Daoism (RELS 318): Spring 2013 – Syllabus

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Class times: MWF from 9.10 to 10.05am in Cherry Hall 304

Course description:
Philosophical Daoism derives its ethics and aesthetics from nature. Originating in c.500bce China, Daoism has continued to shape some of the most poetic and profound ideas of our place in the cosmos. East and Southeast Asia were greatly influenced by the spread of Daoism, both in its earlier, philosophical forms and its later, religious forms. Now, however, appreciation of these ideas has found global appeal, as modern readers continue to discover the beauty, humor, and depth of this early school of thought. The basic assumption of Daoism is that the cosmos has a guiding principle—a *dao*, a *dharma*, a *logos*—that cannot be described in writing because it is always in flux. Nevertheless, for humans to live freely and gracefully, they must discover this Way and live according to it. In this class we will read both primary texts and secondary scholarship in an attempt to apprehend this fascinating and abiding worldview.

Goals:
1. Information literacy: the ability to locate, filter, evaluate, and use information.
(Knowing how to use relevant data to objectively examine conflicting claims with logic, doubt, and humility.)
2. Critical thinking: the ability to identify, question, and substantiate or alter assumptions.
(Moving from an "is X true or false?" paradigm to a "let's weigh the evidence" paradigm.)
3. Objective communication: the ability to make logical, eloquent, and evidence-based arguments.
(Presenting your claims—and any opponent's claims—as accurately, precisely, and dispassionately as possible.)
4. Social responsibility: the recognition that civil rights naturally entail civic engagement.
(Acting for a peaceful society that strives to ameliorate the greed and exaggerated consumption of capitalism.)
5. *Eudaimonia*; Happiness: the early Greeks and early Chinese both knew it was the product of the mental, moral, and aesthetic self-cultivation that can and should attend a study of the arts.

Grades:
Attendance: 10%
Participation: 10%
Basic reading evaluation: 40% (Fifth week test: 10% + Final exam: 30%)
Choose two of the following projects for the remaining 40%:
i. Show a 20-30 minute Powerpoint presentation to give to the class on anything related to Daoism: class-evaluated
ii. Create a 5-10 minute digital narrative on anything related to Daoism in class: class-evaluated
iii. Maintain a blog (including comments section) for 10+ weeks with new content every week: class-evaluated
iv. Lead a class for 40 minutes through a scheduled reading: class-evaluated
v. Analyze three relevant articles or book reviews: each analysis must be at least 2 pages long
vi. Analyze the class readings for 7 weeks, relating each reading to the previous readings: 1 page for each week
vii. Conduct a 2-person debate on a relevant topic: evaluated by peers
viii. Other: suggest your own project (subject to my approval)
Or, for the whole 40%:
Write a 10 page (minimum) term paper: must turn in 2 drafts before the final paper
tldr: attendance: 10% + participation: 10% + 5th week test: 10% + final exam: 30% + project 1: 20% + project 2: 20% = 100%

Grading rubric: (See the "Grading" section at the end of this syllabus for more detail)
Information literacy: explicitly assess the currency, reliability, authority, and purpose of your sources
Critical Thinking: explicitly evaluate the quality of the arguments—particularly the ***evidence***—of your sources
Objective communication: clearly and logically explicate your thesis/aim, within a context/scope, with ***evidence***

As Confucius said: "I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words to a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again." *Analects* 7.8 [子曰不憤不啓不悱不發舉 一隅不以三隅反則不復也]

Texts:

Philip Ivanhoe, trans., *The Daodejing of Laozi* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002). ISBN: 9780872207011; $12

Mark Csikszentmihalyi and Philip Ivanhoe, eds., *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (Albany: SUNY, 1999. ISBN: 9780791441121; $32

Stephen Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters* (Albany: SUNY, 2004). ISBN: 9780791460467; $30

Brook Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009). ISBN: 9780872209114; $16

Blackboard has some pdf readings.

Readings:

Week 1: What is Daoism?

23 Jan: Introduction

25 Jan: Student one-page reports on "What is Daoism?"

Week 2: Celestial Master (Tian shi 天師) Daoism

28 Jan: TBA

30 Jan: TBA

01 Feb: All projects must be decided and a date set by the end of class today

Week 3: Lao Zi 老子: primary source

04 Feb: Ivanhoe (2002), xv-xxxii (Introduction) + 1 (ch.1) +101-114 (Language Appendix)

06 Feb: Ivanhoe (2002), 2-37 (chs.2-37)

08 Feb: Ivanhoe (2002), 41-84 (chs.38-81)

Week 4: Lao Zi: secondary scholarship

11 Feb: Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "Mysticism and Apophatic Discourse in the *Laozi*," in Csikszentmihalyi & Ivanhoe (1999), 1-32.

