

College of Charleston
Department of Religious Studies
Fall 2018

RELS 247: THE DAOIST TRADITION
Tues & Thurs 12:15-1:30; Ed Center 219

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Office Hours: Wed 11-3 or by appointment

“Dao called Dao is not Dao” is the first line of the most famous Daoist scripture. So how do we begin to study Daoism? This ancient Chinese tradition may be the most misunderstood of the major world religions but it has struck a nerve with many Westerners. We begin with an overview of the history of Daoism and then study Daoist scriptures, communities, gender roles, rituals, and sacred sites. We will also consider the role Daoism plays in Chinese society today, including how it impacts such issues as medicine, martial arts, popular culture, the environment, and politics. We also examine its globalization.

This course will fulfill the **General Education Student Learning Outcomes:**

Student Learn Outcome #1: Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture.

Student Learn Outcome #2: Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments.

These two learning outcomes will be assessed by at least three of the Response Papers (worth a total of 15%), which will ask students to analyze primary sources in terms of their religious ideas.

Required texts:

1. *Tao Te Ching* by Lao-Tzu translated by Addiss and Lombardo (**TTC**)
(ISBN-10: 0-87220-232-1)—make sure you get this edition!
2. *The Tao of Pooh* by Benjamin Hoff
3. *The Daoist Tradition: An Introduction* by Louis **Komjathy**
4. *Dream Trippers* by David **Palmer** and Elijah Siegler
5. *Seven Taoist Masters* by Eva **Wong**

There are also required short readings, numbered 1-7, on OAKS. Please print these out!

Please bring the relevant book or printout to class.

Assignments: We will review and discuss each assignment before it is due. There may also be various opportunities to gain bonus marks by attending relevant lectures and writing short papers about them.

Participation and attendance in class including in-class writing: **10%**

One 7-10 pp. term paper due in class on November 20: **20%**

Five out of ten 1-2 pp. "Response Papers" based on the readings: 5 x 5%= **25%**

Oral presentation, including PowerPoint, given in class the week of October 15: **4%**

3 out of 4 "surprise" quizzes (announced in class the day before) 3 x 3%= **9%**

Midterm exam (multiple choice, short answer, and essay) on Oct 9: **12%**

Final exam (multiple choice, short answer, and essay) on Dec 11: **20%**

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook, available online.

Grading Scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 61-62 F: 60 or below.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Tues 8/21: Will this class reveal the "secret wisdom of the Taoists?" Or is it about something else?

Read: Tao of Pooh

Thurs 8/23: What do we need to know about Chinese language, history and geography?

Read: In-class Handout; Komjathy xiii, xix

Tues 8/28: What does it mean to be a Daoist?

Read: OAKS#1- "Popular Misconceptions"; Komjathy 10-13, 39-44, 57-60; Palmer 1-6, 14-19, 21-26

Due: Response Paper #1

Thurs 8/30: Daoism in Ancient China

Read Komjathy 17-22; TTC vii-xii; Palmer 46-50

Tues 9/4: Reading the Daodejing

Read TTC, xii-xv, 1-81; Komjathy 46-47

Due: RP #2

Thurs 9/6: Translating and Interpreting the Daodejing
Read: TTC xvi- xix; another translation of the Daodejing (skim); Komjathy 83-94

Tues 9/11: Reading the Zhuangzi and other early texts
Read: In-class Handout; OAKS#2- Zhuangzi; Komjathy 61-63
Due: RP #3

Thurs 9/13: Daoist History and Revelation
Read: Komjathy 22-28, 54-57

Tues 9/18: What is the Daoist Universe?
Read: Komjathy 101-115; Palmer 50-59
Due: RP #4

Thurs 9/20: Daoist Views on Life and Death
Read: Komjathy 123-142; OAKS #3- “Ancestors and Ghosts”

Tues 9/25: Daoist Ethics
Read: Komjathy 145-162; Palmer 105-110
Due: RP #5

Thurs 9/27: Daoist Diet and Exercise
Read: Komjathy 165-173, 179-184; 94-99, 187-204

Tues 10/2: Daoist Meditation and Alchemy
Read: Komjathy 205-223; OAKS #4- “Golden Elixir”
Due: RP #6
Midterm Exam Study Guide Handed Out

Thurs 10/4: Visualization and Movement Practice
Midterm Exam Review

Tues 10/9: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Thurs 10/11: Daoist Ritual
Read: Komjathy 243-260
Exams handed back

Tues 10/16: Daoist Sacred Places
Read: Komjathy 115-121, 238-239, 265-274, 275-279, 286-288, 290-298
Oral Presentations

Thurs 10/18: Daoist Gods and Demons
Read: OAKS#5- Cahill
Oral Presentations, cont.
Due: RP #7

Tues 10/23: Later Daoist History

Read: Komjathy 28-34, 64 (from “Eremiticism remained”)-67; Wong xvi- 59

Thurs 10/25: Women in Daoism

Read: Komjathy 75-79; Wong 60-126

Tues 10/30: The Complete Reality School of Daoism

Read: Komjathy 73-75; Wong 127-176; OAKS #6—“Fifteen Teachings”

Due: RP #8

Thurs 11/1: Secularization of Daoist Practices/ **Paper Workshop**

Read: Komjathy 34-36; OAKS #7—“Quiet Sitting”; Palmer 27-30, 138-145

Due: Paper-in-Progress

Tues 11/6: **Fall Break** (Storm Make Up Day)

Thurs 11/8: Daoism in China Today

Read: Komjathy 305-308; Palmer 101-104, 110-138

Due: RP #9

Tues 11/13: Daoism in the West

Read: Wong xv-xvi; Komjathy 313 (from “The second example”) -315; Palmer 60-100

Thurs 11/15: Western Daoists in China

Palmer 146-165, 179-183, 199-213

Due: RP #10

Tues 11/20: **Final Paper Due**

Thurs 11/22: **Thanksgiving!**

Tues 11/27: The Future of Daoism

Read: Palmer 225-250

Thurs 11/29: Final Discussion and **Exam Review**

Read: Tao of Pooh (Again!); Palmer 251-263, 274-277

Tues 12/11 12- 3PM: **Final Exam**

Note: Students with documented disabilities who have been approved to receive accommodation through SNAP should feel free to discuss this during office hours. For more information, contact Disability Services at 953-1431.

The Center for Student Learning has writing labs and can arrange individual tutoring for these particular assignments at <http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/> or 953-5635.