have questions about deadlines, assignments, or other expectations for this course, you should consult the syllabus before contacting the professor.
3. Reading materials. It is required that you bring print copies of assigned reading materials to class. The one exception to this rule is Mitchell's *Tao te Ching*, which you are permitted to purchase electronically. For other texts, using e-readers encourages browsing rather than serious, in-depth reading, and creates potential distractions in class. That said, if it is financially not possible for you to pay the difference for the printed materials or to print out papers from Course Den, you may submit to me a written request to use e-readers in class. Only if you submit a request

and have it approved can you use electronic readers in class. Note that you *not permitted to use cell phones* under any circumstances other than an emergency situation discussed with me prior to the start of class.

4. Note taking. In order to do well in class, you must take notes on lecture material. This essential form of active learning facilitates comprehension and retention of course material. Notes must be taken with pen and paper; you are not permitted to use electronic devices for this purpose. At some point during the semester, I may ask to see your class notes in order to assess your level of engagement and comprehension.
5. Cell phone policy. Please turn off your cell phone before the start of class. *Using your phone during class will be considered an absence*. If you have an emergency need to have access to your phone, please consult with me before class.
6. Eating policy. Eating is not allowed during class (except on special occasions as announced). A beverage with a sealable lid is permitted. If you have a demonstrated medical need, please consult with me.
7. Email policy. In order to preserve work/life balance, I encourage you to only send or check emails during certain hours on weekdays. I will reply to your emails within 24 hours from 9:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. on non-holiday weekdays. (Emails sent on Friday can expect a response on the following non-holiday weekday, whether Monday or Tuesday.) Please use proper “li”—in the Confucian sense, as will be explained—in your email communication.
8. Homework assignments. All assignments must be typed, stapled, printed, and turned in at the beginning of the class (at 3:30 pm). It is your responsibility to keep a copy of your assignments. Late assignments will NOT be accepted. No exceptions.
9. Special accommodations. If you need any special accommodations as sanctioned by the university, please notify me within the first two weeks of class.
10. Office Hours. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or problems. You are encouraged to use my office hours (listed above) for that purpose, particularly for involved questions. Questions regarding the content of the course material are especially welcome. Arranging an appointment is advisable so that you won’t have to wait.
11. Missed classes. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to learn of any new assignments or announcements. If for some reason you cannot get that from a classmate, you may ask me.
12. Diversity: This course honors diversity and inclusion. Please respect people of all backgrounds, sexual preferences, and gender identities.
13. The Honor Code and Plagiarism: On the first day of class, you will be required to sign a pledge to abide by the University’s Academic Honor Code (see below), and to pledge all submitted work as a reminder of that commitment. Plagiarism (the misrepresentation of another’s words or ideas as your own, from whatever source) is strictly prohibited and will be reported to the university. Please let me know if you have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism. The honor code (<http://www.westga.edu/undergrad/1762.htm>) reads as follows:

At West Georgia, the student is expected to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and excellence. Not only does academic honesty preserve the integrity of both the student and the institution, but it is also essential in gaining a true education. The West

Georgia student, therefore, pledges not to lie, cheat, steal, or engage in plagiarism in the pursuit of his or her studies and is encouraged to report those who do. See *Connection and Student Handbook*, Appendix E, Academic Dishonesty.

14. Student Rights and Responsibilities:

Please carefully review the information provided by the following link:
<https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-language-course-syllabi.php>

This file contains important information pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class. These statements are updated as federal, state, university and accreditation standards change, so you should review this information anew each semester.

Technological Resources

Audio-visual equipment (e.g., computer and overhead projector) will be used for Power Point and other video presentations. Course Den will be used as an electronic learning environment. Presentation of the syllabus, paper assignments, and other communications will be conducted via this means. Any electronic communication regarding grades can and *must* be had through Course Den as opposed to email. (For all other communication, please use my regular email address (apope@westga.edu).)

Course Outline

- *The following readings are subject to revision as the semester progresses. This could include the addition of assignments not listed below; I will try to give ample notice and will post updated versions of the course outline on Course Den.*
- When there are multiple readings listed for a given class, it is recommended that you read them in the order listed.

UNIT I – TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Week #1 (Jan. 8, 10)

Introduction to Eastern & Transpersonal Psychologies

- *Syllabus*
- Mitchell, *Tao te Ching*

Week #2 (Jan. 15, 17)

History and Key Concepts of Transpersonal Psychology

*****January 15, Martin Luther King Day, NO CLASSES*****

- Valle, *“The Emergence of Transpersonal Psychology”* (Course Den)
- (Optional) Walsh, *“The Transpersonal Movement: A History and State of the Art”* (Course Den)

Week #3 (Jan. 22, 24)

History and Key Concepts of Transpersonal Psychology (continued) & Meditation

- Valle, “*The Emergence of Transpersonal Psychology*” (continued)
- In-class viewing of the documentary *Dhamma Brothers* (January 24)

Week #4 (Jan. 29, 31)

Contemplative Psychology & Meditation

- De Wit, “*The Case for Contemplative Psychology*” (Course Den)
- Welwood, “*Introduction (pp. 3-5)*” (Course Den)
- Welwood, “*Between Heaven and Earth*” (Course Den)

Week #5 (Feb. 5, 7)

Psychospiritual Transformation and its Traps

- Welwood, “*Between Heaven and Earth*” (continued)
- Ram Dass, “*Promises and Pitfalls of the Spiritual Path*” (Course Den)

Week #6 (Feb. 12, 14)

Exam—Unit I

- Catch up & review, Feb. 12
- **Exam, Feb. 14**

UNIT II – EASTERN PSYCHOLOGIES

Week #7 (Feb. 19, 21)

Confucianism

- (Optional) Tu, “*Embodying the Universe*” (Course Den)

Week #8 (Feb. 26, 28)

Taoism

- Mitchell, *Tao te Ching*
- Selections from *Zhuangzi* (Course Den)
- (Optional) Greaves, “*The Holy Man*” (Course Den)

Week #9 (Mar. 5, 7)

Hinduism

- Easwaran, “*Introduction*” to *Bhagavad Gita* (Course Den)
- “*The Wish-fulfilling Tree*” (Course Den)

Week #10 (Mar. 12, 14)

Theravada Buddhism

- Rahula, “The Buddhist Attitude of Mind” (from *What the Buddha Taught*) (*Course Den*)

***** SPRING BREAK (No classes March 19-21) *****

Week #11 (Mar. 26, 28)
Mahayana Buddhism

- Thich Nhat Hanh. (1988). *The heart of understanding: Commentaries on the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, Chapters 1-3; 5-8

Week #12 (Apr. 2, 4)
Mahayana Buddhism, continued

- Thich Nhat Hanh. (1988). *The heart of understanding: Commentaries on the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, Chapters 9-16.

Week #13 (Apr. 9, 11)
Exam—Unit II

- Catch up & review, Apr. 9
- *Exam*, Apr. 11

UNIT III – EASTERN & TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGIES

Week #14 (April 16, 18)
Perennial Philosophy

- Walsh (*from Essential Spirituality*) (*Course Den*)

Week #15 (April 23, 25)
Secular Ethics & Student Presentations

- Dalai Lama (*from Beyond Religion*) (*Course Den*) (*April 23*)
 DUE: Individual presentations and papers, April 25

Week #16 (April 30)
Student Presentations

DUE: Individual presentations and papers

Let’s have a great semester!