

***Pathways to Spiritual Wisdom***  
0128-395-02 *University of San Francisco, Spring 2006*  
*James T. Bretzke, S.J., S.T.D.*

E-mail: [bretzkesj@usfca.edu](mailto:bretzkesj@usfca.edu)

Telephone: 415-422-5298

Web-page: <http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/bretzkesj/USFWebIndex.htm>

***Course Description and Learning Outcomes***

This course will embody the three principal ***Learning Outcomes*** for Core Courses in D-2 (Theology and Religious Studies). Core D-2 status is currently pending for the course. The ***First Outcome*** involves the **Human Dimensions of Religion, Theology, and Spirituality** and through this course students will better “be able to understand their own spirituality and recognize how religion, theology, and spirituality underlie and correlate with a broad range of human experience.” The ***Second Outcome*** brings in **Religious Diversity** and this course will investigate three of the world’s most ancient and revered religious traditions of spiritual wisdom, namely Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. We will look at some of the key sacred texts of each and consider how each of these traditions developed not only in their respective Asian contexts, but also in terms of how they can mutually inform and challenge one another, both in Asia and in America. Thus students “will be able to understand, differentiate, and appreciate various religious traditions, as encouraged by Vatican II’s stance on the Catholic Church’s relationship with other faiths. This understanding will entail the creedal vision, moral teachings, historical context, social expression, and key rites and symbols of these faith traditions.” Finally, the course will pay special attention to the development of an Asian human rights tradition and engagement with concrete justice issues and thus, will help the students fulfill the ***Third Outcome*** of **Social Justice**, through which “students will investigate and discuss how religious and theological traditions can work effectively for social justice and for the good of the entire human family and the environment that sustains it.”

The Buddhism section will be taught principally by Tendzin Choegyal, the 15th Ngari Rinpoche and the younger brother of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, and will focus on Tibetan Buddhism. The Zen, Confucian, and Christianity in Asia sections will be taught by Fr. James Bretzke, S.J., who has lived, studied and taught for a number of years in various parts of Asia. Readings will include the sacred texts from the three traditions, as well as contemporary essays on interpreting these traditions in the present world, and also Shusaku Endo’s historical novel *Silence* which chronicles the tensions surrounding the introduction of Christianity in Japan.

***Course Requirements***

The first requirement of the course is that each student spend at least fifteen minutes daily in some personal reflection and meditation. This can be done in the practice of prayer, or some other spiritual discipline (e.g., yoga, the practice of Zen quiet sitting, or just in reflective

solitude). Obviously this requirement cannot be easily tested or graded, but it should enhance the overall involvement and synthesis of the course's goals.

There will be a fair amount of reading throughout the course which will furnish the basis for class discussion and individual reflection and synthesis. This course will utilize the *Blackboard* web-page rather extensively and the students should count on logging onto the page and checking their e-mail several times weekly (daily if possible, and minimally before each class session). The students are responsible for maintaining an active, viable e-mail account, and keeping their e-mail address current on *Blackboard*. Beginning the third week of the course students will be divided into two groups (A and B) and asked either to post a question on one of the designated readings to the Course Web-Page, or to reply to one of the questions posted (posting and replying alternating weekly).

Beginning the second week of the course each student will be asked to keep a **confidential weekly electronic journal** on the course which would include reflections upon the themes of the class lectures and discussion, the course readings, the daily meditation requirement, and/or any other items relevant to the course. This journal will be submitted electronically either via *Blackboard* or by e-mail to the professor no later than 9 PM on Sunday San Francisco time. The journal entries themselves will not be graded and the length of the weekly entries typically would be somewhere between a few paragraphs to a couple of pages. Only the professor will read the students' journals, though if students wish to post reflections on the Discussion Board of *Blackboard* they are free to do so. In general the topic of the journal entry will be up to the student, though it should manifest critical engagement with the readings and class discussion of the previous week. The first journal entry, though, will be an essay on the student's own perception of his or her own personal understanding of how the course theme of "spiritual wisdom" plays (or does not play) a real role in his or her life up to this point. This essay should be around the equivalent of 4-5 pages in length (e.g., 800-1,000 words).

Throughout the courses there will be several unannounced, brief reading comprehension quizzes based on the content of the **Required Reading** assigned for a given class. If the reading has been done carefully these quizzes would be able to be easily passed with top marks; if the reading has not been carefully done it will be difficult to answer the questions accurately.

