

# ASIAN PHILOSOPHY

## PHILOSOPHY 2111f

Huron @ Western



**Professor:** Dr. Steve D'Arcy

**Course Time & Location:** Mondays 2:30pm to 3:30pm and Wednesdays 3:30pm to 5:30pm (Huron A1)

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**Office Hours:** 12:30pm to 2:00pm, Mondays and Tuesdays (Huron, Valley Wing, V120)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers a broad overview of some influential strands of Asian philosophy, drawn from East Asia, South Asia and West Asia, ranging over a period of about 2,000 years. The unifying theme, tying together these very diverse strands, is *non-propositional knowledge*. This takes two main forms: (1) “know-how,” or *competence knowledge*, which consists of practical skills (like mental concentration, ritual propriety, and mindful attention) that can be mastered, but not by mere reading or receiving verbal instruction; and (2) non-discursive experiential or *acquaintance knowledge*, which consists of intimate familiarity with aspects of life that are ineffable (i.e., inexpressible in the form of explicit claims). The question of what it means to know, when what one knows *cannot* or at least often *does not* take the form of true beliefs and cannot be communicated by means of straightforward assertions, is central to many of the most important and influential texts in the classical traditions of Asian philosophy, including the *Bhagavadgītā* and the early-buddhist *Pāli Canon* (India), Gorampa’s debate with Tsongkhapa (Tibet), Lǎozǐ’s *Dàodé Jīng* and Kǒngzǐ’s *Analects* (China), al-Ghazālī’s *Deliverance from Error* (Persia), Dōgen’s *Fukan zazengi* (Japan), Jinul’s *Secrets of Cultivating the Mind* [*Susim gyeol*] (Korea), and the teaching of “desert mothers” like Macrina the Younger (Anatolia, Turkey). The concern with non-propositional knowledge that animates this cluster of traditions acquires its most dramatic, sensitive and sophisticated expression with the publication of the great gōng'àn/kōan collections of Sòng-era Chán/Zen: the *Blue Cliff Record* (*Bìyán Lù*) and the *Gateless Barrier* (*Wúménguān*). In this course, we work through all or part of each of these texts, with a special focus on our guiding questions: What is non-propositional knowledge? Why is it important? What kind of teaching and what kind of learning does it demand from us? If this knowledge is, in some sense, impossible to acquire by means of books, why do those who insist on this point write so many books, and why do we still read these books hundreds or thousands of years later?

Antirequisite(s): None. Prerequisite(s): None

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to grasp, appreciate, intelligently discuss and write about some key concepts and texts from several of the classical traditions of Asian philosophy, including early Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, Sufism, Desert-Mother asceticism, and Chán/Zen. Concepts covered include the distinction between “substance” (*tǐ*) and “function” (*yòng*); the debate over “sudden” and “gradual” awakening; the

contrast between the narrative or discursive mind and the experiential mind; and the difference between propositional knowledge and both competence knowledge (the cultivation and mastery of practical skills) and intimate-acquaintance knowledge (openness to ineffable dimensions of experience).

## CLASSROOM METHODS

The classes will include lectures, but also substantial discussion of the readings. In order to fully understand and benefit from the lectures, and to contribute fully and effectively to class discussions, students are urged to do the assigned reading prior to class, and to come with questions and insights about them, to be addressed during the class discussions. Regular class attendance is crucial for success in the course. Adjustments and accommodations related to the pandemic will require patience and cooperation from all of us, but some of the adjustments that may have to be made are difficult to foresee in advance. Students are urged to regularly check the course OWL site for announcements and updates that may be important.

- ✓ **Important Note:** classroom methods may need to be adjusted in ways not foreseen in advance, due to the pandemic. Your patience and understanding is appreciated.

## GRADE COMPONENTS

### 1. Three Essays (3 x 30 = 90% of course grade)

Each is worth 30% of the final grade. Essay topics and instructions will be circulated via Owl.

**Essay #1:** 1,000-1,200 words, on the Buddha (Pāli discourses) and non-propositional knowledge.

Due by 11pm on 4 October 2021. Worth 30% of final course grade.

2% per essay grade late penalty each day

**Essay #2:** 1,000-1,200 words, comparing (1) either Lǎozǐ or Kǒngzǐ to (2) each another, or to either Al-Ghāzalī, or Macrina the Younger, or Gorampa. (In other words, two authors from this list have to be compared, and at least one of the two must be either Lǎozǐ or Kǒngzǐ.)

Due by 11pm on 15 November 2021. Worth 30% of final course grade.

2% per essay grade late penalty each day

**Essay #3:** 1,000-1,200 words, drawing substantially on either Dōgen or Jinul, and explaining and discussing any three koans, touching on key course themes.

Due by 11pm on 8 December 2021. Worth 30% of final course grade.

2% per essay grade late penalty each day

### 2. Attendance, Engagement and Participation (10% of course grade)

Worth 10% of final course grade.

