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LS 161H.01: Asian Humanities

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LS 161H
Asian Humanities
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:40-11:00
SS 344

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This course examines selected great works from four major Asian cultural spheres: the Middle East and Persia (Iran), South Asia (“India”), China, and Japan. While these texts, of course, cannot be regarded as fully representative of these cultures, they all could be considered “classics” which have exerted profound influence on these cultures and are both reflective of and productive of their cultures’ social mores, moral norms, philosophies, and ways of life at various key points in their histories. Thus, while reading, reflecting on, and writing about these works will not lead to full introductions to these cultures, through them we will learn much about what has been most valued in them.

Required Readings (all are available for purchase at the campus bookstore):

T.B Irving (translator), *Selections from the Noble Reading: An Anthology of Passages from the Qur’an*

Abolqasem Ferdowsi (Dick Davis, translator), *The Legend of Seyavash*

Naguib Mahfouz, *The Time and the Place and Other Stories*

Bhikkhu Bodhi (translator), *In the Buddha’s Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon*

Barbara Stoler Miller (translator), *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna’s Counsel in Time of War*

Stephen Alter and Wimal Dissanayake (editors), *The Penguin Book of Modern Indian Short Stories*

Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan w. Van Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*

Tsao Hsueh-Chin (Chi-Chen Wang, translator), *Dream of the Red Chamber*

Matsuo Basho (Sam Hamill, translator), *Narrow Road to the Interior and Other Writings*

Banana Yoshimoto, *Kitchen*

Grading

1. Class Participation: Class Preparation and Participation: completion of and reflection upon the reading assignment for the day, as well as consistent attendance and oral participation in regular discussions. No more than two absences will be accepted without written authorization from the Health Service or an advisor, counselor, or administrator. (20% of the final grade)

2. Four 4-5 page Papers. A choice of topics will be assigned for each paper, but there is also the opportunity to develop your own topic, with the instructor's approval (each paper is 20% of the final grade; thus the papers are worth 80% of the final grade in total)

Class Meetings and Assignments

I.

I. THE MIDDLE EAST and PERSIA (greater Iran)

- Tues. 1/29 Introduction to the Course
- Thurs. 1/31 Selections from *Selections from the Noble Reading* (The *Qur'an*)
- Tues. 2/5 Selections from *Selections from the Noble Reading* (The *Qur'an*)
- Thurs. 2/7 *The Legend of Seyavash*, pp. 1-50
- Tues. 2/12 *The Legend of Seyavash*, pp. 51-130 and "Translator's Afterword"
- Thurs. 2/14 Selections from Mahfouz's *The Time and the Place*
- Tues. 2/19 Selections from Mahfouz's *The Time and the Place*

II. INDIA

- Thurs. 2/21 Selections from the Buddha's sermons. *In the Buddha's Words*, pages 26, 29-30, 31-37; 75-76; 88-91, and 96-103
- Tues. 2/26 No class; professor away.
- Thurs. 2/28 Selections from the Buddha's sermons. *In the Buddha's Words*, pages 116-118, 126-128, 130-132, 137-139; 155-156, 166-167, 171-172, 172-174; 191-192, 203-205, 213-214, 218-219; 239-240.
- Tues. 3/5 Selections from the Buddha's sermons. *In the Buddha's Words*, pages 267, 269-272, 278-279, 281-290; 322-323, 335-337, 341-345, 364-365; 402-406, 410-412.
- **Wed. 3/6 First Papers Due by 5:00 PM in the Professor's Mailbox, LA 101****
- Thurs. 3/7 *Bhagavad-Gita*, First-Fifth Teachings
- Tues. 3/12 *Bhagavad-Gita*, Six-Eleventh Teachings
- Thurs. 3/14 *Bhagavad-Gita*, Twelfth-Eighteenth Teachings
- Tues. 13/19 Selections from *Modern Indian Short Stories*

Thurs. 3/21 Selections from *Modern Indian Short Stories*

III. China

Tues. 3/26 Selections from *The Analects* of Kongzi/Confucius (*Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*)

Thurs. 3/28 Selections from the Book of *Mengzi*/Mencius (*Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*)

****Fri. 3/29 Second Papers Due by 5:00 PM in the Professor's Mailbox, LA 101****

Tues. 4/9 Selections from the Book of *Zhuangzi*/Chuang Tzu

Thurs. 4/11 Selections from the Book of *Zhuangzi*/Chuang Tzu

Tues. 4/16 *Dream of the Red Chamber*, Part I, Chapters 1-6

Thurs. 4/18 *Dream...*, Part I, Chapters 7-18

Tues. 4/23 *Dream...*, Part I, Chapters 19-25

Thurs 4/25 *Dream...*, Part I, Chapters 26-33 and Part II, Chapters 34-40

IV. Japan

Tues. 4/30 Basho, *The Narrow Road to the Interior*

Thurs. 5/2 Basho: Select Haiku Poems

Tues. 5/7 Yoshimoto, *Kitchen*, pp. 3-74

****Wed. 5/8 Third Papers Due by 5:00 PM in the Professor's Mailbox, LA 101****

Thurs. 5/9 *Kitchen*, 75-105

****Friday 12/17: Fourth Paper Due by 5:00 PM in the Professor's Mailbox, LA 101****