In addition to the *Blackboard* Discussion Board postings and weekly journals each student will prepare a **Final Project** with one or two other students on one of the related themes of the course. These projects could investigate one of the religious traditions in greater depth from a cross-cultural perspective, or consider how one or more of the religious traditions engages themes such as suffering, compassion, human rights or religious pluralism, or how one or more of these traditions engage concrete moral concerns in areas drawn from social ethics, sexual ethics, bioethics, etc. An opportunity will be given in the last two weeks for the students to present a synopsis of their project to the rest of the class.

Finally, there will be a **Two-Part Final Exam**. *Part One*, due on May 12th will be an essay of between 5-10 pages indicating the student's individual **Personal Synthesis** on *Navigating my Path to Spiritual Wisdom in Light of Traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity*. This essay is designed in part to be a reflection in light of the whole course on the

Introductory Essay the student prepared in the second week of the course, outlining his or her personal understanding at that point in time on how s/he understood “spiritual wisdom” in his or her own life, as well as an indication of how the religious traditions covered in the course have helped to refine the personal understanding of what constitutes spiritual wisdom. **Part Two** of the Final Exam will be taken on the assigned Final Exam date and will consist of Identifications of Key Terms and Concepts Used Throughout the Course [taken on the assigned exam date] {N.B. The list of Identification Terms will be given throughout the course and the final list will be posted on the *Blackboard* course web-site by May 1<sup>st</sup>}.

### ***Course Grading***

Three principal factors will be taken into consideration for the final grade for the course: 1) careful preparation of the assigned readings, attendance, and active participation in each of the class meetings and the web-page discussion board and journal entries (40%); 2) the short reading quizzes (25%); and 3) the final project and the final exam (35%). **N.B.** Any student who misses 20% or more of classes will risk failing the course. In the event of an absence from class the student is requested to extend the professional courtesy of informing the professor of the absence (before-hand if foreseen, after the fact if unforeseen).

### ***Course Etiquette and Practicalia***

Please arrive on time and with your cell-phone turned off. We will normally take a short break towards the middle of the class session, so please try to use that for restroom visits (of course in an emergency please feel free to leave as needed). We will follow the “library” rules on food and drink allowed/not-allowed in the classroom. As Dean Turpin has re-iterated, “attendance at class is an expectation and students are not to be awarded merely for class attendance.” If an absence from class is foreseen please e-mail me in advance of the planned absence. If the absence was unforeseen (i.e., no advance notice was given), then please e-mail me as soon as is convenient after the missed class in order to check in. The student is responsible for getting any notes, handouts, etc., from a missed class. This can be done through a friend, or in the case of handouts, directly from the professor. It is the student, though, who should take the initiative to make sure s/he is up to date on anything that may have been missed in class. If you are having difficulty in following any part of the class lecture, discussion, readings, etc., please either raise the issue in class, or privately with the professor via e-mail, in the office, or after class.

### ***Required Books [available in the Bookstore or Library Reserve]***

Aitken, Robert. *Taking the Path of Zen*. San Francisco: North Point Press, 1982. ISBN 0-86547-080-4

*The Bible* (selections from the *New Testament*)

Confucius. *Analects, The Great Learning and the Doctrine of The Mean*. Chinese Text; Translation by James Legge with Exegetical Notes and Dictionary of all Characters.

New York: Dover Publications, 1971 (republication of the second revised edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893 as Volume I in "The Chinese Classics" Series). ISBN 0-486-22746-4 [Other translations of the Confucian texts are also acceptable in place of this text]

Endo, Shusaku. *Silence*. Translated by William Johnston. New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1969. ISBN 0-8008-7186-3

Tu, Wei-ming. *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*. SUNY Series in Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985. ISBN 0-88706-006-4

**Required Articles** [Available on Library Reserve and electronically on **Blackboard**]

Bretzke, James T., S.J. *Confucian Concepts in the Korean Context* (Excerpted from "Background for the Confucian Notion of Moral Community in the Korean Context," Chapter Two of *The Notion of Moral Community in the Analects of Confucius and Matthew's Sermon on the Mount: A Hermeneutical Approach for the Inculturation of Moral Theology in Korea*. Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1989).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Cracking the Code: Minjung Theology as an Expression of the Holy Spirit in Korea." *Pacifica* 10 (October 1997): 319-330.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Cultural Particularity and the Globalization of Ethics in the Light of Inculturation." *Pacifica* 9 (1996): 69-86.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Human Rights or Human Rites?: A Confucian Cross-Cultural Perspective." *East Asian Pastoral Review* 41/1 (2004): 44-67. Also available online at <http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr004/bretzke.htm>

\_\_\_\_\_. "Moral Theology Out of East Asia." *Theological Studies* 61 (March 2000): 106-121. [Electronic version also available via *ProQuest Religion* database]

\_\_\_\_\_. "A New Pentecost for Moral Theology: The Challenge of Inculturation of Ethics." *Josephinum* 10:2 (Summer/Fall 2003): 250-260.

rJe Tzong-kha-pa. *Lam-Rim Bsdus-Don. Lines of Experience* {The Main Aspects of the Practice of the Stages on the Graded Path to Enlightenment}.