13 Feb: Harold Roth, "The *Laozi* in the Context of Early Daoist Mystical Praxis" in Csikszentmihalyi & Ivanhoe (1999), 59-96.

15 Feb: Compare Csikszentmihalyi and Roth

Week 5: Lao Zi: secondary scholarship

18 Feb: Isabelle Robinet, "The Diverse Interpretations of the *Laozi*" in Csikszentmihalyi & Ivanhoe (1999), 127-159.

20 Feb: Review

22 Feb: ****Fifth-week test****

Week 6: Lao Zi: secondary scholarship

25 Feb: Bryan Van Norden, "Method in the Madness of the *Laozi*" in Csikszentmihalyi & Ivanhoe (1999), 187-210.

27 Feb: Liu Xiaogan, "An Inquiry into the Core Value of Laozi's Philosophy" in Csikszentmihalyi & Ivanhoe (1999), 211-238.

01 Mar: Student project or review the five articles we read on the *Laozi*.

Week 7: Daoism and Chinese Art

04 Mar: TBA

06 Mar: TBA

08 Mar: Student project or

Week 8: Spring Break

11 Mar: no class

13 Mar: no class

15 Mar: no class

Week 9: Complete Perfection (Quan zhen 全真) Daoism

18 Mar: Eskildsen (2004), 1-20 (ch.1 "Introduction")

20 Mar: Eskildsen (2004), 21-38 (ch.2 "Cultivating Clarity and Purity")

22 Mar: Student projects

Week 10: Complete Perfection (Quan zhen 全真) Daoism
25 Mar: Eskildsen (2004), 39-56 (ch.3 "The Asceticism of the Quanzhen Masters")
27 Mar: Eskildsen (2004), 57-94 (ch.4 "Cultivating Health and Longevity")
29 Mar: Student projects

Week 11: Zhuang Zi 莊子: primary source
01 Apr: Ziporyn (2009), 3-21 (chs.1-2)
03 Apr: Ziporyn (2009), 21-38 (chs.3-5)
05 Apr: Student projects

Week 12: Zhuang Zi 莊子: primary source
08 Apr: Ziporyn (2009), 39-60 (chs.6-8)
10 Apr: Ziporyn (2009), 60-83 (chs.9-10 + selections from chs.14, 17, 19)
12 Apr: Student projects

Week 13: Zhuang Zi 莊子: primary source
15 Apr: Ziporyn (2009), 84-103 (selections from chs.20, 22, 23)
17 Apr: Ziporyn (2009), 103-125 (selections from chs.24, 25, 26, 27, 32, 33)
19 Apr: Student projects

Week 14: Zhuang Zi: secondary sources
22 Apr: Scott Cook, "Harmony and Cacophony in the Panpipes of Heaven" in Scott Cook, ed., *Hiding the World in the World: Uneven Discourses on the* Zhuangzi (New York: SUNY, 2003), 64-87.
24 Apr: Paul Goldin, "A Mind-Body Problem in the *Zhuangzi*?" in Cook (2003), 226-247.
26 Apr: Student projects

Week 15: Zhuang Zi: secondary sources
29 Apr: Michael Puett, "'Nothing Can Overcome Heaven': The Notion of Spirit in the *Zhuangzi*" in Cook (2003), 248-262.
01 May: Student projects
03 May: Student projects and/or final exam review

Finals: 6-10 May

Select bibliography:
Livia Kohn and Michael LaFargue, eds., *Lao-tzu and the* Tao-te-ching (Albany: SUNY, 1998).
Hans-Georg Moeller, *The Philosophy of the* Daodejing (New York: Columbia UP, 2006),
Victor Mair, ed., *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983).
Paul Kjellberg and Philip Ivanhoe, eds., *Essays on Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in the* Zhuangzi (Albany: SUNY, 1996).
Roger Ames, ed., *Wandering at Ease in the* Zhuangzi (Albany: SUNY, 1998).

