**University of South Carolina**

**SCHC 481**

***“Confucius, Aristotle, and the Divergence between East and West: A Genetic Perspective”***

Spring 2022 SYLLABUS

Honors Residence Hall | Room B111

10:05 AM - 11:20 AM  
Instructor: Hippokratis Kiaris

### I. Course Objectives

### 

This is a course in the intersection of philosophy, history, anthropology and genetics. The course will examine main differences between the Eastern and Western lines of thought and will explore how genetic variation in different ethnic populations may have affected or been affected by the development of distinct cultures. More specifically the course will initially describe main topics in the history of East (Far East) and West and proceed with a description of main philosophical movements in China and Greece of 7th-3rd cent. BCE. Topics on colonization of Earth and Out-of-Africa migration will also be discussed, along with how genomics informed us on these topics. The course will conclude with description of various personality/behavioral traits and how genetics are thought to influence them at the level of the individuals and the populations.

The course is highly interdisciplinary, aiming to provide students with a perspective of the East-West divergence from a rather holistic standpoint. Since students will have different background knowledge on different disciplines (for example science/humanities), introductory information will be offered on the various disciplines.

Upon completion, students are anticipated to appreciate cultural differences, evaluate historical decisions and outcomes accordingly, and to develop a sense of a unified perspective of human culture. Besides in-classroom lectures, attempts to familiarize students with various expressions of human creativity will be made.

### II. Class Time and Location

### Unless otherwise informed by the instructor, class will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:05 AM - 11:20 AM in Room B111 (Honors Residence Hall).

# **III. Contacting Instructor**

If you need to contact me or have questions outside of class you may reach out at [kiarish@cop.sc.edu](mailto:kiarish@cop.sc.edu).

For office visits I am generally available in my office at CLS713B (9-2pm). You may also schedule an appointment by email but it is not necessary.

**IV. Textbook and instructional material**

No specific material is required in advance. Scientific papers will be provided during class as well as web sites with material to study from.

### VI. Grading Scale

A: 90 – 100

B+: 85 – 89.99

B: 80 – 84.99

C+: 75 – 79.99

C: 70 – 74.99

D+: 65 – 69.99

D: 60 – 64.99

F: < 59.99

The following scheme will be used for class grading:

Class participation (overall) 20%

Seminar 1 (as the presenter) 25%

Seminar 1 (as the critique) 25%

Written Essay (project 1) for the presenter 30%

Optional presentation (project 2) up to 15%

Optional Essay (project 2) up to 15%

Each student will be assigned the role of the presenter on a predetermined topic, and the role of the critique on someone else’s topic (randomly). For seminar #1 the presenter will give a short seminar to all class and will receive their feedback. The critique will summarize the class’s criticism, enhance it with his/her own, and will provide the presenter with a written summary. The presenter will develop subsequently an essay at which the critique will have been incorporated.

Optional essay and presentation will offer extra credits. For optional seminar 2, a topic will be decided by the student upon consultation with the instructor. Although the presentation of optional seminar 2 is at the very end of the semester, if students decide to select it they can do it earlier during the course. For seminar 2, only verbal critique will be provided in class and by me.

### VII. Course Policies

**A. Attendance**

Attendance at class is mandatory. For excused absences reach out to me at least 2 days in advance of the class or inform me about unanticipated events (health, etc.) that prevented you for attending. Documentation may be requested.

**B. Laptops**

Having a laptop with you is highly recommended for some of the lectures, as you may need it to access databases in real time. You will be informed in advance about the need for it.

**C. Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, contact the Student Disability Resource Center website for more information. All accommodations must be approved through the Student Disability Resource Center. After receiving accommodations from the Student Disability Resource Center, the student is responsible for informing the course coordinator of their approved accommodations or verifying the course coordinator has received documentation regarding their approved accommodations from the Student Disability Resource Center. Students with accommodations must communicate directly with the course coordinator once accommodations are approved in order to plan accordingly for the semester.

**Class Topics and Discussions**

Specific topics that will be covered are the following:

1. Eastern versus Western Philosophies-Introduction

2. Socrates-Plato-Aristotle line of thought-Analytical thinking

3. Confucius-Synthesis and the significance of context

4. Comparisons (individualism vs collectivism, structure of societies, political philosophies, etc)

5. Exceptions that “prove the rule”: Heraclitus in Greece and Mozi and the Mohists in China

6. Dispersal of populations-great migrations

7. Introductory genetics

8. Genes and behavioral traits. Experimental studies in animals and studies in human populations

9. Examples of genes regulating personality traits in Easterners and Westerners and their potential implications in associated philosophies

10. Future trends, globalization and mobility

This is a tentative schedule below. The exact pace and topics’ depth will be determined during the course depending on students’ feedback.

**1/11 -** Class Introduction - Objectives and Procedures

**1/13-** Is East different from West? Which way?

**1/18** **– 1/27** Eastern History: An outline

**2/1 – 2/10** Western History: An outline

**2/15- 3/10** Eastern – Western lines of thought- Philosophy

**3/15** Comparative studies and assignment of seminars

**3/17** Basic genetics and genomics

**3/22** Basic population genetics and human variation

**3/24-3/31** Human dispersal and out of Africa migration

**4/5-4/14** Behavioral/personality traits, genetics, population studies, associations and limitations

**4/19-4/21** seminars

**4/25-4/28** Optional Seminar 2. (If students are ready earlier they can arrange for a presentation before that day).

**5/3** Due day for optional Essay 2.