

RSOC 10: Asian Religious Traditions
Spring 2015 MW 4:45pm-6:30 pm

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Office Hours: Thursday 2:30pm-4:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, which fulfills the RTC 1 requirement for the core curriculum, will introduce students to the history, important teachings, and practices of the major Asian Religious traditions of East Asia, South, and Southeast Asia such as Confucianism, Daoism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism. It 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 the major Asian Religious Traditions.
2. Students will engage in comparative and dialogical reflection on these traditions. As well, students 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 of religion and religious ideas.
2. Students will demonstrate the use of formal practices of inquiry and reflection that enable them to go beyond simple typologies to fuller engagement.
3. Students will use the materials to address issues of religions in different social and cultural contexts.

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:

- Students will be able to describe and compare the central religious ideas and practices within one tradition as well as from several traditions.
- Students will be able to use critical approaches to reflect on their own beliefs and the religious dimensions of human existence in different cultural contexts.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

Test-based Assessment (60%)

There will be two examinations, worth 30% each. These examinations will evaluate students' understanding of the South and the East Asian traditions, respectively. Each exam will ask students to identify key terms from the traditions, explain basic concepts of each tradition (*assessing course goal #1*), and write a short essay critically reflecting upon and comparing the traditions studied

(assessing course goal and learning objective #1 and #2)

Short Critical Essays (20%)

Each student will write two short papers (10% each) that will critically review two of the documentaries viewed in class. These papers will ask students to both critically assess the film, and also explore the degree to which it sheds light on the religious human existence. (*This will assess course goal #2 and core learning objective #2*).

Group Presentation (10%)

Students will use the materials to address issues of religions in certain social and cultural contexts. Please discuss with your instructor about the topic(s) you want to present. (*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. 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. **Students are required to write a one page paper that will summarize the assigned readings and present the key points discussed by the author. Papers should be posted on Camino by 4:30pm(late work will not be accepted).**

POLICIES

Regular attendance is required. If you must miss a class, you should inform the instructor in advance. You are responsible for making up missed work.

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 of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: <http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity/>

Disability Accommodations:

To receive academic accommodations for a disability, students must contact Disability Recourses located in Benson 216. Students must register with Disabilities Resources and provide documentation of a disability to Disabilities Resources prior to receiving academic accommodations

ASSIGNMENTS

Critical reflection papers should be either posted on Camino or emailed to me by the end of the day on the day that they are due. Later work will be penalized unless the instructor has granted an extension in advance.

Grading Scale:

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|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 94-100% A | 87-89.9% B+ | 77-79.9% C+ | 67-69.9% D+ |
| 90-93.9% A- | 83-86.9% B | 73-76.9% C | 63-66.9% D |
| | 80-82.9% B- | 70-72.9% C- | 60-62.9% D- |

CLASS TEXTS

(1) WR Willard Oxtoby & Roy Amore, *World Religions: Eastern Traditions* (4th ed., Oxford 2014)

(2) AR Randall L. Nadeau, *Asian Religions: A Cultural Perspective* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014)

(3) Excerpts from AWS Robert Van Voorst, *Anthology of World Scriptures: Eastern Religions* (Thomson_Wadsworth 2007)

Syllabus

- Mar 30 Introduction to the course and its requirements.
Video: *The Dragon The Dragon: A Stroll in Beijing*
- April 1 **East Asian Traditions:**
Confucian Tradition I
We will explore the two major religious traditions of ancient China: Confucianism and Daoism. We particularly explore the historical, philosophical, ethical, divine, and cultural aspects of these two traditions.
WR *World Religions* 269-278; **AR**, *Asian Religion*, ch. 3 & 4 (1st assignment)
- April 3 **Holiday**
- April 6 **Confucian Tradition II**
AR, *Asian Religion*, ch. 5, 6&7; AWS, 143-149 (2nd assignment)
- April 8 **Taoist Tradition I**

We begin to explore the key teachings of Taoism and study the differences as well as similarities between Confucianism and Taoism. We particularly explore the religious and philosophical aspects of Taoism. WR, *World Religions*, 278-288; RN, *Asian Religion*, ch. 8&9 (3rd assignment)
- April 13 **Taoist Tradition II**

During this class, we study the spatial, temporal, and personal dimensions of Yin Yang cosmology in the Taoist tradition. **AR**, *Asian Religions*, ch. 10-12; AWS, pp.162-172. Video: *Taoism A Question of Balance* (4th assignment)
- April 15 **South Asian Traditions**
Hinduism I
This week, we will explore the religious tradition of ancient India, focusing upon a body of scriptures known as the Vedas. We will also explore the diversity of Hinduism and the different movements within this tradition.
WR, 28-47; Video: *Essentials of Faith Hinduism* (5th assignment)
- April 20 Movie: *Hinduism 330 Million Gods* **WR**, 48-59 (1st critical essay due)
- April 22 **Hinduism II**

We continue to enrich our study of Hinduism with a survey of major topics in the contemporary Hinduism, such as the importance of devotion and worship. **WR**, 69-90 (6th assignment)
- April 27 **Hinduism (cont.)**

During this class we will explore the “Three Margas” as religious discipline in the Hindu tradition. We also study the attributes of God in Hinduism and Christianity. Finally, we will briefly look at how Hinduism has extended far beyond the soil of India. **AR**, ch. 15-18 (7th assignment)

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| April 29 | Midterm Exam |
| May 4 | Buddhism I This week, we begin our study of Buddhism with an overview of the life of its founder, Gautama Siddhartha. We also study the core teachings of Buddhism as well the diversity within the Buddhist tradition (8 th assignment); WR , 186-205; Video: <i>Seven Wonders of Buddhist World</i> |
| May 6 | Buddhism II We continue to explore the different schools of Buddhism in East Asia such as China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. WR , 209-232 (9 th assignment) |
| May 11 | Buddhism (cont.) AR 19-21; 24 (2nd critical essay due) |
| May 13 | Japanese Traditions This week, we will explore the Shinto tradition as well as the integration of Buddhism and the Japanese indigenous tradition. WR , 342-367 (10 th assignment) |
| May 18 | WR , 357-376; AR , 27&28 (11 th assignment) Video: <i>Shinto: Nature, Gods and Man in Japan</i> |
| May 20 | Jaina Traditions This week, we will examine the development of Jainism and its bifurcation into two sects, the Digambara and Svetambara traditions. WR , 148-180 (12 th assignment) |
| May 25 | Holiday |
| May 27 | AWS , 138-144; Video: <i>Frontiers of Peace Jainism in India</i> |
| June 1 | Sikh Traditions This week, we will explore the founding of the Sikh tradition in India and study various groups of Sikhism as well as their teachings and practices. We also study contemporary Sikhism by viewing a documentary: Video <i>World Sikhism today</i> (1999, 49 min) WR 106-142; AWS 147-158; Presentation 1 |
| Jun 3 | Presentation 2 |
| Jun 8-12 | Final Exam (TBA) |