Student issues:

Student-teacher relations in the Arts & Humanities:
I'm not here to sell you knowledge. You can get that online or in the library. Selling knowledge to a customer may be the paradigm for other academic divisions, but not in the Arts. History, literature, philosophy, and religion professors are like football coaches: we show you what exercises to do to acquire certain skills, skills like critical thinking, creativity, and communication, but you do the actual work. You are not a passive receptacle of learning, but rather an active practitioner of skill acquirement. Thus we often say of our courses: the more you put into it, the more you get out of it.

Preparation for class:
It is generally accepted in higher academic circles that students must study two to three hours outside of class for every hour spent in class, and this course will certainly demand such commitment. As this course meets 2.5 hours per week, you should expect to spend between five and eight hours per week studying for this course. Students who are unable or unwilling to commit this amount of time to this course should reconsider whether this course is appropriate for them. Try not to fall behind on the reading because it is very difficult to catch up. This is a survey course, and we move along quickly.

Classroom behavior:
I expect you to be not only on time and prepared, but also to demonstrate initiative by asking interesting questions and otherwise engaging the topic at hand. You may have thoughtfully read all of the assignment, but I won't know this unless you give me evidence of this by talking with me about it. An Arts classroom is also like a corporate boardroom: there is protocol to be followed (e.g., raising your hand for a question), there are other people in the room deserving of your respect (e.g., by not distracting them), and there is the fact that you are being judged on your behavior and participation (that 20% of your grade).

Cellphones (and all other hand-held electronic devices):
We live in a fast-paced world. But the skills you have the opportunity to practice in Arts courses require mental focus. Staying focused on a task for eighty minutes at a time is a skill, and a marketable one at that. Cellphones are distracting, perhaps delightfully so, but distraction detracts from focus. Therefore, no cellphones, or any other hand-held electric devices, are allowed in the classroom. Please turn them off and stow them in your pocket or bag before class begins. I don't want to see them or hear them. Thanks!

Computers:
Computers can be useful for taking notes, but they can also be a distraction, both to the user as well as to all those who can see the screen. For these reasons, I do allow computers in the classroom, but only if you sit where no one else can see your screen; that is, in the back row. If all the back row seats are already taken by the time you arrive to class, please accept my humblest apologies, but you will have to take hand-written notes instead. If you are using your computer in the back row, and whatever is on your screen distracts those sitting on either side of you, then I will ask you to turn it off. So sorry!

Talking in class:
You should not talk to each other in class. Not out of respect for me, mind you, but out of respect for other students trying to focus. I see the class period as an opportunity for you. If you do not wish to participate, that is fine with me: you may put your head down and go to sleep, or you can quietly pass notes to one another, or you can lean over and whisper to one another. But if I can hear you talking, that means you are distracting other students. Please don't do that. (Yes, it will affect your grade.)

Studying together:
Studying together can be a good thing or it can be a really bad thing. If you do the work and want to deepen your understanding by discussing it with other students to gain their perspective, that's great. This course is a rare opportunity for you to talk about religion without upsetting someone in the room. But if you do not do the work, meet up with other students, divide the reading, then meet back up to plagiarize each other's notes, that is not a good thing. It's just cheating.

The Library:
I like Google as much as the next guy. Probably more so. But as wonderful as Google is, there are still lots of things the library has that cannot be found with a Google search. Two spring immediately to mind: librarians and books. Librarians know all kinds of things about how to access useful and relevant information, both online and in dead-tree format. Go talk to one! The other thing is books. I know Google Books is making good progress, but there are still a great many texts that are only accessible by browsing the stacks. Browsing the stacks is a key part of the university experience. Don't miss out!

Grades:
Your grades for this class derive from an Excel spreadsheet with columns for each of the items mentioned in the "Grades" section at the beginning of this syllabus. You can have two unexcused absences and still receive an attendance score of 100; it drops by 1/3 of a letter grade after that. For a 100 in the "participation" column, you will need to ask an interesting question every class period. You will receive numbered grades for the two exams and the two projects. At the end of the term there will be a number between 0 and 100 in each column: I will add them up and do the division and that will be your grade.

