

PHIL 2150 - Comparative History of Philosophy

TR 9:00-10:20, ACE 318

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Office: PME 221

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Office Hours: TBD and by appointment

Course Description:

The Comparative History of Philosophy investigates similarities, differences, points of contact, and interaction between world philosophical traditions. This course introduces students to the methods, aims, and problems of conducting comparative study in the history of philosophy and will challenge an often standard image of philosophy as a specifically Western or European phenomenon. In addition to comparing figures, texts, and ideas from the Indian, Chinese, and Ancient Greek traditions, among others, we will examine historical case studies of cross-cultural philosophical interaction, and consider the question of what it means to construct a global history of philosophy.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

Develop an understanding of the history of philosophy from a global perspective.

Develop an understanding of methods of argumentation used by philosophers across cultures.

Hone ability to analyze philosophical arguments and conduct original research in the history of philosophy/history of global philosophy.

Course Evaluation Criteria

Expectations for a “satisfactory” evaluation include regular attendance (no more than 3 absences during the semester), exhibition of an understanding of course material, participation in class discussion, and on-time completion of assignments.

Assignments:

Short written reflections upon reading material (one per week).

Students are responsible for leading a discussion of a particular theme from the reading once during the semester.

1 short paper (5-6 pages) thoroughly analyzing an argument or textual passage

1 longer research paper (roughly 3,000 words) that investigates one area of the cross-cultural interaction of ideas. This paper will engage secondary literature and explore the different intellectual, cultural, and historical dimensions of the chosen encounter.

Students will develop their projects on the basis of feedback from both peers and the instructor.

Disability Services:

New College of Florida is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its student body. Students are welcome to privately discuss any concerns related to barriers to both fully participating and learning in this course. I highly encourage students with accommodations to meet with me as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, you may contact the office of Student Disability Services (SDS) in order to request official accommodation(s). Students may contact SDS in-person (HCL3), at 941-487-4496 OR disabilityservices@ncf.edu. Additional information regarding SDS can be accessed here: <https://www.ncf.edu/student-disability-services/>

Academic Dishonesty Policy:

Students are expected to be familiar with the college's academic dishonesty policy, as described in the General Catalog. Any violation of this policy may result in academic sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the college.

Required Books:

Plato. *Five Dialogues*. 978-0872206335

Easwaran, Eknath. *Bhagavad Gita*. 978-1586380199

Smith, Justin E. H. *The Philosopher: A History in Six Types*. 978-0691163277

Additional course materials will be posted in PDF form on the course Canvas page.

Schedule of Readings (Tentative)

Tuesday 1/29 Introductions/Syllabus Review

Thursday 1/31 Van Norden: *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*, Ch.1
(posted on Canvas)

Justice and the Self

Tuesday 2/5 Plato: *Euthyphro* (*Five Dialogues*, pp. 1–20)

Thursday 2/7 Plato: *Apology* and *Crito* (*Five Dialogues*, pp. 20-57)

Tuesday 2/12 Plato: *Phaedo* (*Five Dialogues*, pp. 93–122)

Thursday 2/14 Plato: *Phaedo* (*Five Dialogues*, pp. 122–154)

Tuesday 2/19 Bhagavad Gita, Chs. 1–6 (pp. 71–145)

Thursday 2/21 Bhagavad Gita, Chs. 7–12 (pp. 147–215)

Tuesday 2/26 Bhagavad Gita, Chs. 13–18 (pp. 216–265)

Virtue and the Philosopher

Thursday 2/28 Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. I–II (Posted on Canvas)

Tuesday 3/5 Aristotle: *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk III (Posted on Canvas)

Thursday 3/7 Mengzi: Selections (Posted on Canvas)

Tuesday 3/12 Mengzi: Selections (Posted on Canvas)

Thursday 3/14 Al-Kindī: “On the Means of Dispelling Sorrows;” Ar-Razi: “The Philosopher’s Way of Life” (Posted on Canvas)

First Paper due Friday 3/15

3/18–3/22: Spring Break

Philosophy and Colonization

Tuesday 3/26 Bartolomé De Las Casas: “In Defense of the Indians” (Posted on Canvas)

Thursday 3/28 Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: “Response to Sister Filotea,” “Poem 92, Philosophical Satire”; Simón Bolívar: “Jamaica Letter,” “Address Delivered at the Inauguration of the Second National Congress of Venezuela at Angostura” (Posted on Canvas)

Tuesday 4/2 John Locke: “Property”; Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: “Preface to *Novissima Sinica*.” (Posted on Canvas)

Violence and Non-Violence

Thursday 4/4 Mohandas Gandhi: Selections on Truth and Non-Violence (Posted on Canvas)

Tuesday 4/9 St. Thomas Aquinas: Selections from *Summa Theologiae* on Natural Law; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (Posted on Canvas)

Thursday 4/11 Frantz Fanon: “On Violence” (Posted on Canvas)

Multicultural Philosophy in America

Tuesday 4/16 Linda Martín Alcoff: “Mestizo Identity” (Posted on Canvas)

Thursday 4/18 David Haekwon Kim: “What is Asian American Philosophy?” (Posted on Canvas)

Tuesday 4/23 No Class – Baccalaureate/Reading Days

Concluding Reflections on the Philosopher

Thursday 4/25 Justin E. H. Smith, *The Philosopher: A History in Six Types*, Introduction & Ch. 1 (pp. 1–53)

Tuesday 4/30 Justin E. H. Smith: *The Philosopher: A History in Six Types*, Ch. 2 (pp. 54–119)

Thursday 5/2 Justin E. H. Smith: *The Philosopher: A History in Six Types*, Chs. 3–4 (pp. 120–190)

Tuesday 5/7 Justin E. H. Smith: *The Philosopher: A History in Six Types*, Chs. 5–6, Conclusion (pp.190–239); Concluding Discussion

Final Paper Due Wednesday of Exam Week (5/15)

Resources/Further Reading

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Features thorough entries with bibliographies on many of the philosophers and general philosophical themes that we will study in this course: plato.stanford.edu

History of Philosophy Podcast/History of Philosophy without any Gaps

Comprehensive podcast series on the history of philosophy, including episodes on many of the figures and themes we will examine.

Rules for Studying the History of Philosophy.

Guidelines on how to read/conduct research in the history of philosophy from Peter Adamson, host of the History of Philosophy Podcast (“History of Philosophy without any Gaps”): <https://historyofphilosophy.net/rules-history-philosophy>

Philpapers.org:

Database of published articles in philosophy.