

**MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD 121
FALL QUARTER 2014**

Prof. Edmond Chang
534-4935 e6chang@ucsd.edu

ERC Bldg, MMW Main Office #211
Office Hrs: Wed. 12-2 pm

**UNDERSTANDING THE PRE-MODERN WORLD:
THE UNIVERSAL QUEST FOR WISDOM**

Course Overview

This course focuses on the quest for wisdom found in various philosophical and religious traditions of the pre-modern world (pre-18th century C.E.). In some cases, that search may have been motivated by a hope for personal transcendence towards a more enlightened life, while in others, it may have stemmed from a collective effort towards sustaining a community. Regardless of incentive, such pursuits for wisdom generally revolved around certain “paradigmatic figures” or “luminary sages.” Such figures may have been either historical or allegorical; yet be they real or imagined, each of them invariably shared an aspiration to realize a well-lived life through a greater awareness of what makes us human, and by extension, what our responsibilities should be. In studying some of these exemplary figures and the historical contexts that produced them, we hope to arrive at a better understanding of the challenges and aspirations that accompany the quest for wisdom. In the course of our philosophical and historical “visits” with these figures, each of us may ultimately be reminded of what is most important in our own development as a human being—not so much the relentless accumulation of knowledge, but the tireless pursuit of what Socrates affirmed as the examined life.

An equally important component of this course is its emphasis on developing your critical reading and scholarly writing skills to a level that is commensurate with university requirements. As such, on top of lectures, the writing and research instruction you receive from your TAs in section represents a crucial component of the course.

Texts and Readings

Course Reader (University Readers)

Strayer, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History*. Combined Edition ISBN 978-0-312-44443-3 (Bedford/St. Martin’s)
Andrea Lunsford, *Easy Writer*, 5th edition (Included in the Strayer combined version, but you can also choose to purchase the Strayer and Lunsford separately if you can find used copies)

Bhagavad-Gita, trans. Barbara Stoler Miller (Bantam Classic)

Plato, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Hackett)

UCSD Library e-reserves: Course password: **EC121** (You need to be connected to the UCSD network in order to access our course reserve page <http://reserves.ucsd.edu/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=22362>. For technical assistance click <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/services/remote.html>.)

All books are available for purchase at the UCSD bookstore or on reserve at the library. The course reader is available through University Readers Printing Service (order by phone: 800-200-3908 or online: <http://www.universityreaders.com>)

Course Requirements:

Midterm examination (20 %)

Final examination (35 %)

Writing Assignments (35 % combined)

Section attendance and participation (10 %)

3 section absences = fail the section

4 section absences = fail the course

Any absence in section will also negatively impact your section grade, as it reflects your level of participation

To pass this MMW course, you must satisfy all course requirements; i.e. you must take all exams and turn in all writing assignments to TA and the final paper to Turnitin.com. In addition, your instructors require you to complete assigned readings for the day of lecture; furthermore, they expect you to come to section prepared to discuss texts and issues related to the week’s readings and lectures.

The Pass/No Pass grading option is NOT permissible for MMW courses; all ERC students must take this course for a letter grade in order to fulfill the ERC general education requirement.

Examinations:

There will be **two** exams in this course. Each will be designed to gauge your grasp of the reading and lecture material. They will generally consist of a variety of objective questions, so if you have attended the lectures consistently, read **and** critically engaged the course material, you can expect to do quite well on these assessments. The final exam will include an essay portion that is cumulative in scope.

Make-up exams will only be granted in the exceptional case of a valid, documented reason for absence. They will be given in a different format and include different content.

Reading Assignments:

The true gem of any MMW course, I believe, is in the readings that instructors assign. Not only will you get more out of the lectures and discussions completing the readings by the dates indicated, but you will also assure yourself a more meaningful engagement with the diverse human cultures covered in the course.

Academic Integrity:

It is your responsibility to know and observe all of the UCSD rules concerning academic integrity and plagiarism. You should familiarize yourself with your responsibilities and rights under the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship <http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/appendix2.pdf> and MMW policies governing academic integrity included in the MMW Style Sheet. Any student found to have committed a substantial violation of the university rules concerning academic integrity will fail the entire course *and* the professor will initiate a charge of academic misconduct that may be noted on your academic record. A second offense will generally result in suspension or permanent expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, how to credit the work of others properly, or how to evaluate sources for quality and reliability and how to avoid it, please talk to your TA and/or me to discuss the matter.

