

## **RSOC 10: Asian Religious Traditions**

Fall 2015      MWF 1:00-2:05 pm      Location: Kenna Hall 306

Instructor: Jessica Chen

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Kenna Hall 300K

Office Hours: Wednesday 2:15-3:15 pm, or by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course, which fulfills the RTC 1 requirement for the core curriculum, will introduce students to the history, teachings, and practices of the major Asian Religious traditions of South, Central, East, and Southeast Asia, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shintoism. It will do so from an historical perspective, and will also explore the development of key theological and religious/philosophical doctrines as well as associated practices.

### **COURSE GOALS**

1. Students will gain a basic understanding of Asian Religious Traditions.
2. Studies will engage in critical and comparative reflection on these traditions, and will seek to understand the relevance of their teachings and practices to the practitioners of these traditions.

### **DEPARTMENT GOALS**

1. Students will be introduced to diverse materials and perspectives.
2. Students will demonstrate the use of formal practices of inquiry and reflection that enable them to go beyond simple typologies to fuller engagement.

The Religious Studies departmental learning goals are embedded in the course goals.

### **CORE CURRICULUM LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

*This course fulfills Santa Clara's Core Requirement Religion, Theology, and Culture 1.*

Core Learning Goals: Knowledge of Global Cultures and Habits of Mind and Heart: Complexity, Critical Thinking, Religious Reflection

Core Learning Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices from several traditions or within one, and from at least two globally distinct regions.
2. Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence.

### **ASSESSMENT & GRADING**

#### **Test-based Assessment (60%)**

There will be two midterm examinations, worth 30% each, which will evaluate students' mastery of the South and East Asian traditions, respectively. The midterms will ask students to identify, in approximately one to two complete sentences, key

terms from the traditions. Each exam will also include a short essay requiring critical and comparative reflection on the traditions. The short identifications will require that students master the basic concepts of the tradition, *thus assessing course goal #1 and the descriptive component of core learning objective #1*. The short essays will ask students to critically reflect upon and compare the traditions studied, *thus assessing course goal #2, the comparative component of core learning objective #1, and core learning objective #2*.

### **Short Critical Reflection Essays (30%)**

Each student will write two short papers (15% each) that will critically review two of the documentaries viewed in the class. These papers will ask you to both critically assess the film, and also explore the degree to which it sheds light on the religious dimensions of human existence. *This will assess course goal #2 and core learning objective #2*.

### **Class Participation (10%)**

Active participation in class discussions is a requirement of this class. This class will have structured discussions, in which students will be required to prepare in advance reflections on course readings, discuss them in small groups, and present the key points of their discussions to the class. These discussions are intended to demonstrate the students' knowledge of the traditions studied, their ability to reflect upon them critically, and their ability to work and learn collaboratively. Participation will both be directly measured by the instructor, and indirectly measured by the students' progress in other assignments.

*Students will be asked to assess the course via narrative evaluations at the end of the quarter.*

*Students will receive regular feedback on their work from their instructor to help them improve their understanding and analytic skills.*

## **POLICIES**

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is required. If you must miss a class, you should inform the instructor in advance when possible, and you are responsible for making up missed work. While absences due to unavoidable problems (sickness, etc.) will definitely be excused, I will **NOT** excuse absences for activities associated with other classes.

**Unexcused absences will significantly lower your final grade.**

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office for Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity/> In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please make sure you properly cite all sources you utilize in your writing, including works that

are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

### Disability Accommodations

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, [www.scu.edu/disabilities](http://www.scu.edu/disabilities), as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please initiate a conversation with me about your accommodations during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. Students who are pregnant and parenting may also be eligible for accommodations. Accommodations will only be provided after I have verifications of your accommodations as approved by Disabilities Resources, and with sufficient lead time to arrange testing and other accommodations. For more information, you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

### ASSIGNMENTS

Papers must be submitted as digital files (via Camino or email) by end of the day (i.e., 12 midnight) on the day that they are due **OR** submitted as a hard copy in class. In order to save paper, I prefer digital submissions, and do not require a hard copy. Please email me your papers as documents in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) formats if possible, or as text files (.pdf, .txt, or .rft). If you submit your paper via email, I will email you a confirmation when I have received it. If you do NOT receive a confirmation within 24 hours, please check with me to confirm that I have received it. If you email me a paper and I do not receive it, I WILL count it as late if you do not check in with me the next day. Late work will only be accepted with the permission of the instructor, and will be penalized at the rate of 5 points per day late (including weekends), unless the instructor has granted an extension in advance (i.e., at least 24 hours prior to the due date). Note that if the instructor does grant an extension, but the assignment is turned in late, i.e., after the extended due date, the late penalty will be calculated based on the day the assignment was originally due.

