

PHIL 470 (2021-22) Term 1

Comparative Conceptions of the Self

Professor Evan Thompson

Tuesday-Thursday 11AM-12:30PM

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Office hours: TBA

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

DESCRIPTION

In this course we will examine conceptions of the self in Chinese philosophy (Mengzi, Zhuangzi), Hindu philosophy (*Bhagavad Gita*), and Buddhist philosophy (Śāntideva). The course will serve as an introduction to some major strands of Asian philosophical thinking about the self and our relations to others.

TEXTS

These are available to purchase at the UBC Bookstore or at Indigo or Amazon:

A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life, by Śāntideva, translated by Vesna Wallace and B. Alan Wallace

For the Benefit of All Beings, the Dalai Lama

Mengzi, with Selections from Traditional Commentaries, translated by Bryan Van Norden

Perfecting Wisdom: How Things Appear and How They Truly Are, the Dalai Lama

The Bhagavad Gita, translated by Laurie Patton

Zhuangzi: Basic Writings, translated by Burton Watson

REQUIREMENTS

- Regular attendance and participation. There will be a sign-in sheet to record attendance. 10%.
- Weekly reading assignments.
- Three reflective papers, 1500 words, responding to assigned prompts. Each paper is worth 30% of your final grade. Information with due dates will be posted in Canvas.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is intellectual theft and occurs when an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship rests on examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. When another person's words (i.e., phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. For further information, please see the following link about academic misconduct:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, as well as possible further disciplinary action by the University.

EMAIL POLICY

The following guidelines apply to email communication during this course:

- I will make every effort to reply to legitimate email inquiries within 24 hours during weekdays but will likely take longer to respond to email during the weekend.
- Each email message should include in the Subject line the course identifier and a clear statement of purpose (e.g., PHIL 491: Question about Paper); otherwise, it may be deleted along with spam messages.

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SCHEDULE

Week 1: Sept 7 & Sept 9. Introduction Sept 7 Imagine Day (no class)	Week 8: Oct 26 & 28. <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> “The Tenth Discourse” up to and including “The Eighteenth Discourse”
Week 2: Sept 14 & 16. Mengzi. <i>Mengzi</i> , Books 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A	Week 9: Nov 2 & 4. Śāntideva <i>A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life</i> , Introduction & Chapters I-III <i>For the Benefit of All Beings</i> , Introduction & Chapters 1-3
Week 3: Sept 21 & 23. Mengzi. <i>Mengzi</i> , Books 3B, 4A, 4B, 5A	Week 10: Nov 9 & 11. Śāntideva No Class Nov 11 (Midterm Break). <i>A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life</i> , Chapters IV-V <i>For the Benefit of All Beings</i> , Chapters 4-5
Week 4: Sept. 28 & 30. Mengzi <i>Mengzi</i> , Books 5B, 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B	Week 11: Nov 16 & 18. Śāntideva <i>A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life</i> , Chapters VI-VIII <i>For the Benefit of All Beings</i> , Chapters 6-8
Week 5: Oct 5 & 7. Zhuangzi “Introduction” up to and including “The Great and Venerable Teacher”	Week 12: Nov 23 & 25. Śāntideva <i>A Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life</i> , Chapters IX & X <i>For the Benefit of All Beings</i> , Chapters 9-10
Week 6: Oct 12 & 14. Zhuangzi “Fit for Emperors and Kings” up to and including “External Things”	Week 13: Nov 30 & Dec. 2. Śāntideva Nov 30: <i>Transcendent Wisdom</i> , pp. 7-50 Dec 2: <i>Transcendent Wisdom</i> , pp. 53-110.
Week 7: Oct 19 & 21. <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> “Introduction” and “The First Discourse” up to and including “The Ninth Discourse”	Week 14: Dec 7. Wrap Up