Office for Student Disabilities Accommodations:

Students requesting accommodations and services for this course due to a disability need to provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) prior to eligibility for requests. Receipt of AFAs in advance is necessary for appropriate planning for the provision of reasonable accommodations. OSD Academic Liaisons also need to receive current AFA letters if there are any changes to accommodations. For additional information, contact the Office for Students with Disabilities: 858-534-4382 (V); 959.534.9709 (TTY) – reserved for people who are deaf or hard of hearing; or email: osd@ucsd.edu. OSD Website: <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>.

Course Syllabus

WEEK 0

10/2 Course Introduction

Writing Assignment Lecture #1

I Wisdom and Human Suffering: Equanimity

WEEK 1

10/7 Confronting Mortality: Gilgamesh and Ishtar

Strayer: 47-66, 75-76

Reader: “The Epic of Gilgamesh”

“Ishtar’s Descent into the Netherworld”

10/9 Understanding Suffering: Job

Strayer: 132-135

Reader: *Job* (excerpts)

UCSD Library e-reserves: Morrison “God’s Answer to Job”

WEEK 2

10/14 Recognizing the Roots of Suffering: Siddhartha Gautama

Strayer: 126-131

Reader: Strong: “Realizing the Four Noble Truths”

UCSD Library e-reserves: Kohn “The Life of the Buddha”

10/16 Accepting Impermanence: Siddhartha Gautama

Reader: Strong “The Acceptance of Women into the Order”

Embree “The Questions of King Menander”

Smith “Wisdom: The Heart Sutra”

WEEK 3

10/21 Confronting the Plague: Boccaccio and Ibn al-Wardi

Strayer: 227-228, 377-379

Reader: Boccaccio “A Most Terrible Plague”

Aberth, selections from *The Black Death*

10/23 **Writing Assignment Lecture #2**

UCSD Library e-reserves: Dols “Comparative Communal Responses to the Black Death in Muslim and Christian Societies”

Stearns: “New Directions in the Study of Religious Responses to the Black Death”

Writing Assignment #1 due

II Wisdom and Community: Other-centeredness

WEEK 4

10/28 Cultivating *Ren*: Confucius

Strayer: 117-124, 151-158

Reader: De Bary “Confucius” (selections)

10/30 Harmonizing with Others: Mencius and Ban Zhao

Strayer: 167-171

Reader: Ebrey “Selections from the *Mencius*”

Ban Zhao “Lessons for Women”

WEEK 5

11/4 Abiding by One’s *Dharma*: Arjuna and Krishna

Strayer: 131-132, 158-162

Bhagavad-Gita (all)

11/6 Living the Examined Life: Socrates

Strayer: 135-139
The Trial and Death of Socrates: “Apology” and “Crito”

WEEK 6

Writing Assignment #2 due

- 11/11 **Veterans Day (University Holiday)**
11/13 Escalating the Love Quotient: Jesus and Mary Magdalene
Strayer: 139-148
Reader: “The Gospel of Matthew” Ch.4-7
“The Gospel of Mark” Ch.13-16
“The Gospel of Thomas” (excerpts)
“The Gospel of Mary” (excerpts)

WEEK 7

- 11/18 **Midterm Exam**
11/20 Redefining One’s *Umma*: Muhammad and Khadija
Strayer: 281-288, 295-298
Reader: “Scripture and Tradition in Islam—The Qu’ran and Hadiths”

III Wisdom and Self: Humility

WEEK 8

- 11/25 Effacing the Self in Nature: Ohiyesa and Old Man Coyote
Strayer: 472-477
Reader: Ohiyesa “Ways of the Spirit”
American Indian Myths and Legends (selections)
UCSD Library e-reserves: Krech “Reflections on Conservation, Sustainability, and Environmentalism in Indigenous North America”
11/27 **Thanksgiving Break**

WEEK 9

- 12/2 Learning from Nature: Laozi and Zhuangzi
Strayer: 124-126
Reader: D.C. Lau *Lao-Tzu: Tao Te Ching* (selections)
Chuang Tzu *Basic Writings* (selections)
Ts’ai Chih-chung *Zhuangzi Speaks* (selections)
12/4 Living in the Moment: Dogen and Kamo no Chomei
Reader: Lu “Dogen and the Meaning of Zen”
Kamo No Chomei “An Account of My Hut”

WEEK 10

Writing Assignment #3 due

- 12/9 Harnessing Willpower: St. Augustine and Martin Luther
Strayer: 493-497
Reader: *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (excerpts)
Luther “Table Talk” and “Ninety-five Theses”
“Luther vs. Erasmus: A Reformer’s Attack on Free Will”
12/11 Embracing Uncertainty: Montaigne and Voltaire
Strayer: 517-520
Reader: Montaigne *Essays* (excerpts)
Gay “The Modern Pagan”
Voltaire “On Universal Toleration”

*****FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18TH 3:00—6:00 PM*****