

HON 312 • Gender of *Dao*

Birmingham-Southern College
Course Syllabus - Spring 2022

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ROOM AND TIME: HUMANITIES 315, M W 11:00AM-12:20PM
Office Hours:
M&W 12:30-2:00pm
T 1:50-2:00pm
Th 1:50-2:00pm
(* + TBA + M-Th when you see me*)
& by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Ames & Hall - *Dao De Jing: A Philosophical Translation* (Ballantine ISBN: 0345444159)

Chen - *The Tao Te Ching: A New Translation with Commentary* (Paragon 1998, ISBN: 9781557782380)

Lennon & Alsop - *Gender Theory in Troubled Times* (Polity, ISBN: 0745683029).

Additional Readings (PDF handouts) on Moodle - login @ - <http://bsc.mrooms2.net> (*required*)
(Help with Moodle: call the help desk at 226-3033 or email helpdesk@bsc.edu)

COURSE CONTENT: Catalog Copy:

An interdisciplinary and genealogical exploration of *dao* in the light of contemporary gender theory. The “Daoist” traditions (including Japanese Shinto) initially exhibit explicit and even singular reverence for the *feminine* on both human and cosmological levels, yet these traditions (with Asia broadly) experience increasing misogyny and social and political reversals. This course uses classical sinology and contemporary gender and women studies to explore East Asian gendered experiences, gender roles, and contemporary gender struggles. The course emphasizes a necessary integration of the humanities with the social sciences. Students will engage in close readings of primary Daoist texts and contemporary gender and women studies scholarship with extensive class discussion accompanied by lecture designed to foster hermeneutic skills and critical analysis. Film and media will also be used to broaden our perspectives.

A GP designated course. Prerequisite: sophomore standing or instructor consent

LEARNING OUTCOMES (LO)

Upon successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Explain the basic presuppositions of East Asian gender culture.
- 2) Identify how East Asian sexism arose and how it compares to the trajectories of sexism in more “Western” cultures.
- 3) Apply scholarly research, argument, and work in global gender and women studies.
- 4) Compare gender and women studies in multiple, global contexts.

The above Learning Outcomes (LO) are addressed in specific assignments outlined in the following syllabus.

The *perspectives* cultivated in this course involve first becoming conscious of basic texts and worldview-assumptions, and then genuinely appreciating what it means see the world otherwise. Students who complete this course will understand the fundamentals of gender in East Asia, and some of the challenges gender and women studies face in a world of increasing globalization. Finally, students will be equipped to continue original research and work in global gender and women studies.

Methods and Structure:

Our classes will be a blend of lecture, discussion, case studies, and student presentations. As a community of inquirers, we'll be learning from each other. As such, it is imperative that for each meeting, you read carefully and reflect on the assigned materials before each class. This kind of course only works well when we are all prepared. Each student is encouraged to bring his or her own area of academic interest to bear on the course, to interrogate the literature, and extend and critique our understanding.

SCHEDULE

We will follow a *provisional itinerary* of assigned texts to be read before each class. Students are responsible for all readings listed on the itinerary *unless otherwise noted*. Given a special circumstance, I may announce additional readings or discussion topics not on the itinerary—e.g., you may be asked to write a brief *summary-critique* of a specific reading (*in-class or take-home*), which may factor as a component of your **participation** grade (see below)—however, by and large, the printed schedule should be your guide.

DISCUSSIONS

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions, both *in the classroom* and online (in the Moodle discussion forums [and/or Teams if needed]) – guidelines, discussion formats, and the **attendance/participation** (A&P) grading plan follow below.

In-Class

Students are expected to *be prepared* for each class (having read carefully the assigned materials) and to be *present* as active participants in *class discussions*. If you are not able to be prepared, let me know *before* class, and I will not call on you that day. However, if you are unprepared more than twice, A&P point reduction applies*. If you are physically in class but *not mentally present*, e.g., absorbed in social-media, texting on mobile device, etc., then A&P point reduction applies [**see attendance/participation* (A&P) below*].

Online Written Discussions (Moodle forums for Textual Engagement):

Weekly Text Critique (WTC): Post a written one-page ***Summary-Critique*** to the Moodle **WTC** Forum *each week*. These critiques need to be *textual* and *timely*, well-crafted, and between 250-400 words. See *Summary Critique* PDF for assignment details.

(Students are expected to post ***one critique per week***. When we have multiple readings/chapters/sections during a week *choose* a single piece for *critique*, the one piece most interesting to you. Make sure to follow the *Summary Critique Guide* (PDF) to receive full credit (10 points per week).

The forum will remain open through the thirteenth week, which thus *allows* for *extra credit* if you do not achieve ten perfect scores. Remember to ***title all posts*** according to the reading/chapter/topic/text you choose (--name your topic, not #) and engage the texts with ***citations***—always reference the *author date* and *page number* [“(e.g., Jullien 1995, 93)”], or if referencing an ancient or accepted *Classic*, reference the *passage number* (e.g., *Genesis* 1:23 or *Laozi* 36). Again, you only need to write on one piece/section/chapter each week, and engage the text

thoroughly.

***Begin each critique by citing a passage from the text** you choose to engage (one that interests you most).*

Special Topics Meditations Forum (STM): - From time to time, I will raise **specific topical questions** and ask you to post a single *meditation-response* to the **Special Topics Meditations** Forum on moodle. These single topic activities need to be thoughtful, timely, and substantive. Special topics forums will stay open for a limited time (usually about 1 week).

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Your grade on these textual engagements depends on regular activity throughout the term—please give them appropriate priority—and always engage the texts with citations.

Post thresholds (to encourage *topical*, thoughtful, timely, and substantive posts): If you reach Moodle posting limits and still have more to say on a topic or text, you can post additional thoughts in the *Informal Discussions* or *Lecture Spillover Discussions* Forums, note, however, that these (the ***Informal and Lecture Spillover Discussions***) forums are *not graded*, however, participation in this open forum is noted.

Open Discussions: If you would like to discuss topics outside the immediate purview of our texts, post your questions or comments to the *Informal Discussion* area. Here you may question (or even rant about) almost anything, as long as you are polite and somehow link it to our class.

Class participation is most important to intellectual development, for as Plato tells us, *dialectic* or “cross-conversation” is the very method of *philosophia*. Participation includes regular thoughtful contributions to class discussions.

When posting written discussions online please show common courtesy toward your classmates (think before you post): use polite language and respect alternative points of view. The purpose of philosophy discussion is not to rave, but to *express yourself coherently* and back up your opinions (and interpretations) with *reasoned arguments*. Keep your *weekly text queries & responses* on topic. Non-relevant posts in this area will be deleted (or moved to a non-graded area), with a reason why sent to the author.

If you would like to discuss topics outside the immediate purview of our texts, post your questions or comments to the *Informal Discussion* area. Here you may question (or even rant about) almost anything, as long as you are polite and somehow link it to our class.

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The following *Guidelines for Class Discussion* are borrowed and adapted from Kirk Hanson of Stanford University School of Business.

- (1) Are the points made substantive, relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others?
- (2) Is the participant a good listener? Do comments show the participant has been listening?
- (3) Do comments show evidence of analysis of the readings or issue at hand?
- (4) Do comments add to our understanding of the texts or issues at hand?
- (5) Does the participant distinguish among different kinds of data (i.e., facts, opinions, beliefs, etc.)?
- (6) Is there a willingness to test new ideas or are all comments “safe” (e.g., repetition of case facts without analysis and conclusions)?
- (7) Is the participant willing to interact with other class members?
- (8) Do comments clarify and highlight the important aspects of earlier comments and lead to the clearer statement of the concepts being covered?
- (9) Has the participant attempted to bring other readings, both from the text and from other sources, to bear on the cases under consideration?
- (10) Do the comments show awareness of the philosophical dimensions of the problem at hand and do these comments fit into a consistent, coherent philosophical framework?

These *Guidelines* apply in the online realm as well.

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PRESENTATIONS

During the fourth week, students schedule a presentation on a future topic of the week (see schedule). The goal of this assignment is for students to **research, engage, and distil** our topical information, and *go beyond the purview of our immediate texts* by using **external research to expand our perspectives** –clearly state two arguments from “peer-reviewed” sources (ask librarian if needed)

Each presentation is required to *include* 1) an individual *contribution statement* (**your own thesis/interpretation**), 2) *two arguments** [or “clarifications”] about your topic from **two “peer-reviewed” academic journal articles** (or academic texts) [use library **Discovery system** (<http://library.bsc.edu/>) to research your chosen topic], and 3) the reasons for why you agree or disagree with the arguments you discovered in 2). 1)-3) in the form of “talking points” with Bibliography are *due on Moodle the evening before the scheduled presentation (before midnight)*.

Note: Students may present individually or in *groups* of no more than three. If one chooses to present in a group, *each student must complete his or her own research* (this means she or he must have their own 1)-3) on the group topic.

