



PHIL 104: Asian Philosophy (GE Area: UD 3 [formerly area V])

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In Person | Fall 2026 | sec 01: TR 12:00-1:15, sec 02: TR 1:30-2:45

How do we understand the relationship between the self and the world? Between knowledge and liberation, or nature and ethical life? This course introduces four major Asian philosophical traditions—**Hindu/Vedic**, **Buddhist**, **Confucian**, and **Daoist**—through a blend of ancient and modern readings that explore these enduring questions. Students will engage each tradition through close reading, comparative discussion, and reflection on how these ideas continue to shape global philosophical and ethical debates today.

- In the **Hindu/Vedic** tradition, we will consider ancient visions of cosmic order and human duty in the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita*, alongside modern reinterpretations of the power of nonviolent political activism by **Gandhi** and ecological responsibility **Vandana Shiva**.
- In the **Buddhist** tradition, we trace the insight of dependent origination from the *Pali Canon* to **Nāgārjuna's** philosophy of emptiness and its 20th century echoes in **Kyoto School** philosophy and the nonviolent political activism of **Thích Nhất Hạnh**.
- The **Confucian** tradition raises questions about moral cultivation and civic harmony. We will explore this tradition and its critics from **Confucius**, **Mingzi**, **Xunzi**, and **Mozi**, to **Hồ Chí Minh's** revolutionary reflections in his *Prison Diary* and **Tu Weiming's** ecologically-oriented humanist Confucianism.
- The **Daoist** tradition invites us to reflect on spontaneity, harmony, and the natural world through the *Zhuangzi* and its echoes in the films and writings of **Trinh T. Minh-ha**.

Required texts for this course include a course packet that will be available at the **Maple Press Store** (330 S. 10th Street, San Jose, CA 95112; <https://maplepress.net/readers/>) and additional readings posted on Canvas. Students must purchase the course packet for the course.

