

Bergen Community College
Division of Arts & Humanities
Department of Philosophy & Religion

Course Syllabus

PHR-106 Eastern Philosophy

Basic Information about Course and Instructor

Semester and year:
Course and Section Number:
Meeting Times and Locations:

Instructor:
Office Location:
Phone:
Departmental Secretary: [optional]
Office Hours:
Email Address:

Course Description

PHR-106 Eastern Philosophy is an introduction to the major philosophical traditions of China and India, concentrating on the work of such major thinkers as Lao Tzu, Confucius, Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Shankara, and Ramanuja. Topics of discussion include the nature, problems, and methods of eastern philosophy; the nature of ultimate reality; the nature of the self; the nature and existence of God; the nature and limits of human knowledge; human nature and the human condition; the meaning and value of life and death; the nature of the good life; and the search for enlightenment.

3 lectures, 3 credits

General Education Course – Humanities Elective – Diversity Course

Student Learning Goals: As a result of meeting the requirements in this course, students will be able to

1. identify the major periods and the major figures in the history of philosophy (east and west);
2. identify and analyze the basic problems of eastern philosophy in the fields of metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology;
3. interpret, summarize, and paraphrase, both orally and in writing, the views of philosophers as expressed in philosophical texts;
4. use the logical and critical thinking methods of philosophy to analyze and evaluate the ways in which Eastern philosophers attempt to solve the problems of philosophy; and
5. state and support their own views on philosophical issues logically, coherently, concisely, and clearly, both orally and in writing.

In pursuit of the foregoing objectives, the course is based on the reading and discussion of philosophical writings of leading Chinese and Indian thinkers (i.e., on primary sources, not text books); the basic principles and methods of logical reasoning are introduced; the techniques of philosophical research and

writing are reviewed; students are given the opportunity and are encouraged to participate actively in class discussions; and students are required to do a substantial amount of expository and critical writing in response to the material presented in the course.

The Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in this course are intended to be aligned with as many of the college's Core Competencies and General Education Goals as possible. They are also correlated with the overall Learning Goals of the Philosophy Program. In addition, student progress in reaching the course's SLOs is to be assessed through a variety of assessment types (tools) and on the basis of a variety of assessment criteria. These alignments and correlations are depicted in the [attached document](#). [\[Back to course listing\]](#)

See an [individual classroom syllabus](#) for this course based on the policies stated in this departmental syllabus. [\[Back to course listing\]](#)

Course Content

The course is intended to introduce students to the (at least general) history of philosophy (east and west), to the basic problems and methods of Chinese and Indian philosophy, and to the leading figures in the major philosophical traditions of China and India. Therefore, the course includes the following (mandatory) components:

1. A review of the (at least general) history of philosophy (east and west).
2. A discussion of the major problems and methods of Chinese and Indian philosophy.
3. The study of the work of at least one major philosopher from each of the following traditions: Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.

In addition to the foregoing mandatory components, the course may include (in the discretion of the instructor) the study of eastern philosophical traditions other than the ones specified above and of modern Chinese and/or Indian philosophers (e.g., Fung Yu-lan, Hsiung Shih-li, Aurobindo Ghose, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan).

The course may be presented as an historically-ordered study of the writings of major eastern philosophers, or as a topically-ordered study of the ways in which eastern philosophers have approached the major problems of philosophy.

Special Features of the Course (if any) [to be designated by the instructor]

E.g., the use of learning technologies in the course (Internet, PowerPoint, etc.); the inclusion of technological literacy and/or information literacy learning in the course; etc.

Course Texts and/or Other Study Materials

The **required text** for this course is *Readings in Philosophy: Eastern & Western Sources*. Ed. George Cronk, Toby De Marco, Peter Dlugos, and Paul Eckstein. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil Publishing, Inc., 2nd ed., 2004. ISBN 0-7380-0781-1.

Recommended Supplementary Sources

Primary Sources

- Bonevac, Daniel, and Stephen Phillips (eds.). *Understanding Non-Western Philosophy*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1993.
- Chan, Wing-Tsit (ed.). *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Confucius. *Analects*. Trans. D.C. Lau. New York: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Lao Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*. Trans. and ed. Stephen Mitchell. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988. [There are many other English versions of this classic.]
- Nagarjuna. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika*. Trans. and Commentary Jay L. Garfield. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, and Charles A. Moore (eds.). *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.
- Ramanuja. *The Vedanta-Sutras with the Commentary of Ramanuja*. Trans. George Thibaut. Volume 48 of *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. F. Max Müller. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1989.
- Shankara. *The Vedanta-Sutras with the Commentary of Sankaracarya*. Trans. George Thibaut. Volumes 34 and 38 of *The Sacred Books of the East*, ed. F. Max Müller. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1988.
- Vasubandhu. *Seven Works of Vasubandhu*. Trans. and ed. Stefan Anacker. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1984.

