

Non-western Philosophy (A002087)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2023-2024

A (semester 1)	English	Gent	seminar	15.0h
			lecture	15.0h

Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Rostalska, Agnieszka	LW21	lecturer-in-charge
Van den Stock, Ady	LW21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Arts and Humanities (main subject Philosophy)	5	A
Master of Arts in Philosophy	5	A
Exchange Programme Philosophy and Moral Sciences	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

Non-Western Philosophy; Indian Philosophy; Chinese Philosophy; Comparative Philosophy

Position of the course

In an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, it is most relevant for students of philosophy to gain a better understanding of the philosophical traditions of non-Western cultures, so as to transcend the Eurocentric models in the academic study of philosophy.

Contents

This course is divided in two sections, given by two alternating lecturers.

Section 1. Indian Philosophy

By Dr. Agnieszka Rostalska

This section is intended as an in-depth critical study of Indian philosophy which combines reflection through comparative or cross-cultural methods and models of philosophizing. It aims to introduce the ideas present in the diverse philosophies which originated in India, mainly Jain, Buddhist, and Brahminical traditions. While their historical context is mostly ancient and medieval, we will also discuss their interpretations, significance, and current relevance through the lenses of contemporary thinkers.

The students will acquire a basic understanding of the key problems, questions, and concepts which prevail in South Asian philosophy. We will cover a variety of topics ranging from the nature of existence, the means of knowing reality, as well as the broader implications of concepts such as causality, the doctrine of *karma*, and rationality for these themes. We will also discuss the repercussion of some of these concepts for issues related to gender, ethics, and socio-political philosophy.

The classes take the form of lectures combined with group discussions and individual reflections on selected substantive texts. Compulsory readings will be the starting point for a discussion on a given topic. Additionally, as part of their homework, students will listen to selected podcasts from the *History of Philosophy without Gaps* website:

<https://historyofphilosophy.net/>

The content of the podcast will be used for explanatory purposes and will stimulate further live discussions.

Section 2. Chinese philosophy

By Dr. Ady Van den Stock

The aim of this part of the course is to introduce students to a number of crucial questions,

problems, and concepts in the academic study of and discourse surrounding non-Western philosophy and to critically engage with them in a historically as well as culturally sensitive manner. The specific focus will predominantly lie on the case of late nineteenth and twentieth-century China, but will also touch upon the modern (re)invention of Japanese, African, and Latin-American traditions of thought, broader methodological problems in the field of comparative philosophy, as well as the role played by conceptions of culture, race, and alterity as possible frameworks for observing the philosophical non-West. During the final two classes of this section, students will be introduced to some of the major schools of classical (pre-Qin) Chinese philosophy and some of their most important concepts and themes with an eye to how they continue to resonate in contemporary Chinese thought and society.

The classes will come in the form of lectures, supplemented with selected readings relevant to the subject matter and group discussions.

Initial competences

The course requires the final competences as stated for the BA program of Philosophy and Moral sciences, or Oriental Languages and Cultures. Students who have acquired these competences otherwise can also join this course.

Final competences

Demonstrating a thorough understanding of some of the main concepts, problems, and methodological issues in the study of the non-western philosophical traditions treated in this course.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- (online) lecture: theoretical and historical background
- (online) seminar: discussion and analysis of reading material
- guided self-study: preparatory reading of texts provided by the lecturers
- self-reliant study activity: outline and academic source assignment, presentation assignment, final paper

Learning materials and price

Learning materials will all be available on Ufora.

References

References will be available on Ufora.

Course content-related study coaching

The lecturer can be consulted on fixed office hours.

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- Research paper about a specific theme relevant to the course that is fixed together with the lecturer.
- Active participation in group discussions of reading materials made available by the lecturers.

Calculation of the examination mark

Participation: 30 %

- Philosophy is a dialogical, and hence, social activity. For this reason, your presence (10%) is

required. If something prevents you from attending class, please notify the lecturer/s as soon as possible with a brief explanation of your situation (medical excuses require a doctor's note, wherever possible).

- Bring hard copies of readings to class.
- Complete the assigned readings prior to class. Class time is more discussion-oriented than lecture-oriented. If you do not complete the assigned readings prior to class, then this negatively affects not just your own learning experience but that of your classmates as well.
- You are required to participate in small group and large group discussions, and to demonstrate that you have completed the readings for each class and made a good faith effort to understand the readings. I/we will often call upon students to answer questions on the spot. If you suffer from social anxiety, please speak with me/us in private, and I/we will accommodate your request as best as possible.
- No Laptop Computers, Cell Phones, or Internet Devices: The internet is a wonderful resource, but not during our class time. It is a distraction to you and others. On rare occasions I/we may give you permission to use your laptops or cell phones in class.
- Complete the assignments on time. Your active participation includes completing on scheduled time the following assignments: 1) outline (10%) and academic sources and 2) presentation (10%).

Final essay: 70%

Each student will develop a final essay of approximately 5000 words (at least 3,500 words). Choice of topic is up to you, but at least a major component of the paper must engage closely with one or more of the readings we dealt with in class. You are welcome to incorporate your own interests from other disciplines into the paper; however, the paper should primarily be a work of philosophy, or at least have obvious philosophical importance. The essay should incorporate both readings assigned in class as well as external research. You are encouraged to consult with us about the final paper throughout the semester.

Required readings will be announced/made available before the beginning of the course.

Facilities for Working Students

- 1 Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance, a task is imposed in substitution
- 2 Possible alternative examination on a different time in the same academic year
- 3 Alternative time for feedback

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy