

NOBILITY AND CIVILITY: EAST AND WEST I (Global core INSM W3920)

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General Description

This colloquium is designed to provide cross-cultural examination of Asian, Middle Eastern, Northern African and European classics on a major theme common to world civilizations.

The course adopts the pedagogical method of Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, encountering first-hand primary texts recognized in their own traditions as landmarks that merit continued close attention. Undergraduates who have completed Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization would be encouraged to draw on their prior readings as a springboard and background in class discussion. We do not start from theories of civilization or of interpretation; we privilege the text, not theory, opening the text up to examination from any angle of interpretation.

Course Objectives

Nobility & Civility: East and West is an interdisciplinary colloquium that focuses on the examination and comparison of different cultural understandings of the concepts of nobility and civility as they appear throughout the ancient, medieval and early modern world. Our project involves the analysis of important philosophical, religious and literary texts from the East Asian, Indian, Islamic and Western traditions. A fundamental aim of this course will be the formulation of an intercultural perspective from which the core human concerns of nobility and civility, which these various traditions share, can be more coherently articulated.

More generally, this course seeks to provide a model for integrated undergraduate education focusing on common human values and universal perennial issues while also recognizing cultural and historical differences. Providing students with a perspective on themselves and their place in a larger world has become ever more crucial in an increasingly globalized society. The course thereby contributes to the broadening and deepening of the liberal arts education that characterizes Columbia College and that many of Columbia's alumni have paid tribute to over the years. As a capstone Global Core course, *Nobility & Civility: East and West* would not only continue the work of the core abroad, but would be taking the Global Core curriculum to an international setting.

Language

The course will be taught in English, but students able to read any of the *Nobility and Civility* texts in the original language would be encouraged to do so. Indeed, in the international learning environment of a hybrid classroom, I would welcome the opportunity to explore shades of meaning through the nuance of translation.

Extracurricular activities related to the course

Venice has been a crossroad of cultures for centuries, thus inviting our students to develop the widest possible perspective on transculturalism and challenging any predetermined paradigms with respect to East and West, or, more specifically, Europe and the world beyond its borders. To take full advantage of our Venetian location and its cultural resources, we will visit specific civic sites that showcase the meeting of East and West as well as encourage further reflection upon the issues articulated in the written texts. Interrogating the arts, armor, and maps in the Polo Museale Veneziano (especially the Museo d'arte orientale and the Correr Museum) will help students delve further into key intellectual and ethical arguments that have been taken up in the required readings, from ancient China and India through

medieval Japan and Iran to early modern Europe. A visit to the Castello Estense in Ferrara will give students a first-hand look at an important center for the epics of Boiardo and Ariosto.

Attendance, Preparation and Participation

As a colloquium, this is a discussion-driven course that depends on one's close reading of the texts. Regular attendance, as well as thoughtful engagement with issues pertinent to our readings, comprise the basis of evaluation. Students who miss two or more consecutive classes will be asked to submit make-up work--usually one's reading notes on the assigned texts.

Method of Evaluation

Aside from attendance and participation, there are four other factors of assessment:

1. **Written Work:** Two 5-6 page papers are required. Students may consult with the instructor on the scope and topic of their essays, which should be critical and interpretive, not research papers. (25% of grade)
2. **Presentations and participation:** Each student will make at least one introductory, seminar-style presentation on one of the assigned texts. Presentations will be evaluated on their organization and concision, as well as on how well they draw out issues and themes for class discussion. (25% of grade)
3. **Response paragraphs:** A thoughtful response of 1-2 paragraphs for each reading should be posted in CourseWorks by 9:00 pm on the day before class, and all students are responsible for reading other students' responses prior to class discussion. (25% of grade)
4. **Final examination:** There will be a 2-hour written examination. (25% of grade)

Syllabus

Week 1 (June 13, 15). Ancient China: moral/political philosophy

Confucius, *Analects* (551 BCE - 479 BCE)

Confucius, *The Analects* in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, volume 1, 2nd edition, edited by William Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000) (hereafter abbreviated *SCT, I.*), pp. 24-29, and 41-63; or *Sources of East Asian Tradition*, volume 1, edited by William Theodore de Bary (New York, Columbia University Press, 2008) (hereafter abbreviated *EAT, I.*), pp.22-25, 29-40.

Mencius (372 - 289 BCE)

The Mencius in *SCT*, volume 1, 2nd edition, pp. 112-58 or *EAT*, volume 1, pp.69-92.

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Xunzi (ca. 300-230 BCE)

Xunzi in *SCT* (volume 1, 2nd edition), pp. 159-83 or *EAT*, volume 1, pp. 92-104

Laozi (6th or 4th century BCE) *SCT* (volume I, 2nd edition) pp. 77-94 or *EAT* pp. 49-60

Han Feizi (280-233 BCE)

Han Feizi in *SCT* (volume 1, 2nd edition), pp. 190-209 or *EAT*, volume 1, pp. 106-115.

Week 2 (June 20, 22). Ancient Indian (Hindu) epics, political science and drama

Ramayana (ca. 400 BCE)

The Ramayana of Valmiki: an Epic of Ancient India, volume 1, translated by Robert P. Goldman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 1-13, and pp. 41-49; also sargas 1-4, 13, and 17-20.