Secondary Sources

- Hackett, Stuart C. *Oriental Philosophy*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979.
- Koller, John M. *Oriental Philosophies*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2nd ed., 1985.
- Phillips, Stephen H. *Classical Indian Metaphysics*. Chicago: Open Court, 1995.
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. *Indian Philosophy*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Zimmer, Heinrich. *Philosophies of India*. Ed. Joseph Campbell. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Reference Works

- The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*. Ed. Ingrid Fischer-Schreiber *et al.* Boston: Shambala Publications, Inc., 1994.
- Reese, William L. (ed.). *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 2nd ed., 1996.

Writing and Critical Thinking Requirement(s)

Because PHR-106 is a General Education course, it requires students to complete a variety of critical thinking and writing assignments. These assignments may include class discussions and debates requiring the application of critical thinking skills, short in-class essays, out-of-class writing projects (journals, research papers, argument-analysis papers, book reviews, etc.), tests and examinations containing essay components, and so forth. Instructors will respond to and comment on students' writing in detail.

Grading Policy

A student's final grade for the course is based primarily on his or her performance on the required work for the course (writing assignments, examinations, class presentations, etc.) and on his or her overall mastery of the material covered in the course. A student's class participation may also be evaluated, and the grade thereon may be used as a factor in determining the student's final grade for the course; but a class participation grade will count for no more than fifteen percent (15%) of the final grade.

Attendance Policy

BCC Attendance Policy:

All students are expected to attend punctually every scheduled meeting of each course in which they are registered. Attendance and lateness policies and sanctions are to be determined by the instructor for each section of each course. These will be established in writing on the individual course outline. Attendance will be kept by the instructor for administrative and counseling purposes.

Philosophy and Religion Departmental Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually. Attendance will be taken at each class session. It is expected that class will be conducted such that students will benefit in their written work by the lectures and class discussion. If students occasionally arrive late, they should be encouraged to enter quietly, not disturbing the class. If students miss class, they should be encouraged to use the course calendar to stay abreast of material. It is probably a good idea for students to find study partners and to exchange telephone numbers. Make-ups for examinations should be allowed by the instructor if, in the instructor's judgment, the student has presented a good excuse for missing the work. Instructors may penalize work which is late; however, the instructor's policies for make-ups and late work must be clearly specified on the student guide.

Attendance Policy in this Course:

[To be designated by the instructor]

Other College, Divisional, and/or Departmental Policy Statements [optional but recommended]

Examples:
Statement on plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty.
ADA statement.
Sexual Harassment statement.
Statement on acceptable use of BCC technology.
Statement on the purpose and value of faculty office hours.

Student and Faculty Support Services [optional but recommended]

List support services, e.g., the Writing Center, the Math Lab, the Tutorial Center, Online Writing Lab (OWL), Office of Specialized Services, etc. Include information on the BCC Library.

Example:

Student and Faculty Support Services

The Distance Learning Office – for any problems you may have accessing your online courses	Room C-334	201-612-5581 psimms@bergen.edu
Smarthinking Tutorial Service	On Line at:	www.bergen.edu/library/learning/tutor/smart/index.asp
The Tutoring Center	Room S-118	201-447-7908
The Technology Assisted Learning Lab (Math and English)	Room C-110	201-447-7988
The Writing Center	Room C-110	201-447-7136
The Online Writing Lab (OWL)		www.bergen.edu/owl
The Office of Specialized Services (for Students with Disabilities)	Room S-153	201-612-5270
The Sidney Silverman Library – Reference Desk	Room L-226	201-447-7436

Include the following statement on Logos – The BCC Philosophy Club

Logos – The BCC Philosophy Club

Logos usually meets on Tuesdays during the Activities Period, 12:30-1:25 PM, in Room L-342. I encourage you to join the club. Since you are interested in the study of philosophy, you should find the meetings and other activities of the philosophy club very interesting. For further information, check the Philosophy & Religion bulletin board adjacent to Room L-325A or contact LOGOS Advisor, Dr. Vanda Bozicevic (L-331, 201-493-7528, vbozicevic@bergen.edu). (LOGOS does not hold regular meetings during the summer.)