United Nations *Declaration on Human Rights*. <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

Vatican II. Chapter 5 "Universal Call to Holiness" of *Lumen Gentium* The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)

Wilfred, Felix. "Human Rights or the Rights of the Poor? Redeeming the Human Rights from Contemporary Inversions." *SEDOS Bulletin* <http://www.sedos.org/english/Wilfred.html>

**RECOMMENDED READINGS** [Available on Library Reserve and/or on **Blackboard**]

Bretzke, James T., S.J. *Bibliography on East Asian Religion and Philosophy*. Studies in Asian Thought and Religion, 23. Lewiston NY: Mellen Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Common Good in a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Insights from the Confucian Moral Community." In *Religion, Ethics & the Common Good*, 83-105. Annual Publication of the College Theology Society, 41. Edited by James Donahue and Theresa Moser. Mystic CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Conversion to Interreligious Dialogue: A Duty with the Church's Mission." *National Jesuit News* 33:3 (December 2003/January 2004): 2; 14. [Electronic version available at [http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/dialogue/documents/articles/njn\\_bretzke.html](http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/dialogue/documents/articles/njn_bretzke.html)]

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Notion of Sincerity (*Ch'eng*) from a Neo-Confucian Metaphysical Perspective." Co-authored with Luke Jong-Hyeok Sim. *Acta Koreana* 4 (2001): 77-94.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The *Tao* of Confucian Virtue Ethics." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 35 (1995): 25-41.

**SYLLABUS OF READINGS**

Refer to the *Course Readings* for complete page numbers and bibliographical information on these assigned readings. Readings listed for each week ideally should be completed **by the first class-time** of each week, unless otherwise indicated. The "Articles" will be available on Library Reserve and electronically on the *Blackboard* course web-site.

**Week 1**      *Introduction: Discerning Pathways to Spiritual Wisdom*  
**January 23, 25**

**Required Reading:** By January 25<sup>th</sup>:

Bretzke's "Cultural Particularity and the Globalization of Ethics in the Light of Inculturation."

Acts of the Apostles: Ch. 2 (Pentecost Account)

Gospel of Matthew: Chs. 5-7 (Sermon on the Mount)

Gospel of Luke, Ch. 4: 14-44 (Jesus's Homecoming)

**Recommended Reading:**

Bretzke's "Conversion to Interreligious Dialogue: A Duty with the Church's Mission."  
Bretzke's *A Morally Complex World*, Ch. 1

**Week 2**      ***Overview of Three Traditions of Spiritual Wisdom: Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism***  
**January 30, February 1**

**Required Reading:**

Bretzke, *Confucian Concepts in the Korean Context*: "Fundamental Confucian Concepts." (pp. 14-33 of the manuscript)  
Gospel of Matthew Chs. 3-4, 19 (John the Baptist, Jesus in the Desert, Call of the First Disciples, Jesus the Teacher, Jesus and the Rich Young Man)  
Vatican II. Chapter 5 "Universal Call to Holiness" of *Lumen Gentium*

**Recommended Reading:**

Bretzke, *Confucian Concepts in the Korean Context*: "Ancient Chinese Philosophy and Religion," (pp. 1-14 of the manuscript)  
Bretzke's *A Morally Complex World*, Chs 2-4, 7

***Journal Entries Begin: First Journal Entry is 800-1000 word essay on Personal Reflections on meaning of "spiritual wisdom" in your own life to date.***

**Week 3**      ***Christianity in Asia Part 1: Gemma Cruz & Fr. Bretzke***  
**February 6, 8**

February 6<sup>th</sup>: Guest Lecture from Gemma Cruz, "Wisdom of the Common People:"  
Popular religion from a Christian (mainly Filipino), liberationist perspective.