### Grading Scale

94.0-100 A	87.0-89.9 B+	77.0-79.9 C+	67.0-69.9 D+
90.0-93.9A-	83.0-86.9 B	73.0-76.9 C	63.0-66.9 D
	80.0-82.9 B-	70.0 -72.9 C-	60.0-62.9 D-

### CLASS TEXTS

- (1) **WR** Willard Oxtoby & Roy Amore, *World Religions: Eastern Traditions* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford 2014, **REQUIRED**)
- (2) **AWS** Robert Van Voorst, *Anthology of World Scriptures: Eastern Religions* (Thomson-Wadsworth 2007, **RECOMMENDED**)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Mon. 9/21 **Class Introduction**  
During the first class we will quickly go over the plan for the quarter, and engage in the usual introductions.

### 1. SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIONS

Wed. 9/23 **Hinduism I: The Vedic Tradition**  
We will explore the religious tradition of ancient India, focusing upon a body of scriptures known as the *Vedas*.

- **WR 28-39**

Fri. 9/25 **Hinduism II: Classical Hinduism and Theology**  
We will continue our discussion of Hinduism with an exploration of the great theistic Hindu traditions.

- **WR 41-59**
- **Recommended:** watch this 22-minute rendition of the Ramayana to become familiar with the storyline:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBiWDKuEaIE>

Mon. 9/28 **Hinduism III: Hindu Scriptures**  
We will continue our study of Hinduism with a class discussion of selections from Hindu scriptures. Please read these texts carefully, and bring with you to class any questions or comments you have about them.

- **AWS 30-2 (Aditi & the Birth of the Gods, 2 Phil. Views of Creation)**
- **AWS 34-5 (That You Are)**
- **AWS 42-4 (The Life of Women, Creation and the Caste System)**
- **AWS 54-63 (Bhagavad-Gita and Ghandi reflection)**

Weds. 9/30 **Hinduism IV: Bakhti, Art, and Worship in Modern Hinduism**  
We will enrich our study of Hinduism with a survey of major topics in contemporary Hinduism, such as the importance of devotion and the rite of worship (*pūjā*).

- **WR 59-75**
- **AWS 64-5 [Bhakti poems]**

Fri. 10/2 **Hinduism V: Modern Hinduism**  
We will conclude our study of Hinduism with an exploration of how Hinduism is practiced in contemporary India.

- **WR 76-84 [to end of Funeral Rites]**
- **In-Class Video:** "Hinduism: 330 Million Gods," (1977, 52 min)

- Mon. 10/5 **Buddhism in South Asia I: The Life of the Buddha**  
 We begin our study of Buddhism with an overview of the life of its founder, Gautama Siddhartha.
- **WR 187-196**
  - **AWS 78-86**
- Wed. 10/7 **Buddhism in South Asia II: Buddhist Teachings**  
 We will survey the basic teachings of Buddhism, with particular focus on the subject of the Buddha's first sermon, the Four Noble Truths.
- **WR 196-204**
  - **AW 86-9**
- Fri. 10/9 **Buddhism in South Asia III: Theravada Buddhism**  
 We will then turn to the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, which predominates in South and Southeast Asia.
- **WR 204-217**
  - **AWS 102-112**
  - **In-Class Video:** "Making of a Monk" (1996, 15 min)
- Mon. 10/12 **Sikh Traditions I: Teachings and Practice**  
 We will explore the founding of the Sikh tradition in India, with a focus on Guru Nanak and his successors.
- **WR 106-114**
  - **AWS 147-158**
- Wed. 10/14 **Sikh Traditions II: Contemporary**  
 We will continue our exploration of Sikhism with a look at contemporary Sikh groups and their characteristic teachings and practices.
- **WR 114-142**
  - **AWS 159-162**
- Fri. 10/16 **MIDTERM REVIEW**  
 We will conduct a review session for the first midterm, on South Asian religious traditions.
- Mon. 10/19 **IN-CLASS MIDTERM #1: South Asian Religions**
- 2. ISLAM AND EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS**
- Wed. 10/21 **Islam in Asia I: History and Establishment**
- Ernst, "Islam and the modern concept of religion," pp. 38-69
  - "Hinduism and Islam," *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, pp. 301-305

