

Fall 1999

CAS 150 GO: GAME AND CULTURE

(2 credit hours)

Mondays, 7:40 P.M. to 8:55 P.M.

Harkness 329

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Go is an ancient game with a modern following. It is commonly held that Go originated in Central Asia before 1000 B.C.; it begins to be mentioned in Chinese writings about 500 B.C. Go playing in China was primarily limited to the Emperor's court and the military. The game was introduced to Japan sometime before 700 A.D. There it enjoyed popularity among the aristocracy and Buddhist priests as one of the Zen arts. Although tactical understanding of the game had been well developed for centuries, the Buddhist priests developed most of the strategic principles of play that are followed by Go masters today. The modern era of Go is usually dated from 1612, the year that the Tokugawa Shogunate began government subsidies for the leading Go players. Go thrived for the next 250 years in Japan, but fell on hard times during the Meiji period. Beginning in the 1920s Go enjoyed a revival in Japan that not only reestablished the vitality of professional play but also greatly spread the game among the public. There are now over 10 million regular players in Japan. Go has long been popular in Korea, where it is one of the four arts. Since the Cultural Revolution, Go has enjoyed a resurgence in China. The American and European Go Associations have memberships in the thousands; each holds annual gatherings attended by hundreds.

As the editor of the *American Go Journal* observes, Go is more than just a game:

... Go can take on other meanings to its devotees: an analogy for life, an intense meditation, a mirror of one's personality, an exercise in abstract reasoning, a mental "workout," or, when played well, a beautiful art in which white and black dance in delicate balance across the board.

One objective of the course is to provide you with a basic introduction to Go so that you will be able to play at a casual level and, if so moved, begin advanced study. Another objective is to use Go as a window on Asian culture. I encourage you to take the course pass/fail.

Books and Materials for Purchase

Jeong Soo-hyun and Janice Kim, *Learn to Play Go: A Master's Guide to the Ultimate Game* (New York: Good Move Press, 1994).

Yasunari Kawabata, *The Master of Go* (New York: Berkley Publishing, 1974).

CAS 150 Supplementary Reading: John Power, editor, *Invincible: The Games of Shusaku*, pp. 2-14.

You will be provided with small Go sets for use during the first third of the course. Though full-size Go sets will be available in the game room at Wilson Commons, you may wish to purchase a set from the bookstore.

Course Requirements

1. Regular class attendance and participation.
2. Two to three hours per week of scheduled games with classmates. (Two tournaments will be held during the semester.)
3. Two, two-page, double-spaced, typed papers as follows:
 - A. An essay on Kawabata's *The Master of Go* – Due **October 11**.
 - B. A review of the film, *The Go Masters*, any historical or cultural article from *Go World*, or one of the following books: Scott A. Boorman, *The Protracted Game: A Wei-Ch'i Interpretation of Maoist Revolutionary Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); Yasuyuki Miura, *Go: An Asian Paradigm for Business Strategy* (San Rafael, CA: Kiseido, 1995); Sung-Hwa Hong, *First Kyu* (New York: Good Move Press, 1999) – Due no later than **November 30**.
4. Short weekly homework assignments. (Usually a few problems or questions based on the readings.)

Tentative Reading and Special Events Schedule

September 13-20

Jeong and Kim, Chapters 1-4.

During the first two classes we will learn to play several versions of the “**capturing game**,” which is similar to Go but easier to play immediately. We will do this with a 9X9 board so games are quick and relatively simple. You should try to play as many games as possible with classmates and friends so that you become very familiar with the notion of capturing stones.

September 27

Jeong and Kim, Chapter 5-9.

Having mastered the capturing game, you are now ready to learn how to play Go. During the early part of the semester you will continue to play on a 9x9 board until you are comfortable with basic tactics. You will then move up to the 19x19 board and begin to develop strategic concepts.

John Fairbairn, "Go in Ancient China" (www.cwi.nl/~jansteen/go/go-0.html)

October 11

Kawabata, entire. (First essay due.)

October 18

Guest lecture: Professor William Hauser, Department of History

Very important: Read *Invincible: The Games of Shusaku*, pp. 2-14, **prior** to class.

October 25

In-class mini-tournament to give me a chance to observe your games in progress. **Please bring your Go sets to class.**

November 1

Film: *The Go Masters*

Note: Class will meet from **7:15 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.**

November 8, 15, and 22

Jeong and Kim, Chapters 10-14.

November 29

Last opportunity to hand in second essay.

December 6

Team Go to celebrate the end of the term.

Tournament Schedules

Round	Date Results Due
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Tournament One (9 x 9 board)

1	October 11
2	October 18
3	October 25
4	November 1

Tournament Two (19 x 19 board)

1	November 8
2	November 15
3	November 22
4	December 6

Pay **three** games per round in Tournament One; play only **one** game per round in Tournament Two.

Small prizes will be awarded to the winners of each tournament.

Please report results to Harkness 312 by 12:00 noon on the indicated date. *The best way to report results is by e-mail*. If you report the results by e-mail or phone mail, then please be sure to make clear who won.

Go and Computers

Several computer programs play Go at the level of about 10 kyu. It might be helpful to play a few games with one of these programs. Several programs will be placed on reserve in the Computer Library and Resources Center (CLARC), Rush Rhees Library, under the course number. For information about computer programs that play Go, see www.usgo.org/computer/. For general information about Go-related web sites, see www.sentex.net/~mmcadams/goweb.html

The Internet Go Server is a 24-hour international Go club that can be accessed through the Internet. For information about the IGS see: <http://www.well.com/user/mmcadams/igs.howto.html>. Yahoo also provides a Go server at yog1.yahoo.com/yog/go/html.