Presentations should be concise (*about 5-10 minutes per person*). The point of the presentation is to expand the topic and our understanding, and to encourage and provoke class discussion. I expect you to take a stand and bring up original questions. When you sign up for a topic you assume the responsibility to be on schedule.

QUIZZES

Quizzes: We will have four “pop quizzes”. You may be quizzed on any previously assigned readings. Exams may contain any material covered in your readings and class discussions. I may also assign homework (such as writing assignments or research projects) that will supplement your quiz and exam scores. Exams will consist of a series of short-answer questions (true-false, multiple choice, or fill-in-the-blank) followed by a few *philosophical* short-essay questions. We will have a review session before each announced exam. (If unforeseen circumstances force us to change a scheduled exam, I will announce the new date in class and on Moodle.)

CRITICAL RESEARCH PAPER

The course will culminate in a *critical research paper* that is argumentative in nature (– students argue *for* or *against* a position, an idea, a tradition, an interpretation, a methodology, etc. -- 6-10 pages -- students have great latitude regarding topic choice, *only the paper must use our texts as starting points to expand or critique conventional Western conceptions of “environment” and “science”*).

Student research should creatively contribute to advancing our understanding, and demonstrate a command of the relevant tools of analysis derived from the class. Partial details of the paper format and requirements are outlined below, additional information will be provided as we become more familiar with the texts. Students will present a brief summary of their research at the end of the semester (failure to present research will result in a *participation* deduction).

Research requirements: *at least* two primary texts & two full-text article from instructor or one approved from the BSC Library Databases (e.g. “Jstor,” “Academic Search Premier,” etc.), see <http://library.bsc.edu/tools/online.htm><http://lib.ollusa.edu/databases/Philosophy.cfm>

The BSC library (<http://library.bsc.edu>) provides access to academic books, articles, and numerous online resources. Librarians are available to help you identify, locate and evaluate the information you need to complete your assignments. Please make use of their services!

Ideally, some of your critiques, meditations, and presentation will catalyze and integrate into your research topic.

GRADES

Your **final grade** will be determined by a straight average according to the following plan:

- 15% - *attendance/participation* (A&P) (3% or 30 points *deducted* per missed session or assignment after 2 free passes)
- 10% - weekly *text critiques* in Moodle discussion area (1 per week x 10 points, up to 100 points)
- 10% - special topics meditations in Moodle discussion area (periodic → 100 points)
- 10% - presentation including thesis, 2 peer-reviewed arguments, & evidence
- 20% - four pop quizzes (4 x 50 → 200 points)
- 10% - final exam
- 25% - research paper
 - (including:
 - 1. Proposal with Bibliography – 2.5% (= 25 points)
 - 2. Thesis Paragraph with *Updated Annotated Bibliography* – 5% (= 50 points),
 - 3. Draft – 5% (= 50 points)
 - 4. Peer Critique – 2.5% (= 25 points)
 - 5. Final Draft - 10% (= 100 points)

(Research Paper → 250 points)

(100% = 1000 total points)

Missed work: There will be no make-up exams or quizzes. Un-excused missed exams will receive a “zero.” *Late written work will be docked 15% per day* (- material turned in after due date/time is “late” [if something is due “in class,” then any time after the beginning of class on the stated due date is late]). In *documented cases* of health issues (verified by a physician, not a nurse, on an official letterhead), family emergencies, jury duty, etc. you may substitute a *cumulative - comprehensive* timed online exam for one missed exam (NOTE: this benefaction may only be invoked once). (*if you have a *legitimate excuse*, I will try to accommodate your situation given that you contact me immediately.*)

ATTENDANCE, COURTESY, PREREQUISITES, AND SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE:

**** COVID-19** Pandemic-Contingencies necessitate expanding the definition of “attendance” – if anyone displays symptoms indicative of possible infection, email professor immediately about alternative “participation.” **

Attendance will be taken intermittently (3% or 30 points will be *deducted* per missed session after 2 free pass). Students who regularly miss class discussions and quizzes will almost surely miss assignments, group work, and do poorly on exams. *If your attendance & participation points fall to zero, you automatically fail the course.* Please consult the College’s official policy regarding withdrawals. Unless you have permission from the dean, I do not give “Incompletes.”

NOTE: more than 4 absences will carry a *letter grade* penalty for the final grade. More than 6 absences will result in *failing the class*.