**Required Reading:**

By February 8<sup>th</sup>: Bretzke's "Moral Theology Out of East Asia."  
Gospel of Mark Chs. 14-16 (Passion Narrative)  
Gospel of John Chs. 13-21 (Passion, Resurrection)

**Web-Page Question/Replies begin: Each person in Group A posts a one question to one of the assigned readings or class discussion; Each person in Group B posts a reply to one of the questions posted by Group A. Post the Questions by Friday at 9 PM and the Replies by Sunday at 9 PM.**

**Week 4**      ***Tibetan Buddhism: Tenzin Choegyal***  
**February 13, 15**

**Required Reading:** Complete reading of *Lines of Experience* by February 13<sup>th</sup>

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group B posts a question each; Group A posts a reply each to one of the questions posted by Group B. Post the Questions by Friday at 9 PM and the Replies by Sunday at 9 PM.**

**Week 5      *Tibetan Buddhism: Tenzin Choegyal*  
February 22 [No Class on Presidents' Day February 20<sup>th</sup>]**

Re-reading of *Lines of Experience* as indicated by *Tenzin Choegyal*

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group A posts; Group B replies**

**Week 6      *Tibetan Buddhism: Tenzin Choegyal*  
February 27, March 1**

Re-reading of *Lines of Experience* as indicated by *Tenzin Choegyal*

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group B posts; Group A replies**

**Week 7      *Tibetan and Zen Buddhism: Tenzin Choegyal & Fr. Bretzke*  
March 6, 8**

**Required Reading:** Complete reading of Aitken's *Taking the Path of Zen before* March 8<sup>th</sup>

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group A posts; Group B replies**

**NO CLASS WEEK OF MARCH 13<sup>TH</sup>: SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8      *Confucianism Introduced in Sacred Texts*  
March 20, 22**

**Required Reading:**

By March 20<sup>th</sup>:

Bretzke, *Confucian Concepts in the Korean Context*: "The Other Books of Confucius"  
(pp. 38-44 of the manuscript)

Confucius. *The Great Learning and the Doctrine of The Mean*.

By March 22<sup>nd</sup>: *Confucius Analects*

**Recommended Readings:**

Bretzke, *Confucian Concepts in the Korean Context*: "Post-Confucian Developments."  
(pp. 44-49 of the manuscript)

Bretzke & Sim, "The Notion of Sincerity (*Ch'eng*) from a Neo-Confucian Metaphysical Perspective."

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group B posts; Group A replies**

**Week 9**      *Confucianism Interpreted in Contemporary Settings*  
**March 27, 29**

**Required Reading:**

Tu, Wei-ming. *Confucian Thought*, Chs. 3,5, 7,8

**Recommended Readings:**

Bretzke's "The Common Good in a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Insights from the Confucian Moral Community."

Bretzke's "The *Tao* of Confucian Virtue Ethics."

Tu, Wei-ming. *Confucian Thought*, Chs. 1,2,4

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group A posts; Group B replies**

**Week 10**      *Shusaku Endo's Silence*  
**April 3, 5**

**Required Reading:** Complete *before* Class on April 3<sup>rd</sup> Endo's *Silence*

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group B posts; Group A replies**

**Week 11**      *Christianity in Asia Part 2: Challenges of Cross-Cultural Moral Wisdom*  
**April 10, 12**

**Required Reading:**

Bretzke's "A New Pentecost for Moral Theology"

**Recommended Reading:**

Bretzke's *A Morally Complex World*, Chs. 5-6.

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group A posts; Group B replies**

**Week 12**      *Test Case for Cross-Fertilization: Buddhism, Confucianism & Christianity in Contemporary Korea*  
**April 17, 19**

**Required Reading:**

Bretzke's "Cracking the Code: Minjung Theology as an Expression of the Holy Spirit in Korea."

**Recommended Reading:**

Bretzke, *Confucian Concepts in the Korean Context*: “Development of Confucian Thought in Korea; Five Relationships; and Other Forces in Korea’s Cultural Ethos.” (pp. 49-64 of the manuscript)

**Web-Page Question/Replies: Group B posts; Group A replies**

**Week13**      *Cross Cultural Human Rights as a Test Case for Pathways for Wisdom*  
**April 24, 26**

**Required Reading:**

By April 24<sup>th</sup>:

Gospel of Matthew: Ch. 25 (Parables of the Last Judgment)

Gospel of Luke Chs. 15-16 (Parables of Mercy and Judgment)

United Nations *Declaration on Human Rights*

Wilfred, “Human Rights or the Rights of the Poor?”

By April 26<sup>th</sup>:

Bretzke’s “Human Rights or Human Rites?: A Confucian Cross-Cultural Perspective.”

**Week 14 & 15**      *Navigating Pathways to Spiritual Wisdom: Small Group Presentations*  
**May 1,3, 8, 10**

**Final Exam in Two Parts: Part One:** Personal Synthesis due by May 12<sup>th</sup>; **Part Two:** In class exam on assigned examination date.