

# Course Syllabus

**IDS 2935 (#25006) SELF AND SOCIETY IN EAST ASIA**

UF Quest 1/ Identity - General Education: Humanities, International, Writing (2000)

**[Note: A minimum grade of C is required for General Education credit]**

Period 4 (10:40 AM - 11:30 AM) [CHE0237](#)

## Instructors

Stephan N. Kory, Assistant Prof. of Chinese  
skory@ufl.edu 392-7083  
Office Hours: M/W/F 12:55-1:40 or by appointment

Matthieu Felt, Assistant Prof. of Japanese  
mfelt@ufl.edu 273-3778  
Office Hours: T/R 3:00 to 4:00, or by appointment

## Teaching Assistant

Seepo, Catrin, PhD Student  
cseepo@ufl.edu  
Office Hours: Th 11:30-12:30 / 2:00- 3:00,  
or by appointment

**Please email for an appointment, even within posted office hours.**

## Course Description

This interdisciplinary Quest 1 course prompts students to reconsider the nature of identities, both personal and social, as well as personhood itself, through a rigorous examination of traditional Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese texts. Much like the Bible or the US Constitution in America, these historical works inform mainstream cultural identity and practice in contemporary East Asia, despite their ancient provenance. Direct engagement with these primary sources will allow students to approach identity from a non-liberal perspective that does not revolve around ideas of inherent rights, freedoms, and liberties, and expose them to alternative ideas about the definition of humanity, the construction of society, and the so-called natural order. As a result, students will be able to critically reflect, through comparison, on the processes that create and maintain identities in our contemporary society, in the contemporary Asian present, and in the premodern Asian past.

The course is organized by beginning with the fundamental philosophical and ideological perspectives for studying East Asia, such as Confucianism, Legalism, Daoism, and Buddhism. This provides the tools to continue with study of materials that both broach essential questions of the human experience and occupy central positions in the contemporary cultural identity of East Asia. The instructors will provide context when necessary, but no previous familiarity with East Asian history or culture is expected.

## **Course Delivery**

This course is a traditional face-to-face class focused on the written and spoken exchange of ideas. Students will be engaged through class discussion with the instructors and with one another, as well as through weekly comments from the instructors and TA on their written work. Students should have a computer, phone, or other smart device to take quizzes online.

The instructor leading discussion for each session is indicated on the schedule below; for exact date, see the course website. Assignments will be posted to the course website or distributed in class. See the section on “Graded Work” below for details. Students are expected to read the assigned material before class begins and be prepared to discuss it. Instructors will evaluate and provide feedback on all written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization. The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

## **Quest 1 / General Education Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes**

### **Quest 1 Descriptions and Student Learning Outcomes**

QUEST 1 DESCRIPTION: Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations of truly challenging questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? To grapple with the kinds of open-ended and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world, Quest 1 students use the humanities approaches present in the course to mine works for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas.

QUEST 1 (Q1) SLOS: AT THE END OF A Q1 CLASS, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition within and across the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Content).
- Analyze and evaluate essential questions about the human condition using established practices appropriate for the arts and humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Critical Thinking).
- Develop and present clear and effective responses to essential questions in oral and written forms as appropriate to the relevant humanities disciplines incorporated into the course (Communication).
- Connect course content with critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond (Connection).

### **General Education Designations and Student Learning Outcomes**

HUMANITIES (H) DESCRIPTION: Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

HUMANITIES SLOS: AT THE END OF AN H CLASS, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in the course (Content).
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).

INTERNATIONAL (N) DESCRIPTION: International courses promote the development of students' global and intercultural awareness. Students examine the cultural, economic, geographic, historical, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world, and thereby comprehend the trends, challenges, and opportunities that affect communities around the world. Students analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate their own and other people's understanding of an increasingly connected world.

INTERNATIONAL SLOS: AT THE END OF AN N CLASS, STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Identify, describe, and explain the historical, cultural, economic, political, and/or social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world (Content).
- Analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and/or social systems and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly connected contemporary world (Critical Thinking).

### **Self and Society in East Asia Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment**

Reflecting the curricular structures of Quest 1 and these Gen Ed designations, at the end of Self and Society in East Asia, students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies in humanistic study of canonical East Asian texts and philosophies. As these works and ideas continue to be relevant in contemporary Asia, students will also be able to identify, describe, and explain their position in historical, cultural, economic, political, and social experiences and processes that characterize the contemporary world. These materials are especially important as carriers of contemporary cultural identity. As such, students will be able to identify, describe, and explain the history, theories, and methodologies used to examine essential questions about the human condition, especially the formation and

maintenance of identities (**Content SLOs for Gen Ed H, N, and Q1**). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in classroom discussion, reading quizzes, one assigned analysis paper, posted reading responses, an extra-curricular review, and a final paper.

2. Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought in the East Asia and in the East Asian humanities. Students will approach issues and problems from the perspectives of multiple genres, as well as multiple subject positions. Students will assess these materials first on their own terms, and then, with instructor guidance and facilitated discussion, with cognizance of their own local positions, those of people in contemporary Asia, and those of historical Asia. As such, they will be able to analyze and reflect on the ways in which cultural, economic, political, and social systems and beliefs mediate understandings of an increasingly connected contemporary world. The juxtaposition of these positions will foster the analysis and evaluation of essential questions about the human condition, especially with respect to identity and personhood, both local and global, past and contemporary (**Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed H, N, and Q1**). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in classroom discussion, one assigned analysis paper, an extra-curricular review, posted reading responses, and a final paper.
3. Communicate knowledge, thoughts, and reasoning, and develop and present clear and effective responses, about traditional East Asian philosophy, literature and culture and its relationships to the contemporary period clearly and effectively (**Communication SLO for Gen Ed H and Q1**). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in classroom discussion, one assigned analysis paper, an extra-curricular review, posted reading responses, and a final paper.
4. Analyze, evaluate, and critically reflect on connections between course content and their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond as global citizens. The course introduces students to alternative approaches to personhood and identity, which will allow students to critically reflect on their own situation and connect to those outside of UF and the USA who may not understand their selfhood in the same fashion (**Connection SLO for Q1**). These outcomes will be assessed through participation in classroom discussion, one assigned analysis paper, an extra-curricular review, and a final paper. TO SEE HOW ASSIGNMENT ADVANCES EACH SLO, SEE BELOW.

## Required Textbooks

The required texts below are available at the campus bookstore or your favorite online retailer. All other readings will be provided via PDF on the course website in Canvas. Students are required to bring a copy of the day's assigned reading to every class. Failure to do so may result in loss of participation points. Students are expected to complete the reading assignment for each class **BEFORE** the class begins.

- *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, Philip J. Ivanhoe & Bryan W. Van Norden (Hackett), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.

- Robert van Gulik, *Judge Dee at Work: Eight Chinese Detective Stories* (University of Chicago Press, 1967)
- David Kherdian, *Monkey: A Journey to the West: A Retelling of the Chinese Folk Novel by Wu Ch'eng-en* (Boston: Shambhala, 1992)

Recommended Writing Style Manual:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Seventeenth ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

## Graded Work

### Regular class participation (Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4) (5%)

Consistent informed, thoughtful, attentive, courteous, and professional engagement with class materials, fellow students, and instructor/TA in class. Participation will be assessed based on the following basic rubric: 5% for outstanding participation; 4% for regular participation; 3% for inconsistent participation; 2 or 1% for problematic preparation.

### Reading quizzes (Advances SLO: 1) (15%)

7 reading quizzes will be given at random in class over the course of the semester. The lowest quiz score will be dropped. Each reading quiz covers readings due the day of the quiz and all of the readings since the last quiz (or from Week 1 Class 1). Most questions will be multiple-choice. You will need a computer or smart device to take the quiz.

### Weekly posting (Advances SLOs: 1,2,3) (25%)

Response postings are due weekly on Fridays over the course of the semester, submitted to the "Discussions" section of the course website. At least one, if not more, suggested topics will be posted for students to respond to, but you may write on whatever you wish. Postings should be one to two paragraphs in length (**about 200 words**) and reflect a thoughtful engagement with the assigned reading. They will be graded on a five-point scale as follows:

- 0 - No posting submitted.
- 1 - Posting is "very poor," i.e., extremely short and of low quality
- 2 – Posting has missed the main points of the reading/is too short/ is poorly written
- 3 – Posting is acceptable. Demonstrates some understanding of some of the reading, but also major misunderstandings with unclear writing.
- 4 – Posting is good. Addresses the main points of the text and expresses them reasonably well.
- 5 - Posting is excellent. Understands the main points of the text, addresses the topic thoughtfully, and expresses its points eloquently.

Please note that writing longer postings does not guarantee any extra points. **The score of the lowest two postings will be dropped.** Late postings will be deducted one point per day from the due date. The posting is due by midnight Saturday.