Courtesy and Tardiness: Please show common courtesy toward the class: *turn off all mobile devices during class*. Trolling social media, gaming, texting, etc. on mobile devices, laptops, tablets, etc. is distracting for peers in your space. If you are caught surfing non-academic materials during class, after one warning, then A&P (non-present) point reduction applies. Also, habitual tardiness or policy abuse will be *penalized* through the “attendance/participation” grade component listed above – after being tardy two times, infractions will be treated as an absence.

Prerequisites: technically, there are no prerequisites for this course, however, you must be able to express yourself in writing. If you are uncomfortable writing short essays, you should postpone this course until you have had more writing practice.

The key to doing well in this class is careful, thoughtful, and thorough *reading*. We will be studying primary texts that can be tedious, complicated, and very difficult (you will probably need to read most texts more than once). Your job is to *engage*

the texts and reflect them upon your own lives. (Hint: make reflective and interrogative notes in your books or in your reading journal.) If you feel uncomfortable or confused about anything in the course, please do not hesitate to schedule an appointment with me. Finally, remember always to bring your texts to class.

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BSC Resources for Writers

The Writing Center, located in the Humanities Center 102, offers one-on-one assistance for student writers. We serve all writers at all points in the writing process. Peer tutors spend thirty minutes to an hour per appointment, and there is no limit to the number of tutoring sessions you can have. Drop in during regular hours (M-Thurs, 3:30-10 & Sunday 5-10) or email writingcenter@bsc.edu to make an appointment. No matter what class you are taking, we can help!

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ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

If you have a registered academic accommodation with the Office of Accessibility, please talk with me privately after class during the first week (or so) to discuss these accommodations. If you have a disability but have not contacted the Office of Accessibility, please contact them as soon as possible at one of the following email addresses: awsmith@bsc.edu or accessibility@bsc.edu. If you prefer to call the office, the number is (205) 226-7909.

HONOR CODE

Students are expected to abide by the Honor Code in regard to all assignments. Regarding exams, it is acceptable and even encouraged that you study with one another. However, come exam time, your work must be your own. The same applies to your homework. Blatant violations of the honor code will result in your failing this class.

Romanization “Key” for older texts

In the 1980s and 1990s a new mainland Chinese system for spelling Chinese words called *pinyin* became popular around the world. Here's the newer spelling for some of the terms in our older texts.

** ** *

Tao = *dao*

jen = *ren*

tzu-jan = *ziran*

Te = *de*

I Ching = *Yijing*

Lao-tzu = *Laozi*

Chuang-tzu = *Zhuangzi*

Lie-tzu = *Liezi*

hsüan = *xuan*

chun-tzu = *junzi*

wu-hsin = *wuxin*

hsin = *xin*

Wu Ch'eng-En = Wu Chengen

Kuan-Yin = Guanyin

Hsüan Tsang = Xuanzang

** ** *

PS, I find that if we drop the *definite* article "the" before *almost* every occurrence of "*dao*" and retranslate "the Way" into "*dao*," it starts to open up the English to "process" (which is one of the prime characteristics of East-Asian worldviews). Try converting "the *Dao*" and "the Way" into simply "*dao*," i.e., strikeout the definite article before "*dao*" throughout your texts (e.g., "~~the~~ Dao" and "~~the~~ Way").