Grading:
My grading rubric for all exams and projects consists of three areas, each of which is weighted equally for grading. The first is information literacy, the second is critical thinking, and the third is objective communication. I think these skills are important for all college students (actually, all *humans*) to learn for a variety of reasons, not least because they are skills that many employers, from a wide variety of fields, look for in potential job candidates.
"Information literacy" refers to your ability to find good sources of information; discriminate between reliable and unreliable sources (knowing that these lie on a continuum); and ascertain who the author is, the context in which they are writing, and what they are trying to do with their claim(s) and/or argument(s).
"Critical thinking" refers to your ability to assess your sources and the claims they make by analyzing their argument(s). Specifically, it is the ability to identify an author's thesis, summarize their argument, distinguish the evidence given in support of the argument, and logically weigh that evidence as support for the argument. Given the semantic range of many words, critical thinking may often involve the careful consideration of a single phrase to deduce the author's intent.
"Objective communication" is the ability to articulate your own claims in a scholarly fashion: What is the point (the aim, the thesis) of what you are saying? What is the scope of your claim? (That is, where and when and to whom does it apply?) Do you know how to cite your sources, adduce relevant evidence (and counter-evidence), and draw logical conclusions? Would the authors you are citing agree with your characterization of their work? Can you synthesize multiple sources into a coherent narrative? Is your writing clear and precise and original? (See "Plagiarism" below for more on the latter.) Communication is a skill that will improve with practice. And it is not just mechanically exteriorizing your interior thoughts: articulating your ideas can actually change your ideas by allowing you to more clearly assess the logic and evidential support of your heretofore-unchallenged assumptions.

Exams:
There are two exams for this course, one around the fifth week to give you some indication how closely I expect you to do the reading (the answer: pretty closely), and the final exam during finals week. Because I do not want this course to be about memorization, both exams are open-note (but not open-book) and usually require a few sentences to answer each question. A good test/exam answer will draw information from the reading and/or the lecture (preferably both). It will be concise, relevant, and factual. (Your opinions are welcome in class, but not on the exams.) I give exams to induce you to creatively summarize and/or synthesize the data that you yourself have collected about the topics at hand. Your notes must be yours and must be hand-written or printed; no photocopies are allowed. Because I want you to read broadly, and construct interesting answers, I do not have "study-guides" or answer questions like "What are the main points?" Figuring that out for yourself is part of the fun!

Projects:
While the function of tests and exams are to get the entire class to deal with the same basic reading material, I want the projects that you do in relation to—or in addition to—the reading to be as "learner-centered" as possible. Therefore I want each of you to have some latitude in choosing how to express your engagement with the material. This syllabus offers a few options, involving speaking, writing, and technology, that you may choose from, but I also encourage you to propose new avenues by which you can creatively explore the topic while utilizing your own skills and interests.

Plagiarism:
Whenever you submit work to me, of any kind and for any assignment, either oral or written, if the words that you use in your work match uncited words anywhere else in the universe (except your own notes, written in your own words): that is plagiarism. This includes any webpage, any monograph in any language anywhere, and even other students' notes, past or present. If you were sick one day and got notes from another student, you must first put them in your own words if you are going to submit them as your own work. I am the judge of what constitutes words that "match." Any work that includes plagiarized words will receive a zero, and may result in failing the class and expulsion from the university. If this concept is unclear to you, please see me or a WKU librarian to explain it more.

How to read in academia:
For the reading each week, first skim the appropriate chapters or pages in order to identify the main points, events, and individuals. Then re-read those chapters or pages in order to determine how examples are used to support those points, events, and individuals. Pay attention to chapter titles and subheadings (if any) to help guide you. As you read (just as when you listen in class), do so with pencil or marker in hand so you can note or highlight those key points, events, ideas, themes, patterns, and individuals in the margins. Do not underline or highlight everything. Teach yourself to discriminate between important information (including analyses and conclusions) from unimportant information; practice determining why something is important: in the short run, in the long run, in other places, to other people, and for other events. Note causes, effects, and results. Review these notations regularly as you read the assigned pages. Reviewing in this fashion should enable you to see the direction a chapter (or lecture) is taking; it should also help to improve your concentration. With practice you should improve.

Student Disability Services:
Students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center, A-200. Any request to me for accommodations must be accompanied by a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

The Learning Center (TLC) (located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC-A330):
Should you require academic assistance with this course, or any other General Education Course, there are several places that can provide you with help. TLC tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week. To make an appointment, or to request a tutor for a specific class, call 745-6254 or stop by DUC A330. Log on to TLC's website at <http://www.wku.edu/tlc> to find out more. TLC hours: M-Thur. 8am-9pm, Fri. 8am-4pm, Sat.-Closed, and Sundays 4pm-9pm.