



Introduction to Non-Western Cultures - Humanities 216

Face-to-Face

Tuesday and Friday 216-9V1B 7:30-9:10

Tuesday and Friday 216-9V2B 9:15-10:50

Wolk Hall, Rm. 104

Fall 2025 and Spring 2026

3 Credits

Instructor Information

Name: Mrs. Mindy Stephens *she/her*

Contact Info: Email: mstephens@mvgshome.org
Phone: 540-347-7237

Office Location: LRCC Warrenton, Wolk 112-B

**Student
Engagement
Hours:** M-F: 11-2:45

**Instructor
Communication:** Email is preferred, emails received on the weekend are generally managed on the first day of the work week

**Student
Communication:** Please use your MVGS Google accounts for our communication

Course Description

Introduces students to beliefs, historical developments, and forms of creative expression that have shaped cultures in regions outside Europe and North America (non-western). Studies the cultures, values, creative expressions, and historical development of selected non-western regions of the world: Asia, Africa, Middle East, Oceania, or the Pre-Columbian Americas. This is a Passport and UCGS transfer course.

General Course Purpose

This course is designed to offer students an upper level Humanities course that focuses on non-western cultures.

Course Objectives

- Communication
 - Through written, visual and/or oral presentations, describe and construct responses to questions related to non-western regions of the world.
- Critical Thinking
 - Examine and interpret various critical theories presented in context of non-western cultural studies.
- Cultural and Social Understanding
 - Identify influences of non-western cultures and correlate those trends through historical and current events.
- Non-Western Cultures Within the Understanding of Humanities
 - Explain important non-European religions/traditions of thought and forms of creative expression, ranging from literature to the visual and performing art.
 - Discuss and analyze responses to particular literary, artistic, architectural, philosophical, musical,, and other creative works.
- Historical Importance of Non-Western Cultures
 - Demonstrate historical and cultural empathy with analysis and reflection on the ideas and cultural traditions that inform the cultures of non-western peoples.
- Influence of non-western cultures on the Humanities today
 - Examine the impact of non-western cultures onto western cultures in today's modern world.

Major Topics to be Included

- Non-Western Cultures Within the Understanding of Humanities
- Historical Importance of Non-Western Cultures
- Influence of Non-Western Cultures on the Humanities Today

Learning Resources

- *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hess
- *The Analects* by Confucius
- *Sun Tzu's The Art of War: A Graphic Novel* (Illustrations by Pete Katz)
- *The Face: Cartography of the Void* by Chris Abani
- *The Bustan of Sadi*, tr. by A. Hart Edwards
- *The Conference of the Birds* by Peter Sis
- *Death and the King's Horseman: A Play* by Wole Soyinka
- *The Classic Tradition of Haiku* by Faubion Bowers
- *A Sourcebook in Asian Philosophy* by John Koller and Patricia Koller
- *Searching for Stars on an Island in Maine* by Alan Lightman

Technology Resources

- MVGS students are provided with a laptop, or they may bring their own device if it is properly identified. It is expected that each student will have their device with them each class day.
- Course will be managed using the Google Classroom online platform. Students can access the syllabus, updated instructor information, and class assignments using their mvgshome.org accounts.

Grading and Evaluation

Name/Type of Assessment	Points/Percent of Final Grade
Class Engagement/Homework	10%
Classwork/Quizzes	25%
Projects/Assessments	30%
Writing	35%
	Total: 100%

Submitting Assignments

- **Late-work:** Work is expected to be completed on time. Late work will accrue a daily grade penalty: one letter grade will be deducted per **school day** of lateness, once an assignment has been reduced to a 50%, its acceptance is at the discretion of the instructor.
- **Make-up work:** After an absence, please contact your instructor via email within 24 hours to discuss make-up work.

Grading Scale

Students will be assigned the following final letter grades, based on calculations coming from the grading and evaluation section above.

Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

College Policies

Faculty and students are responsible for being familiar with Student Policies as outlined in the Student Handbook. You will be required to follow the attendance policy and student code of conduct for your school or school division.

Academic Integrity

- **Academic integrity & collaboration**
 - Students and faculty are expected to act with integrity in their educational pursuits. The [Academic Honesty](#) policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty, and administration in upholding academic integrity. Academic honesty is essential to develop students' full intellectual potential and self-esteem. A student caught cheating will be held responsible at both the college and high school setting.
 - First offense: Student will receive no credit for the assignment, and parents/guardians and administrators will be informed of the reasons for the grade deduction.
 - Second offense: Students will receive no credit for the assignment, and they will be referred to the administrator for disciplinary action according to the dictates of their school district and Laurel Ridge Community College.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**
 - Please be aware that the use of AI, paraphrasing tools, rewriting tools, or any other method of generating unoriginal writing is strictly prohibited. Sites like Grammarly can be used for grammar-checking your work, and the predictive text models used by sites like Google are also permitted, but students should be conscious and diligent about avoiding plagiarism in those instances. All digital writing assignments must be created within the Google Classroom document to show the writing process.