Mark based on attendance and participation, judged by an overall assessment by the Instructor.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Instructions on how to access the course readings can be found on the "Overview" tab in the course OWL site. If you have any difficulty accessing an assigned reading, contact the instructor at [sdarcy@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:sdarcy@huron.uwo.ca)

# TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS

## 8 September: What is Non-propositional knowledge?

*Reading:* Course outline

## 13 September: Meditation and Renunciation as Forms of Inquiry

*Reading:* Bhagavad-Gītā, 6: Dhyāna-yoga (“The Yoga of Meditation”)

## 15 September: The Buddha on the Limits of Discursive Knowing

*Reading:* “Short Dialogue with Mālunkya” (pp. 168-72)

## 20 September: The Buddha on Teaching and Learning

*Reading:* “The Simile of the Snake” (pp. 156-67)

## 22 September: The Buddha on Cultivating Mental Skills

*Readings:* “Establishing Mindfulness” (pp. 141-51); “The Stilling of Thoughts” (pp. 152-55)

## 27 September: The Buddha on Self-Awareness and Self-Liberation

*Readings:* “From the Chapter on Causes” (pp. 210-16); “From the Chapter on Aggregates” (pp. 216-22)

## 29 September: The Buddha on ‘Heavenly’ Virtues

*Reading:* “Discourse on Indiscriminate Benevolence”

## 4 October: Kongzi on Teaching and Learning

*Reading:* Kongzi (Confucius), *Lún Yǔ (Analects)*, Books I-VI, XII-XV

## 6 October: Kongzi on Skill and Propriety

*Reading:* Kongzi (Confucius), *Lún Yǔ (Analects)*, Books I-VI, XII-XV

## 13 October: Laozi on the Dao

*Reading:* Laozi, *Dàodé Jīng*, 1-81

## 18 October: Laozi on Substance and Function; non-duality

*Reading:* Laozi, *Dàodé Jīng*, 1-81

## 20 October: Laozi on Kongzi and Artifice

*Reading:* Laozi, *Dàodé Jīng*, 1-81

## 25 October: Macrina the Younger on Philosophy’s Limits

*Reading:* “On the Soul and the Resurrection”

## 27 October: Gorampa on Non-discursive Knowledge

*Reading:* Gorampa “The Refutation of Tsong kha pa,” pp. 115-137

{{ 1, 3 November: No Classes (Fall Reading Week) }}

## 8 November: Al-Ghazālī on ‘Mystical’ Knowledge and Ineffability

*Reading:* Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty*.

## 10 November: Al-Ghazālī on Doubt

*Reading:* Al-Ghazālī, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty*.

## 15 November: Jinul on Sentience and Sapience; Gradual and Sudden Insight

*Readings:* Jinul [Chinul], *Secrets of Cultivating the Mind*

## 17 November: Dōgen on Nonthinking, Form and Emptiness

*Readings:* Dōgen, *Fukan Zazengi*; *The Heart Sutra*

## 22 November: Gōng'àn (Koans)

*Reading:* Wúmén Huìkāi, *Wú-Mén-Guān (Gateless Barrier)*, Wúmén’s Preface, case 1

## 24 November: Gateless Barrier

*Reading:* Wúmén Huìkāi, *Wú Mén Guān (Gateless Barrier)*, cases 2-24

## 29 November: Gateless Barrier

*Reading:* Wúmén Huìkāi, *Wú Mén Guān (Gateless Barrier)*, cases 25-48

## 1 December: Blue Cliff Record

*Reading:* Bìyán Lù (*Blue Cliff Record*), cases 1, 2, 6, 12, 28, 36

## 6 December: Blue Cliff Record

*Reading:* Bìyán Lù (*Blue Cliff Record*), cases 40, 43, 49, 55, 59, 63, 64, 69

## 8 December: Blue Cliff Record

*Reading:* Bìyán Lù (*Blue Cliff Record*), cases 72, 73, 84, 89, 91, 92





## **Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations 2021 - 2022**

### **Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Pandemic Contingency**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, typically using a combination of synchronous instruction (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) and asynchronous material (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online at the discretion of the course instructor. In the unlikely event that changes to the grading scheme are necessary, these changes will be clearly communicated as soon as possible.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

### **Attendance Regulations for Examinations**

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/attendance.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf).

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf). The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf).

### **Turnitin.com**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

### **Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)**

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a self-reported absence form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the Senate policy at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf) are met.

Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a Student Medical Certificate (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds). The Student Medical Certificate is available online at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

### **Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence**

- (a) **Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade: Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising**

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, and if the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported absences, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to

expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may not collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

**(b) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email [hurouss@uwo.ca](mailto:hurouss@uwo.ca).**

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation where the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence have not been met, including where the student has exceeded the maximum number of permissible Self-Reported. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at [hurouss@uwo.ca](mailto:hurouss@uwo.ca) for any further questions or information.

### **Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron's Student Support Services at [hurouss@uwo.ca](mailto:hurouss@uwo.ca). An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academic-support.uwo.ca/>

Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

### **Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western**

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: [huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca)

Community Safety Office: [safety@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:safety@huron.uwo.ca)

Chaplaincy: [gthorne@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:gthorne@huron.uwo.ca)

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.