**Mid-term paper (1000 words) (Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4) (20%)**

Students are encouraged to consult the instructors and/or TA concerning the contents of their paper. Instructions for submission and prompt will be provided on the course website. Students may use APA, Chicago, or MLA format and style, so long as they are consistent within the assignment. Submissions should be uploaded as PDF or Word files by the posted deadline. Paper will be graded according to the writing rubric at the end of this document. This paper will count for 1,000 words towards the UF Writing Requirement pending a grade of “C” or better in the course. **Due March 04.**

**Prompt:** Compare one of the readings from this course with one from outside the course. The comparison may be of philosophical works (for example, Xunzi vs. Hobbes) or of literary ones (for example, *Tale of Genji* vs. *The Crown*). You have a wide latitude for selecting your comparison; consult with instructors in case of doubt. The paper should explain why the two works interpret a shared issue or problem (human nature, fidelity, etc) differently and why that distinction is important to understanding the overall meaning of each work.

**Extra-curricular review (Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4) (10%)**

Students are expected to write one review (~300 words) of an Asia-related academic event on or off campus or in recent popular culture. Events are provided on the course website. Students should *briefly* summarize the contents of the talk, exhibit, or film and explain how it intersects with one or two concepts discussed in class. Please cite at least one material read for class. The review should be submitted to the course website. **Due April 18.**

**Final Paper (Advances SLOs: 1,2,3,4) (25%)**

1000-1500 words. Instructions for submission and prompt will be provided on the course website. Students may use APA, Chicago, or MLA format and style, so long as they are consistent within the assignment. Submissions should be uploaded as PDF or Word files by the posted deadline. Paper will be graded according to the writing rubric at the end of this document. This paper will count for 1,000 words towards the UF Writing Requirement pending a grade of “C” or better in the course. **Due April 23.**

**Prompt:** Analyze one of the literary texts from this semester by applying the philosophical perspectives from the first few weeks of the semester. How do the ideologies, such as Confucianism, Daoism, or Buddhism, function within the text you have chosen, and how is this perspective important to grasping the text’s overall meaning?

**Grading Schedule**

Final grades will be assigned according to the percentages below:

A	93% and above	A-	90% and above		
B+	87% and above	B	83% and above	B-	80% and above
C+	77% and above	C	73% and above	C-	70% and above

D      67% and above                  D      63% and above                  D-     60% and above  
F      Less than 60%

More information on grades and grading policies is  
here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Class Attendance and Makeup Policy**

Class attendance is expected. Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog as noted

below: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Late work will receive a 10% deduction per 24-hour period that passes until it is submitted.

### **Accommodations**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### **Classroom Demeanor**

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of class time. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all. Note that all students in the traditional classroom setting are expected to wear masks at all times, etc in accordance with UF guidelines.

### **Materials and Supplies Fee**

There are no additional fees for this course.

### **University Honesty Policy**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

### **University Wellness Schedule**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:  
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### **Writing Studio**

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

#### **WEEK 1: Kongzi and the Ideal Person**

**SNK**

Summary: The course begins with the teachings of Kongzi (Confucius), whose ideas have profoundly influenced notions of self, society, and humanity in East Asia. This week we set the foundation for the course by examining his own words and what he thought it meant to be a person. Discussion will focus on contrasting Kongzi’s vision for society and his notion of identity with our own and exploring the ways in which his legacy still affects our world.

#### **WEEK 2: The Limits of Knowledge**

**SNK**

Summary: Kongzi was never the only game in town. Philosophers in the Daoist tradition questioned how much we could really be sure about, and probed the limitations of our perceptions of reality. Compared to the Confucian perspectives in weeks 1 and 2, how do these works posit self and identity? What kind of lifestyle would this approach lead to, and is this a feasible vision of society? How might these principles be lived in our contemporary world?

#### **WEEK 3: Are people good? Can we make them good?**

**SNK**



Summary: There are a few things Kongzi was not entirely clear about, namely human nature. This week we examine three different reactions to Kongzi's thought in order to flesh out the relationship between different views on human nature and how they determine strategies for controlling human behavior. Be prepared to take sides in discussion, and see if you can identify analogous positions in contemporary politics, whether in the US or your own country.

#### **WEEK 4: Humanistic Ways of Knowing the World**

**SNK, MF**

Summary: This week, our readings make claims about the importance of two humanistic genres, historical writing and poetry. Our discussion will begin by identifying and connecting these claims to the positions on self and society that came up in previous weeks. But beyond that, can we make similar statements about the humanities in our own society? What is the relation between these genres and the societies in which they operate, and how is it changing?

#### **WEEK 5: Nondualism and the Self**

**MF**

Summary: The arrival of Buddhism from India introduced one third way, along with Confucianism and Taoism, to understand self and identity. In Asia, these ideologies mixed together despite their differences, and today, many people subscribe to elements of all three, known as the "Three Teachings." This week, we will work through a Buddhist holy text that preaches the fundamentals of nondualism. Discussion will focus on the points of conflict between Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, and whether/how those tensions might be resolved.