- “Islam in South Asia,” *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*, pp. 634-644

Fri. 10/23 **Islam in Asia II: Sufism, Mughals, and the Chishti Order**

- Heehs, “Indo-Persian Sufism,” pp. 252-3, 259-278
- Ernst, “Major Chishti Shrines,” pp. 85-104
- **In-Class Video:** TBA

Mon. 10/26 **Islam in Asia III: Politics and Religious Encounter in India**

- Friedmann, “Islamic Thought in Relation to the Indian Context,” 50-62
- Zelliot, “A Medieval Encounter between Hindu and Muslim,” pp. 64-79
- Pandey, “Can a Muslim be an Indian,” pp. 608-629

Wed. 10/28 **Islam in Asia IV: China**

- Israeli, “Islam,” *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China*, pp. 1185-1190
- Benite, “Chinese Muslim Myths of Origin,” pp. 93-111

Fri. 10/30 --NO CLASS--

Mon. 11/2 **Ancestor Worship and Shamanism**

We will survey the beliefs and practices centering upon the ancestors in ancient East Asia.

- **AWS 159-162**

**SHORT PAPER #1 DUE**

Wed. 11/4 **Confucianism I**

During this class we will explore life and key teachings of Confucius, the founder of the Confucian tradition.

- **WR 269-276**
- **AWS 165-178**

Fri. 11/6 **Confucianism II**

We will continue our discussion with a focus on key Confucian ethical teachings, and their impact in East Asia.

- **WR 276-278, 288-293**
- **AWS 178-189**

Mon. 11/9 **Daoism I**

During this class we will explore the history and key teachings of Daoism, the indigenous Chinese religious tradition.

- **WR 278-285, 293-294**
- **AWS 195-217**

- Wed. 11/11 **Daoism II**  
 We will continue our study of Daoism, on the practice of Daoist and Daoist-related healing and meditative techniques in contemporary China.
- **Video** “Healing and the Mind: The Mystery of Chi” (1993, 58 min)
- Fri. 11/13 **Confucianism & Daoism: Class Discussion**  
 We will dedicate this class to critical reflection on, and discussion of, a selection of readings on Chinese religions.
- **AWS 171-173, 175-177, 179-180, 199-200, 204, 210-211**
- Mon. 11/16 **East Asian Buddhism I: Mahayana Buddhism**  
 We will return to Buddhism with an overview of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and the history of its spread in East Asia.
- **WR 217-223, 294-304**
  - **AWS 92-93, 101-102, 112-113**
- Wed. 11/18 **East Asian Buddhism II: Pure Land, Zen and Tibetan Buddhism**  
 We will look closely at the three most widespread traditions of East Asian Mahayana Buddhism, the Pure Land, Zen, and Vajrayana traditions.
- **WR 223-239, 308-311, 312-315, 357-362**
  - **AWS 94-98, 114-124**
- Fri. 11/20 **--NO CLASS--**
- Mon. 11/30 **Shintoism I**  
 We will survey the basic teachings and practices of Shintoism, Japan’s indigenous religious tradition.
- **WR 343-351, 363-367, 370-375**
  - **AWS 221-230**
- Wed. 12/2 **Shintoism II**  
 We will conclude our study of Shintoism by viewing a documentary illustrating key Shinto teachings and practices.
- **Video** “Shinto: nature, gods and man in Japan” (1996, 50 min)
- Fri. 12/4 **MIDTERM REVIEW**  
 We will conduct a review session for the second midterm, on Islam and East Asian religious traditions.
- Mon. 12/7 **MIDTERM #2: Islam and East Asian Religions**  
**SHORT PAPER #2 DUE**