General Description
This colloquium is designed to provide cross-cultural examination of Asian, Middle Eastern, Northern African and European classics on a major theme common to world civilizations.

The course adopts the pedagogical method of Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, encountering first-hand primary texts recognized in their own traditions as landmarks that merit continued close attention. Undergraduates who have completed Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization would be encouraged to draw on their prior readings as a springboard and background in class discussion. We do not start from theories of civilization or of interpretation; we privilege the text, not theory, opening the text up to examination from any angle of interpretation.

Course Objectives
_Nobility & Civility: East and West_ is an interdisciplinary colloquium that focuses on the examination and comparison of different cultural understandings of the concepts of nobility and civility as they appear throughout the ancient, medieval and early modern world. Our project involves the analysis of important philosophical, religious and literary texts from the East Asian, Indian, Islamic and Western traditions. A fundamental aim of this course will be the formulation of an intercultural perspective from which the core human concerns of nobility and civility, which these various traditions share, can be more coherently articulated.

More generally, this course seeks to provide a model for integrated undergraduate education focusing on common human values and universal perennial issues while also recognizing cultural and historical differences. Providing students with a perspective on themselves and their place in a larger world has become ever more crucial in an increasingly globalized society. The course thereby contributes to the broadening and deepening of the liberal arts education that characterizes Columbia College and that many of Columbia's alumni have paid tribute to over the years. As a capstone Global Core course, _Nobility & Civility: East and West_ would not only continue the work of the core abroad, but would be taking the Global Core curriculum to an international setting.

Language
The course will be taught in English, but students able to read any of the _Nobility and Civility_ texts in the original language would be encouraged to do so. Indeed, in the international learning environment of a hybrid classroom, I would welcome the opportunity to explore shades of meaning through the nuance of translation.

Extracurricular activities related to the course
Venice has been a crossroad of cultures for centuries, thus inviting our students to develop the widest possible perspective on transculturalism and challenging any predetermined paradigms with respect to East and West, or, more specifically, Europe and the world beyond its borders. To take full advantage of our Venetian location and its cultural resources, we will visit specific civic sites that showcase the meeting of East and West as well as encourage further reflection upon the issues articulated in the written texts. Interrogating the arts, armor, and maps in the Polo Museale Veneziano (especially the Museo d’arte orientale and the Correr Museum) will help students delve further into key intellectual and ethical arguments that have been taken up in the required readings, from ancient China and India through
medieval Japan and Iran to early modern Europe. A visit to the Castello Estense in Ferrara will give students a first-hand look at an important center for the epics of Boiardo and Ariosto.

Attendance, Preparation and Participation
As a colloquium, this is a discussion-driven course that depends on one's close reading of the texts. Regular attendance, as well as thoughtful engagement with issues pertinent to our readings, comprise the basis of evaluation. Students who miss two or more consecutive classes will be asked to submit make-up work--usually one's reading notes on the assigned texts.

Method of Evaluation
Aside from attendance and participation, there are four other factors of assessment:

1. **Written Work**: Two 5-6 page papers are required. Students may consult with the instructor on the scope and topic of their essays, which should be critical and interpretive, not research papers. (25% of grade)

2. **Presentations and participation**: Each student will make at least one introductory, seminar-style presentation on one of the assigned texts. Presentations will be evaluated on their organization and concision, as well as on how well they draw out issues and themes for class discussion. (25% of grade)

3. **Response paragraphs**: A thoughtful response of 1-2 paragraphs for each reading should be posted in CourseWorks by 9:00 pm on the day before class, and all students are responsible for reading other students’ responses prior to class discussion. (25% of grade)

4. **Final examination**: There will be a 2-hour written examination. (25% of grade)

Syllabus

**Week 1 (June 13, 15).** Ancient China: moral/political philosophy

**Confucius, Analects** (551 BCE - 479 BCE)

**Mencius** (372 - 289 BCE)

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**Xunzi** (ca. 300-230 BCE)
Xunzi in *SCT* (volume 1, 2nd edition), pp. 159-83 or *EAT*, volume 1, pp. 92-104
Laozi (6th or 4th century BCE) *SCT* (volume I, 2nd edition) pp. 77-94 or *EAT* pp. 49-60

Han Feizi (280-233 BCE)
Han Feizi in *SCT* (volume 1, 2nd edition), pp. 190-209 or *EAT*, volume 1, pp. 106-115.

Week 2 (June 20, 22). Ancient Indian (Hindu) epics, political science and drama

*Ramayana* (ca. 400 BCE)


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*Kautilya, Artha Sastra* (c. 350-283 BCE)
Selections from Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, translated by Gary Tubb for use in this seminar – available on Courseworks.

*Visakhadatta, Rakshasa’s Ring* (c. 376-415 CE)

Week 3 (June 27, 29). Ancient India: Theravada Buddhism; East Asia and India: Mahayana Buddhism.


*Dhammapada* (3rd century BCE?)

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*Lotus Sutra* (3rd century CE)

*Vimalakirti Sutra*
Week 4 (July 4, 6). Ancient Greek/Roman: biographies and moral/political philosophy; Medieval Japanese: epic and drama

Plutarch, Life of Alexander (46 CE-120 CE)  

Cicero, Dream of Scipio (106 BCE - 43 BCE)  

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Heike (end of 12th century)  

Atsumori (end of 12th century)  

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Week 5 (July 11, 13). Middle Ages: Greater Middle East, Western Europe, North Africa: epic, biography, and history

Ferdowsi, Seyavash (Ferdowsi, c. 940-1020)  

History of Saladin (Ibn Shaddad, 1145-1234)  

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Marco Polo, The Travels (Marco Polo, 1254-1324)  
Preface 1-18, [p. 35 on-line, p. 1 of the volume), Book 1.23-25 (the Old Man of the Mountain), Book 1.46-50 (Prester John and Chinghis Kaan); Book 1.51-55 (customs of the Tartars); Book 2.1 (Cublay Kaan); Book 2.10-12 (Cublay Kaan’s person, sons, and palace); Book 2.24-27 (Cublay Kaan’s money printing and governing); Book 3.2-3 (Japan); Book 4.1-4 (battles in Greater Turkey); Book 4.34 (conclusion)  
Recommended: documentary: “In the Footsteps of Marco Polo” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmAuJ4Y7Aa0

Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406)  
Week 6 (July 18, 20). Medieval/Renaissance Western Europe: epic and romance

The Song of Roland (between 1140 and 1170)


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Boiardo, Orlando Innamorato (Boiardo, 1441-1494)
Princess Angelica of Cathay arrives at Charlemagne's court in Paris and all present, including Roland (now Orlando), fall in love (1.1.1-35, pp. 3-7); Orlando fights the Tartar khan Agricane over Angelica (1.8.29-55 and 1.9.1-17, pp. 160-165); Orlando's travel's through Morgana's underworld kingdom (2.8.1-2.9.29, pp. 312-324); Orlando and Angelica at a tournament in Cyprus (2.20.1-40, pp. 409-414).

Ariosto, Orlando Furioso (Ariosto, 1474-1533)
While Paris is under attack, Orlando sneaks out in search of Angelica (8.68-83 and 9.1-7, pp. 280-287); Orlando goes mad when he discovers Angelica loves another (23.100-136, pp. 718-727); Orlando recovers his wits (39.44-61, pp. 444-448).