- We will do a substantial amount of writing in class, and in the event that plagiarism is suspected, samples of the questionable work will be compared to original writing samples to check for a match with student voice. In some instances, the student might be asked to produce writing in a proctored setting to evaluate for the use of AI in a questionable assignment. Fear of receiving a bad grade or poor time management are not reasons to use plagiarizing tools to create unoriginal content.

Accessibility

- **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

Laurel Ridge Community College is committed to ensuring that students with documented disabilities have the opportunity to take part in educational programs and services in accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students seeking accommodations must make application with the Disability Counselor in the Office of Accommodations and Disability Services. Accommodations will be made in this class in accordance with the Accommodation Letter from the Disability Counselor. For courses dual enrolled at the high school, please discuss this with your high school counselor.

Wellness

- **Statement on student wellness**

- As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning. If wellness concerns or stressful life events diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities, consider contacting your School Counselor.

College Services Contact List

- [Library](#)
 - Text: 540-318-1123
 - Phone: 540-868-7170 (Middletown) or 540-351-1596 (Fauquier)
- [Tutoring](#)
 - Online tutoring can be accessed through [Brainfuse](#)
- [Testing Center and Proctored Exams](#)
- For Dual Enrollment Services, please call 540-868-7210.
- College Front Desk: Call: 800-906-5322

Other Course Information

Student Conduct Policy

- Students will adhere to the conduct policies outlined in the MVGS Student Handbook. Additionally, students must adhere to the LRCC Code of Conduct.

Revisions/Updates to Syllabus

- Expanded information and revisions and/or updates to the syllabus will be provided via email and Google Classroom.

Course Schedule

This section will contain a broad overview of the course schedule.

Week	Course Content
1-2	<i>Share Your World</i> : Introductory Multimedia Slide Presentation Introduction to Creative Non-Fiction (David George Haskell) Self-Reflection: How Culture Influences Identity Introduction to <i>The Face: Cartography of the Void</i> My Face: A Memoir in Seven Parts My Face: Caveat (Part I)
3-4	Time as a Conundrum: <i>All You Zombies</i> by Robert A. Heinlein Time as Culture: How Different Cultures Understand Time Time as Communication: Calling All Earthlings
5-7	RESEARCH: Students will self-select a research topic focusing on non-western cultural foundations of literature, art, architecture, philosophy, music, or technological innovation. Students may focus on any of non-western region or pre-columbian civilization. Research: Developing an Effective Research Question Gaining an Historical Perspective: Introduction to Ancient India <i>Siddhartha</i> and a Journey to the Indian Subcontinent
8-11	Research: Explore and Focus—Define the Question India: Arts and Culture Dominant Features of Indian Philosophy and Societal Structure <i>Siddhartha</i> and Ancient India Test
12-15	Research: Consider the Source My Face: Orientation (Part II) Visual Rhetoric and Its Influence on Culture The Three Philosophies of China and <i>The Tao of Pooh</i> by Benjamin Hoff <i>The Vinegar Tasters</i> – Art and Culture The Tao of Pooh Project: Global Connections Found in the Hundred Acre Wood Lessons from <i>The Art of War</i> by Sun Tzu - Formal Essay Response, Final Draft (APA format)

EXAM	Cumulative Non-Western Humanities Exam (1 st Semester)
16-18	Research: Annotated Bibliography (6-8 Sources) My Face: Part III My Face: Part IV The Virtues of Confucianism and <i>The Analects</i> of Confucius “The MVGS Analects of the Class of 2025” – A Whole Class Project
19-23	Research: Outlining and Organizing Content Research: Intellectual Property and Fair Use Documentation Symbolism in the Arts Art Criticism “Art Changes the Way We See the World” Formal Essay Response, Final Draft (APA format)
24	My Face: Part V Haiku: The Heart of Japan in 17 Syllables The Influence of Shinto on Modern Day Japan and the Western World
25-28	Research: Rough Draft (1500 words or more) My Face: Part VI Introduction to Sufi Islam: <i>The Conference of the Birds</i> by Peter Sis (a visual interpretation of ancient Sufi epic poetry) “Art Changes the Way We See the World” Formal Essay Response, Final Draft (APA format)
29-34	Research: Published Draft and Multimedia Presentation of Research My Face: Part VII <i>Searching for Stars on an Island in Maine</i> by Alan Lightman Whole Class Discussions About Science, Both Western and Non-Western philosophy, and Our Place in the Universe
35-36	Research: Presentation My Face: Final Edits and Bookbinding Event

Academic Dates

- Courses dual enrolled at the high school have unique drop and withdraw dates. They are not the same as outlined on the college’s website for courses offered at LRCC. Please follow these dates for this course:

Last date to drop: 9/23/2025

Last date to withdraw: 1/23/2026

Drop = Student receives a refund from the counseling office and class does not appear on LRCC transcript.

Withdraw = Student does not receive a refund and class appears on LRCC transcript with a “W.” In order for a student to drop or withdraw, the student must go to the Director of School Counseling to fill out the drop/withdraw form. The student must sign the form. If a student leaves your class or moves away, please notify the Director of School Counseling immediately so the student can be dropped or withdrawn as appropriate

Subject to Change

- This syllabus and the accompanying schedule are subject to change. Any revisions to these documents will be posted in Google Classroom and an email and announcement will be sent notifying students of the revisions.