

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Religions of Asia • REL 2315 • Fall 2018

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– MIRCEA ELIADE –

A true encounter implies a dialogue. In order to begin a valid dialogue with non-European cultures, it is indispensable to know and understand these cultures.

Purposes

Who are we? What is our real nature? What are our most important duties to family, society, ancestor, gods, and God? What is the nature of God and the soul, and do they even exist? Why is religion important even if God does not exist and the soul is not eternal? How does one live in harmony with nature and society? These are some of the central questions that the Asian religious and philosophical traditions have dealt with for many thousands of years. In addition to examining how Taoist, Confucian, Buddhist and Hindu thinkers answered these questions, we'll also think about the social, ritual, and ethical implications of their answers. Should one leave the world behind or should one adhere to one's social duties? How should one treat other humans, animals and the gods? How should one relate with the divine? From my experience with research and teaching we often learn comparatively; we make sense of the unfamiliar by means of the familiar. There is, therefore, a comparative component of this course, one that encourages discussion of the Asian religions in comparison with more familiar religions, and we will also reflect on how Asian is interpreted in modern Western scholarship and popular media.

Time & Location

TUESDAY	11:45 AM - 1:40 PM, Matherly Hall 108
THURSDAY	12:50 PM - 1:40 PM, Matherly Hall 15
OFFICE HOURS	Monday & Wednesday 10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

Required Texts

1. WILLIARD OXTOBY, ROY AMORE & AMIR HUSSAIN, *World Religions: Eastern Traditions, Fourth Edition*, 2014, Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-0-900281-8.
2. VALERIE ROEBUCK, *The Upanishads*, Penguin Classics. ISBN 0140447490.
3. EDMUND RYDEN & BEN PENNY. *Daodejing*. Oxford World's Classics. ISBN 0199208557.
4. All handouts and assigned readings or websites.

The Ritz Student Union has these books. If they run out, they will get more. Please *always* bring the book or article we are reading to class with you.

Evaluation

1. Class Participation – 10%
2. Paper One – 20% (due Week 9)
3. Paper Two – 20% (due Week 16)
4. Midterm – 25% (given Week 8)
5. Comprehensive Final Exam – 25% (given 12/13/2018, 5:30–7:30 PM)

Each paper should be 1000 words each, which satisfies Gordon Rule (GR2). You will be asked to formulate your own topic in consultation with me. The midterm and final examinations will consist in multiple choice questions and essay(s).

Tentative Weekly Schedule

Week One - Review of Syllabus

Thursday: Introduction to entire course

China

Week Two - General overview of Chinese Religions and focus on the Confucian tradition

Tuesday: Begin discussing and reading OXTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.262-278

Thursday: Continue, OXTOBY, Chapter 6, pp.262-278

Week Three - Focus on Confucian tradition

Tuesday: Discuss Mengzi and Xunzi, OXToby, Chapter 6, pp.2276-278; Watch & Listen – MICHAEL PUETT: “The Path,” Talks at Google
Thursday: Read and discuss handout – Confucian *Analects*

Week Four - Early Daoism (or Taoism)

Tuesday: Begin discussing and reading OXToby, Chapter 6, pp.278-288
Thursday: Continue, OXToby, Chapter 6, pp.278-288

Week Five - Focus on Daodejing

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing *Daodejing*, Chapters 1-20
Thursday: Continue, *Daodejing*, Chapters 21 and onward

Japan

Week Six - Early Japanese Religion and Japanese Zen Buddhism

Tuesday: Begin reading OXToby, Chapter 7, pp.340–352; Listen – LEONARD COHEN, “Love Itself”
Thursday: Possible Guest Lecture – PROFESSOR TONY STEWART, Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair in Humanities, Topic TBA

India

Week Seven – Early Buddhism

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXToby, Chapter 5, pp.184-204
Thursday: Continue, OXToby, Chapter 5, pp.184-204

