

RSOC 10: Asian Religious Traditions

Spring 2015

MWF 1:00 - 2:05 PM

Kenna Hall 308

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Office Hours: Wed. 2:15-3:15 PM, and Fri. 11 AM-12 noon, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, which fulfills the RTC 1 requirement for the core curriculum, will introduce students to the history, major teachings, and practices of the major Asian Religious traditions of South, Central, East, and Southeast Asia, namely Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, 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 the Asian Religious Traditions.
2. Students 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 the 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 the 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 keys points of their discussions to the class. Discussions will also be held in class in conjunction with the documentaries viewed in 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 the 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 of 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 that you properly cite all sources that 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, 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 verification of your accommodations as approved by Disabilities Resources, and with sufficient lead time for me to arrange testing or other accommodations. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

ASSIGNMENTS

Papers should 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 the Pages (.pages) or 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 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	87.0–89.9B+	77.0–79.9C+	67.0–69.9D+
90.0–93.9A-	83.0–86.9B	73.0–76.9C	63.0–66.9D
	80.0–82.9B-	70.0–72.9C-	60.0–62.9D-

CLASS TEXTS

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

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Mon. 3/30 **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. 4/1 **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 28-40

- Fri. 4/3 **NO CLASS (Academic Holiday)**

- Mon. 4/6 **Hinduism II: Hindu Theology**
 We will continue our discussion of Hinduism with an exploration of the great theistic Hindu traditions, as well as the *Bhakti* devotional movement.
 •WR 41-56
 •AWS 54-62

- Wed. 4/8 **Hinduism III: Modern Hinduism**
 We will enrich our study of Hinduism with a survey of major topics in the contemporary Hinduism, such as the importance of devotion and the rite of worship (*pūjā*).
 •WR 57-96
 •AWS 62-65
- Fri. 4/10 **Hinduism IV: Hindu Scripture**
 We will continue our study of Hinduism, with a class discussion of selections from the Hindu scriptures.
 •AWS 30-45
- Mon. 4/13 **Hinduism V: Modern Hinduism**
 We will conclude our study of Hinduism with the viewing of a documentary that explores the practice of Hinduism in contemporary India.
 •Video “Hinduism: 330 Million Gods” (1977, 52 min)
- Wed. 4/15 **Jain Traditions I**
 We will explore the origins of Jainism, an ancient Indian religion that focuses on the renunciation of worldly bonds, and we will focus on the basic teachings of this religious tradition.
 •WR 148-160
 •AWS 129-138
- Fri. 4/17 **Jain Traditions II**
 We will examine the development of Jainism and its bifurcation into two sects, the Digambara and Svetambara traditions. We will also focus on Jain ethical teachings and practices.
 •WR 160-178
 •AWS 138-144
- Mon. 4/20 **Jain Traditions III**
 We will conclude our study of Jainism with the viewing of a documentary
 •Video “Frontiers of Peace: Jainism in India” (1986, 40 min)
- Wed. 4/22 **Buddhism in South Asia I: The Life of the Buddha**
 We will begin our study of Buddhism with an overview of the life of its founder, Gautama Siddhartha.
 •WR 187-196
 •AWS 78-86

- Fri. 4/24 **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
 •AWS 86-9
- Mon. 4/27 **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
 •Video "Making of a Monk" (1996, 15 min)
- Wed. 4/29 **Sikh Traditions I: Origins and Development**
 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
- Fri. 5/1 **Sikh Traditions II: Teachings and Practice**
 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
- Mon. 5/4 **Sikh Traditions III: World Sikhism today**
 We will conclude our study of Sikhism by viewing a documentary on contemporary Sikhism.
 •Video "World Sikhism today" (1999, 49 min)
- Wed. 5/6 **Midterm Review**
 We will conduct a review session for the first midterm, on the South Asian religious traditions.
- Fri. 5/8 **In-class Midterm #1: South Asian Religions**

- 2. East Asian Religions**
- Mon. 5/11 **Archaic Traditions: Ancestor Worship and Shamanism**
We will survey the beliefs and practices centering upon the ancestors in ancient East Asia.
•AWS 159-162
- Wed. 5/13 **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. 5/15 **Confucianism II**
We 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
Short Paper #1 Due
- Mon. 5/18 **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. 5/20 **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. 5/22 **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. 5/25 **NO CLASS (Academic Holiday)**

- Wed. 5/27 **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
- Fri. 5/29 **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
- Mon. 6/1 **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. 6/3 **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. 6/5 **Midterm Review**
We will conduct a review session for the second midterm, on the East Asian religious traditions.
- Mon. 6/8 **Midterm #2: East Asian Religions**
1:30-4:30 PM. Location Kenna Hall 308.
Short Paper #2 Due