HON ** • ** Gender of Dao - Provisional Itinerary * (M, W 3:30pm - updated Aug 23, 2020)		
Week & Date	Topics & Texts (to be read before each class)	Assignments Due
1: Feb. 2	Introduction – “Western” Questions: “What is Gender?” / (“What is <i>dao</i>?”)	Print PDF Readings & Slides from Moodle *BEGIN “WEEKLY TEXT CRITIQUES” (WTC) ON MOODLE*
2: 7 9	THE SEMINAL ‘DAOIST’ TEXT: THE <i>LAOZI DAODEJING</i> 老子 道德經 “ DAOISM ” according to D. C. Lau’s <i>Laozi Daodejing</i> PDF (“experience” entire text in 1 or 2 sittings) Western conceptions of Gender / Chinese conceptions of Gender “Gender” from the OED (PDF) (inspect OED entry, what stands out about the evolution of the term?) Lennon & Alsop, “Introduction” (→ start thinking about a lexicon of “gender”) <i>Dao De Jing</i> - “Historical Introduction” (Ames & Hall 2003, 1-10); LEXICON on “ <i>dao</i> 道” “Glossary of Key Terms (Ames & Hall 2003, 55-71) (→ lexicon of “ <i>dao</i> 道”)	Post to Special Topics Meditations on moodle (STM): your initial thoughts on the <i>Laozi Daodejing</i> (with comparisons from different translations and engagement with commentaries)
3: 14 16	“CONFUCIANIST” BACKGROUNDS “Introduction to Confucius and the <i>Analects</i> ” “Confucian Encounters with Proto-‘Daoists’” Yin and Yang or “becoming female” – the strategy of “keeping to <i>yin</i> ” Selected pdfs and the <i>Guiguzi</i>	Watch <i>Confucius Words of Wisdom</i> (Biography) *CONTINUE “WEEKLY TEXT CRITIQUES ON MOODLE
4: 21 23	Lexicon <i>Zhuangzi</i> 6 Xi Wang Mu (Queen Mother of the West)	Meditation: <i>your</i> initial thoughts on “keeping to the female” / “becoming female” Lz 6, 10, 28, 61
5: 28 Mar. 2	BEGIN PRESENTATIONS Despeux-Kohn - <i>Women in Daoism</i> 2003 <i>Xunzi</i> 27 Shamanesses (<i>wu</i>) - East and West Selections on <i>Wu</i> and <i>Miko</i> (female shamans) Jia Jianhua - “The Identity of Tang Daoist Priestesses”	Think about a possible “lexicon” entry
6: 7 9	Gil Raz - Recovering Bodily Differences Birthing the Self Metaphor and Transformation in Medieval Daoism Valussi - “Female Alchemy” Jia - Gendering Chinese Religion Subject Identity Body (2014) Li - Daoism and Feminism: Identity through Life Stories of Chinese Immigrant Women <i>Jia - Gender Power Talent_Journey of Daoist Priestesses</i> 2018	*CONTINUE “WEEKLY TEXT CRITIQUES ON MOODLE

*This Itinerary may be changed in class at anytime.

7:	14	<i>Mid-term Assessments due Mon. Mar. 18</i>	*CONTINUE "WEEKLY TEXT CRITIQUES ON MOODLE
	16	Okano Haruko – "Women and Sexism in Shinto"	
8:	21 23	*** Spring Vacation - ENJOY! AND READ ***	*Meditation: <i>CONCEPTUAL LEXICON (500-600 WORDS) POST TO MOODLE BEFORE MIDNIGHT SUNDAY 3/27)*</i>
9:	28 30	Lai - <i>Daodejing</i> Resources for contemporary feminist thinking 2000 Hall and Ames – "Chinese Sexism" in thinking from the Han Miller, Dessie – "Celebrating the Feminine: Daoist Connections to Contemporary Feminism in China"	*Start thinking about research topic, speak with a reference librarian explore library databases* *Discuss Research Sources*
10:	April 4 6	Contemporary Gender Theory – "It's confusing these days." Monique Wittig – "One is not Born a Woman (1981)" Lennon & Alsop, "The Data of Biology" Lennon & Alsop, "Gendered Psyches"	*Typed Research <i>PROPOSAL</i> (statement—"I propose to research _____") w/ Bibliography (due before Friday midnight)
11:	11 13	"Yin and Yang" and "becoming female" Reconsidered Lennon & Alsop, "Historical Materialism" Lennon & Alsop, "Simone de Beauvoir: Becoming Woman" Selections Liu & Yamashita - <i>Routledge Handbook of East Asian Gender Studies</i> , (2019) Coates, Jennifer, Lucy Fraser, and Pendleton Mark - <i>The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture</i>	*THESIS Paragraph ("I will argue ____, because ____") w/ <i>Updated ANNOTATED Bibliography</i> (due on moodle before Thur. midnight)*
12:	18 20	Lennon & Alsop, TBA Lennon & Alsop, "Making Sense of our (Gendered) Selves"	**FIRST DRAFT DUE (BRING 3 COPIES)** *PEER CRITIQUE DUE*
13:	25 ** 27	Bring the Balance Back TBA	*CONTINUE "WEEKLY TEXT CRITIQUES ON MOODLE BEGIN PRESENTATIONS
14:	2 4	Discuss Research *HONOR'S DAY* Thur 5/5	*END WEEKLY TEXT CRITIQUES ON MOODLE (SUN. MIDNIGHT, 5/8)
15:	9	(*Last day of classes, Mon. May 9*) READING DAYS Tues. 5/10; Sat. 5/14; Sun. 5/15	*Research Paper (Final Draft) due by Tues, 11:59pm.*
16:		FINAL EXAM, Mon., May 16, before 12 noon (Seniors grades due Wed. May 18, 9am)	