Include a Course Outline and Calendar [can be combined in a single syllabus section]

The Course Outline and Calendar must include all of the following elements:

- A daily or (at least) weekly schedule of topics to be covered.
- Dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment. (This does not mean that all evaluation of students must be in groups and at the same time. Exams and other means of assessment can be listed as "to be scheduled individually.")
- Due dates for major assignments – e.g., when is a paper due; if the topic has to be approved, when; if an outline or draft is an interim step, when it is due.
- Any required special events must be included in the outline/calendar, e.g., a lecture by a visiting speaker, a dramatic or musical performance, a field trip.
- Designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic (see sample below).
- A note to students stating that the course outline and calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Sample Format for Course Outline and Calendar

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topic/Activity	Learning Objectives	Assignments/Events
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

PART I: THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY – EASTERN AND WESTERN PERSPECTIVES

Required Reading 1:

Cronk, "Notes on the Nature of Philosophy" (handout)

Supplementary Readings on the Nature of Philosophy: TBA

PART II: CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY – HOW TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A CIVILIZATION

Required Reading 2:

Confucius (Kung Fu Tzu) (551-479 BC), the *Analects*, in *Readings*, 1-14

Supplementary Reading:

Mencius, *The Book of Mencius*, in *Readings*, 161-177

PART III: TAOIST PHILOSOPHY – FINDING "THE WAY" (TAO)

Required Reading 3:

Lao Tzu (6th century BC), the *Tao Te Ching*, in *Readings*, 15-24

Supplementary Readings:

Chuang Tzu, *The Book of Chuang Tzu*, in *Readings*, 139-160

Raymond M. Smullyan, from *The Tao is Silent*, in *Readings*, 503-513

PART IV: PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC (preparation for classical Indian philosophy)

Required Reading 4:

Cronk, "Philosophy and Logic" (handout)

Supplementary Readings on Logic: TBA

PART V: MAHAYANA BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY – VOIDISM VS. IDEALISM

Required Readings 5, 6, and 7:

Early Buddhist Texts, in *Readings*, 39-60

Nagarjuna (2nd century AD), *The Fundamentals of the Middle Way*, in *Readings*, 211-222

Vasubandhu (4th century AD), *Twenty Verses on Consciousness-Only*, in *Readings*, pp. 223-228

Supplementary Reading: TBA

PART VI: VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY – NON-DUALISM VS. QUALIFIED NON-DUALISM

Required Readings 8, 9, and 10:

From the *Upanishads*, in *Readings*, 25-37

Shankara (788-820 AD), from his *Commentary on the Vedanta Sutras*, in *Readings*, 229-250

Ramanuja (1017-1137 AD), from his *Commentary on the Vedanta Sutras*, in *Readings*, 251-261

Supplementary Readings:

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), from *An Idealist View of Life*, in *Readings*, 447-468

George Cronk, *On Shankara*.

SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

[with designation of Student Learning Objectives – by number – for each topic]

Note to Students: The following Course Outline and Calendar is tentative and subject to change, depending upon the progress of the class.

Week(s)	Date(s)	Topic/Activity/Assignments	Student Learning Objectives
1-2	Sep 6, 8, 13, 15	The Nature of Philosophy – Eastern and Western Perspectives Read "Notes on the Nature of Philosophy" (handout)	1, 2, 5
3-4	Sep 20, 22, 27, 29 Sep 20 Sep 27 Sep 29	Confucian Philosophy – How to Build and Maintain a Civilization <u>Read</u> Confucius Confucius/Lao Tzu Paper assigned (due by 10/17) Short Essay on the Nature of Philosophy due Midnight deadline for completing Student Information & Syllabus Comprehension Surveys	1, 3, 5
5-6	Oct 4, 6, 11, 13 Oct 13	Taoist Philosophy – Finding "The Way" <u>Read</u> Lao Tzu Short Essay on Confucius due	1, 3, 5
7-8	Oct 18, 20, 25, 27 Oct 18 Oct 25 Oct 27	Philosophy and Logic (preparation for classical Indian philosophy) <u>Read</u> "Philosophy & Logic" article Argument Analysis Paper assigned (due by 11/17) Confucius/Lao Tzu Paper due Short Essay on Lao Tzu due	4-5
9-11	Nov 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17 Nov 17	Mahayana Buddhist Philosophy – Voidism vs. Idealism <u>Read</u> <i>Early Buddhist Texts</i> , Nagarjuna, & Vasubandhu (in that order) Argument Analysis Paper due	1-5

12-14	Nov 22, 24, 29, Dec 1, 6, 8 Nov 22 Nov 25-28 Dec 8 Dec 13	Vedanta Philosophy – Non-Dualism vs. Qualified Non-Dualism <u>Read</u> <i>Upanishads</i> selections, Shankara, & Ramanuja (in that order) Short Essay on Buddhist Philosophy due Thanksgiving Weekend Final deadline for late and extra credit work – no late or extra credit work accepted after this date Short Essay on Vedanta Philosophy due	1-5
15	Dec 13, 15	Final Review	5