A.
Field of Study Literature (application for title change)

Course number: Relg 252
Course title: East Asian Philosophical Thought (title change)
Catalogue Description: Introduction to major East Asian philosophical texts through literary criticism.
Course prerequisites: None
Credit hours: three
Typical enrollment: 20
How often and by whom offered: every other year, Jane Geaney
Staffing implications: none
Adequacy of library resources: approved by Marcia Whitehead
Interdepartmental and interdisciplinary implications: none
Contact person: Jane Geaney

B.
How This Course Meets This Requirement:

This course approaches the subject of East Asian philosophical thought through interpretation of primary texts. The reading consists of analysis of primary texts and an introduction to literary theory. The course shows how certain literary theories (structuralism, deconstruction, new historicism, new criticism, Marxism, feminism, and “performative language” theory) have been applied to the primary sources -- thus indicating how literary theories function as competing interpretive frameworks through which a text may be understood. Through class discussions and written assignments, the course will teach students to read these texts as literature. The required papers for this course involve the explicit application of literary theory to the primary texts.

C.
See Attached Syllabus
Description
This course introduces some of the main philosophical traditions of China and Japan. The reading for this course consists almost entirely of primary texts. This will present an immediate problem -- these texts are not automatically accessible to a Western reader. That is part of the point of the course. Although this is an introductory course, I hope it will convey that, while the intellectual tradition of a different culture is not easy to grasp, that is precisely why it is worth the effort to understand it. (If it turned out to be "just like what you always thought," then you might just as well have studied yourself in the first place.)

Objectives
1) One objective of the course is the introduction of literary theory. Since this is a 'literary field of study' course, we will approach the Chinese and Japanese religious classics by attending to the theories of interpretation we bring to a literary text.

2) The other objective of the course is to acquire a general knowledge of the foundational philosophical traditions of China and Japan.

This is an unusual way to introduce literary theory (using non-Western literature) and an unusual way to introduce East Asian thought (deviating from traditional historical/anthropological approaches). Occasionally, the two objectives may seem unrelated. But since these are literary texts, we certainly are compelled to understand them through models of interpreting literature. What this course does, by introducing contemporary theories of interpretation, is make us self-consciously aware of using them in the process of interpreting.

Method
We will use two introductory literary theory texts to provide a general sense of some main types of theory. Then, after reading each primary source, we will examine how it has been interpreted by means of a particular literary theory (if indeed it has—some of these primary sources have not yet been read in this way).

Literary Field of Study
The field of literary studies concerns itself with verbal texts read as structures of meaning. While language is a practical tool for thought and communication of many sorts, the particular focus of literary studies is on linguistic creations as meaningful in themselves, and not purely as documents that record meaning outside themselves.

Courses satisfying the literary studies requirement are centrally concerned with the textual analysis of primary works. They consider a variety of interpretive frameworks and attend to one or more collateral areas of investigation, including the study of the process by which texts are created and received, the historical and cultural contexts in which they are created and received, and their relationships to each other and to other fields of experience and analysis. The field of literary studies brings its perspectives and methods to bear on imaginative and non-imaginative works alike.
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Required Texts

*Beginning Theory*, Peter Barry
Manchester University Press; 2nd edition, 2002 (0719062683)

*A Short Introduction to Literary Theory*, Jonathan Culler
Oxford University Press, 1997 (019285383X)

*Confucius—The Secular as Sacred*, Herbert Fingarette
Waveland Press; Reissue edition, 1998 (1577660102)

*The Analects of Confucius*, Arthur Waley translation
Vintage books, 1989 (0679722963)

*Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters*, A. C. Graham trans.
Hackett, 2001 (0872205819)

*Te Tao Ching*, Robert Henricks trans.,
Modern Library, 1993 (0679600604)

*The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, Richard Bowring trans.
Penguin Classics; 1 edition, 1999 (014043576X)

*Essays in Idleness: The Tsurezuregusa of Kenko*, Donald Keene trans.
Columbia University Press, 1967 (0231083084)

*Opening a Mountain: Koans of the Zen Masters*, Steven Heine
Oxford University Press, 2001 (0195135865)

**The Tower of Myriad Mirrors: A Supplement to the Journey to the West**

Shuen-fu Lin, Larry J Schultz, Center for Chinese Studies University of Michigan, 2000
(089581501X)

*Two Zen Classics*, Katsuki Sekida
Weatherhill, 1995 (0834801302)

(0824817982)
Other Required Readings:

Journal of Chinese Philosophy, vol. 10 no. 2: 95-126 (e-reserve)

Tamkang Review 11.3 (Spring 1981):249-66. (e-reserve)

http://www.cityu.edu.hk/ccs/Newsletter/newsletter6/contribution01.htm

Steve Bradbury, "The American Conquest of Philosophical Taoism,"  

Yoda, Tomiko, “Literary History against the National Frame, or Gender and the Emergence of Heian Kana Writing” positions: east asia cultures critique - Volume 8, Number 2, Fall 2000, pp. 465-497 Available on Project Muse

Requirements and Grades

80 % (20% each)
Four five page papers, none of which will require additional research, only careful readings of the texts assigned in class.

I will take your writing very seriously and attempt to help you improve your ability to express your ideas clearly. I will hold special “labs” for each paper on the Wednesday before they are due. You may also email me an outline for any paper on the Friday before it is due and I will comment on it.

I will distribute a more detailed description of the kind of paper appropriate for this course and information regarding how these papers will be graded. Please do not use title pages, cover sheets, or plastic binders—just hand in five pages of writing. Please put your ID number on the top right of the first page. DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME of your paper. (Please sign the honor pledge by writing out your ID number as if it were your signature on the back of your paper.)

20%
Class Participation
a) Informed discussion. I will be looking for visible interest and initiative in asking and answering questions in a way that demonstrates that you have read and thought about the reading. (If discussion wanes, in spite of this gentle incentive, I may take to calling on people.)

b) Reading responses. Each of you will be required to write brief (one-page typed) responses to five of the readings (not those that are involved in the paper topics). I will only accept these on email (jgeaney@starpower.net) by 5:00 on the day before class, thereby giving me time to review them before class. There is plenty of time to prepare the reading in advance, therefore, late responses will not be accepted. (The responses will be graded on a scale of ‘good’, ‘fair’ and ‘poor’.)

Incompletes will be granted only in the most extenuating circumstances (like a coma).