Week Eight – Midterms

Tuesday: catch-up and review
Thursday: mid-term will be given in class

Week Nine - Mahāyāna Buddhism

Deadline – Paper One

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXToby, Chapter 5, pp.217–225
Thursday: Continue, OXToby, Chapter 5, pp.217–225

Week Ten - Hindu Traditions

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXToby, Chapter 2, pp.26-40
Thursday: Continue, OXToby, Chapter 2, pp.26-40

Week Eleven - Focus on the Upanishads

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing VALERIE ROEBUCK, *Upanishads*, read Īśavāya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Kena
Thursday: Continue, *Upanishads*, read Īśavāya, Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Kena

Week Twelve - Classical Hinduism

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing OXToby, Chapter 2, pp.40-66

Thursday: Continue, OXTOBY, Chapter 2, pp.40-66

Week Thirteen - Focus on Bhagavad Gītā

Tuesday: Begin reading and discussing JONATHAN EDELMANN, “Introducing the Bhagavad Gītā,” *Teaching Interreligious Encounters*, M.Pugliese & A.Hwang, Oxford Uni Press.

Thursday: Continue, EDELMANN, “Introducing the Bhagavad Gītā”

Week Fourteen – No Classes

No class November 20 – American Academy of Religion

No class November 22 – Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen - General Issues in Indian Religion: Karma and Rebirth

Tuesday: JONATHAN EDELMANN, “Seeing in Eternal Return: Hermeneutical Perspectives on Karma and Rebirth,” *Religions*, 2017.

Thursday: Continue EDELMANN, start FRANCIS CLOONEY, “Vedānta’s Theology of Karma,” *Journal of Religion*, 1989.

Week Sixteen

Tuesday: *Deadline - Paper Two*; Review for Final Examination

Policies

Grading

The final grade is based on each student’s individual performance and his/her fulfillment of the course requirements, as stipulated in the syllabus.

The same course rules and expectations apply equally to all students—no student is entitled to special consideration or unique treatment. Other extraneous or irrelevant factors, including student’s personal desires or expectations about grades, are not considered. Students should also not expect retroactive changes or other forms of grade modification.

Students should take all assignments and other course requirements very seriously. There are no opportunities to do additional work for extra credit or better grade.

No incomplete grades are given, except in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the students should contact the instructor no later than a week before the last day of classes.

Final grades are computed according to the standard grading scheme in Canvas.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is expected of all students, starting with the first day of classes. (For more on the university’s attendance policies, see the Undergraduate Catalog).

Students are advised to take extensive notes in class, and to use them prudently in their preparation for the exams. The exams are primarily based on the lectures, along with the readings.

Student with exceptional participation performance may be awarded up to 3 bonus points (3% of the final grade). This bonus is entirely based on the instructor’s discretion, and the final assessment takes into account both the quantity and quality of student’s participation in classroom discussions, as well as other elements of coursework.

Exams and Papers

No make-up exams are given, except in documented instances of illness or other emergency, in which case the student must contact the instructor directly before the exam, if feasible, or as soon as possible.

If any student has a valid reason to request rescheduling of an exam—such as observance of a religious holiday—he/she must contact the instructor in person and make suitable arrangements one week before the examination. Failure to act in accord with these instructions will lead to a failing grade.

All papers and exams must be provided to the instructor at the scheduled time. In the absence of a documentable emergency, late papers and exams will be given no credit.

Classroom Conduct

All students are required to come to class on time, as late arrivals (and early departures) are disruptive.

Office Hours and Communication

Students are encouraged to come to office hours, especially if they have questions on the course materials. The instructor is also glad to discuss all relevant topics that, due to time constraints, are not covered in class in much detail.

Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor directly and in person, preferably during office hours

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties.

For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure (posted online by the Dean of Students Office).

Disability

A student who has a documented disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor in person at the beginning of the course so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

The student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor, as early as possible.

All arrangements for changes pertaining to the quizzes and the exams must be made at least one week in advance.