#### **WEEK 6: The Role of the Artist**

**SNK**

Summary: In Week 4, we discussed some possibilities for artistic expression, especially poetry, and their place in society. This week, we begin working with actual poems from the height of the Chinese tradition, which are still memorized by almost all children in China today as part of their early education. Do these works speak to the aspirations of Week 4? What aspects of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist thought resonate in these works, and what might this suggest about the intersection of artistic identity and societal ideology? How do these intersect in our contemporary society?

#### **WEEK 7: The Role of Fiction**

**MF**

Summary: This week introduces the first fiction in the course and what is often called the first novel in world history. However, none of the ideological traditions we have encountered so far explicitly supported this genre, and at the time, it was quite novel. Why do you think it might have been written, and what societal reactions might you envision? How does the work differ from modern fiction, and are those differences related to differences in ideas of self, society, and identity? Now this work serves as the cornerstone of Japanese cultural identity; are there elements of national identity in the original work?

#### **WEEK 8: Narrating the Self, Performing Identity**

**MF**

Summary: Perhaps no genre of writing is more individualistic than the diary. This week, we will read three deeply personal reflections, and compare actual lives to the idealized depictions seen in the fiction of Week 7. Note that these diaries were clearly written to be read by others; how

would you compare their contents and attitudes to contemporary social media? Do we have identities apart from what we perform?

### **WEEK 9: History and Memory in the Epic**

**MF**

Summary: In Week 4, we discussed the ideal role of history writing and its relation to societal ideals. This week, we take up an epic retelling of a historical war and the samurai who participated in it. The major figures in the work assume larger-than-life characteristics, and in discussion, we will compare their “heroic individualism” with the models for identity and personhood encountered elsewhere, for example Kongzi’s ideal scholar-official. *Heike* also entails a decent amount of romanticization and exaggeration. What might these modifications to history achieve, both for people when the work was composed, and for those who see it as part of their cultural identity in the present?

<March 04 Mid-term Paper Due >

### **WEEK 10: Traditional Literature and Adaptation**

**MF**

Summary: This week, we encounter some later dramatic adaptations of episodes from Weeks 7 and 10. What differences can you detect between the versions, and how do they affect the overall message of the text? What might they suggest about the target audience of these performances? In our own society, adaptations and sequels constitute most of box office revenue, from *Godzilla* to *The Avengers*. What might our adaptations reveal about us?

### **WEEK 11: Ideological Conflict**

**MF**

Summary: While ideological problems lurked in the background of *Genji* in Week 7, in the *Nine Cloud Dream*, the clear contradiction between the Confucian value of social relations and Buddhist lack of human attachments is the primary driver of the plot. What position do you think the author is advocating, and how does it reflect the role of fiction discussed in Week 7? Does this kind of negotiation suggest possibilities for handling ideological conflict in contemporary society, or do the differences in identity and personhood make the conceptual distance too great?

### **WEEK 12: Layers of Identity**

**SNK**

Summary: This week repeats the general plot of Weeks 7 and 12, with a dashing male protagonist in *The Story of the Stone*, the greatest Chinese novel, living a charmed love life, but instead of a fictional court lady or monk as the narrator, we have an semi-autobiographical tribute. How might these differences in narrator identity affect the impact and style of the text, both from the perspective of a historical reader, and from that of a contemporary one?

### **WEEK 13: Self, Society, and National Identity**

**MF**

Summary: Tragedy strikes this week as our heroine Thúy Kiều is called to sacrifice herself again and again, suffering far more in her love story than the male protagonists of Weeks 7, 12, and 13. Is the individual in Asia destined to be crushed by obligation, and why has her story gone so differently than the other love tales encountered this semester? The poem is regarded as the National Epic of Vietnam, but what rationale could there be for elevating this work in particular, and how can a work represent an entire people?

### **WEEK 14: Travel and Imagination**

**SNK**

Summary: In the penultimate week of the course, we travel back through all three ideologies from the course, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, as Tripitaka journeys from China to India. His travel is an opportunity for us to review our own journey through the course and the issues surrounding identity construction and maintenance discussed in class. We will take this week as a final chance to reflect on the possibilities and intersections of self, culture, and society in our own world and others, and to use this comparison to clarify the consequences of our own subject positions.

**<Extra-curricular Report Due April 18>**

**WEEK 15: Rites and Rights**

**SNK**

Summary: The reading this week is on criminal justice, but in a setting that does not operate on our traditional idea of individual rights. How does justice change when the fundamental expectation of the individual's role in society is different? What might this reveal about the assumptions of our own society's approach toward crime and incarceration?

**Final Paper Due April 23**