The Ramayana of Valmiki: an Epic of Ancient India, volume 2, translated by Sheldon I. Pollock (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), sargas 1-28, 57-8 (pp. 79-143, 204-11).

The Bhagavad Gita (ca. 5th c. BC - 4th c. CE). From the *Mahabharata*.

Trans. Eknath Easwaran (New York: Vintage Spiritual Classics, 2000).

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Kautilya, *Artha Sastra* (c. 350-283 BCE)

Selections from Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, translated by Gary Tubb for use in this seminar – available on Courseworks.

Visakhadatta, *Rakshasa's Ring* (c. 376-415 CE)

Three Sanskrit Plays, trans. Michael Coulson, Penguin Books, pp. 165-291.

Week 3 (June 27, 29). Ancient India: Theravada Buddhism; East Asia and India: Mahayana Buddhism.

Life of the Buddha in de Bary. *The Buddhist Tradition*, Modern Library, pp. 55-72.

Dhammapada (3rd century BCE?)

The Dhammapada, translated by John Ross Carter and Mahinda Palihawadana (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

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Lotus Sutra (3rd century CE)

The Essential Lotus: Selections from the Lotus Sutra, translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia, 2002).

Vimalakirti Sutra

Vimalakirti Sūtra, tr. by Burton Watson (Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 17-111.

Week 4 (July 4, 6). Ancient Greek/Roman: biographies and moral/political philosophy;
Medieval Japanese: epic and drama

Plutarch, *Life of Alexander* (46 CE-120 CE)

Plutarch, *The Life of Alexander the Great*, translated by John Dryden, edited by Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: Modern Library Classics, 2004).

Cicero, *Dream of Scipio* (106 BCE - 43 BCE)

"The Dream of Scipio" in *On the Good Life*, translated by Michael Grant (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 337-55.

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Heike (end of 12th century)

The Tale of the Heike, translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 9-16, 65-76, 98-100, 148-169.

Atsumori (end of 12th century)

Atsumori (Nō) in Royall Tyler, *Japanese Nō Dramas*, Penguin Classics, pp. 37-48

Week 5 (July 11, 13). Middle Ages: Greater Middle East, Western Europe, North Africa:
epic, biography, and history

Ferdowsi, *Seyavash* (Ferdowsi, c. 940-1020)

Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *The Legend of Seyavash*, translated by Dick Davis (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2004), pp. 3-132.

History of Saladin (Ibn Shaddad, 1145-1234)

The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin, translated by D.S. Richards, Crusade Texts in Translation (Ashgate, 2002 paperback) pp. 13-38, 72-82, 96-106, 113-116, 144-165, 217-245.

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Marco Polo, *The Travels* (Marco Polo, 1254-1324)

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Travels_of_Marco_Polo

Preface 1-18, [p. 35 on-line, p. 1 of the volume), Book 1.23-25 (the Old Man of the Mountain), Book 1.46-50 (Prester John and Chinghis Kaan); Book 1.51-55 (customs of the Tartars); Book 2.1 (Cublay Kaan); Book 2.10-12 (Cublay Kaan's person, sons, and palace); Book 2.24-27 (Cublay Kaan's money printing and governing); Book 3.2-3 (Japan); Book 4.1-4 (battles in Greater Turkey); Book 4.34 (conclusion)

Recommended: documentary: "In the Footsteps of Marco Polo"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmAuJ4Y7Aa0>

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406)

Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, edited by N.J. Dawood (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 91-116, 123-142, 151-154, 276-289, and 333-343.

Week 6 (July 18, 20). Medieval/Renaissance Western Europe: epic and romance

The Song of Roland (between 1140 and 1170)

The Song of Roland, translated by Glyn S. Burgess (New York: Penguin, 1990).

Chretien de Troyes, *The Knight of the Cart* (c. 1170) in *The Complete Romances of Chretien de Troyes*, translated by David Staines (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), lines 1-931, 1283-2010, 2999-4012, 5300-6107, and 7098-7112.

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Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato* (Boiardo, 1441-1494)

Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando Innamorato / Orlando in Love*, translated by Charles S. Ross (West Lafayette: Parlor Press, 2004).

Princess Angelica of Cathay arrives at Charlemagne's court in Paris and all present, including Roland (now Orlando), fall in love (1.1.1-35, pp. 3-7); Orlando fights the Tartar khan Agricane over Angelica (1.8.29-55 and 1.9.1-17, pp. 160-165); Orlando's travel's through Morgana's underworld kingdom (2.8.1-2.9.29, pp. 312-324); Orlando and Angelica at a tournament in Cyprus (2.20.1-40, pp. 409-414).

Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* (Ariosto, 1474-1533)

Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso / The Frenzy of Orlando*, trans. Barbara Reynolds, 2 vols. (NY: Penguin, 1975).

While Paris is under attack, Orlando sneaks out in search of Angelica (8.68-83 and 9.1-7, pp. 280-287); Orlando goes mad when he discovers Angelica loves another (23.100-136, pp. 718-727); Orlando recovers his wits (39.44-61, pp. 444-448).