

RSOC 10: Asian Religious Traditions

Spring 2017

TR 10:20 AM- 12:00 noon

Kenna Hall 306

Instructor: Prof. David Gray
Office: Kenna Hall 323H
Phone: x4343
email: dgray@scu.edu
Office Hours: Mon. 10 AM-12 noon, 1-2 PM; TWR 1-2 PM, 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 be excused, I will **NOT** excuse absences for activities associated with other classes. **Unexcused absences will significantly lower your final grade.**

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. 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. Quoting or paraphrasing another work *without acknowledging it* IS plagiarism.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <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 discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as

possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting

In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medically related needs. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.

Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)

Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy [at http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb](http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb) or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>

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 within 24 hours. 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) IAR Jeffrey Brood et al., *Invitation to Asian religions* (1st ed., Oxford 2016, **REQUIRED**)
- (2) Short Readings will be available on Camino at least 24 hours prior our discussion of them in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Tues. 4/4 **Class Introduction**
During the first class we will review the syllabus, and engage in the usual introductions.
- Thurs. 4/6 **Conceptual Introduction: What is religion, and why should we study its Asian manifestations?**
We will discuss the basic subject of this class, religion, and will review attempts to define it and approaches to studying it, particularly with respect to the Asian religious traditions.
•IAR 3-29
1. **South Asian Religions**
- Tues. 4/11 **Hinduism I: The Vedic Tradition**
We will explore the religious tradition of ancient India, centering around a body of scriptures known as the *Vedas*.
•IAR 31-59
- Thurs. 4/13 **Hinduism II: Classical Hinduism & Hindu Theology**
We will continue our study of Hinduism, with a class discussion of selections from the Vedic scriptures and an introduction to classical Hindu theology.
•Discussion: Vedic Literature (short readings on Camino)

- Tues. 4/18 **Hinduism III: Modern Hinduism**
 We will conclude 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*), and will view a documentary that explores the practice of Hinduism in contemporary India.
 •**IAR 59-83**
 •**Video** “Hinduism” (2002, 56 min)
- Thurs. 4/20 **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. We will also survey development of Jainism and its bifurcation into two sects, the Digambara and Svetambara traditions.
 •**IAR 131-157**
- Tues. 4/25 **Jain Traditions II/ Buddhism in South Asia I**
 We will conclude our study of Jainism with the viewing of a documentary on the tradition. We will then begin our study of Buddhism with an overview of the life of its founder, Gautama Siddhartha.
 •**Video** “Frontiers of Peace: Jainism in India” (1986, 40 min)
 •**IAR 85-90**
- Thurs. 4/27 **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.
 •**IAR 90-99**
- Tues. 5/2 **Buddhism in South Asia III: Theravada Buddhism**
 We will then turn to the Theravada tradition of Buddhism, which predominates in South and Southeast Asia.
 •**IAR 99-101, 108-109, 115-117**
 •**Video** “Making of a Monk” (1996, 15 min)
- Thurs. 5/4 **Sikh Traditions I: Origins, Teachings & Practices**
 We will explore the founding of the Sikh tradition in India, with a focus on Guru Nanak and his successors. We will also cover contemporary Sikh teachings and practices.
 •**IAR 159-185**

- Tues. 5/9 **Sikh Traditions II: World Sikhism today**
 We will conclude our study of Sikhism by viewing a documentary on contemporary Sikhism. Following the conclusion of the film & our discussion of it, we will conduct a review session for the first midterm, on the South Asian religious traditions.
 •Video “World Sikhism today” (1999, 49 min)
Midterm Review
- Thurs. 5/11 **Midterm #1: South Asian Religions**
2. **East Asian Religions**
- Tues. 5/16 **Archaic Traditions: Ancestor Worship and Shamanism**
 We will survey the beliefs and practices centering upon the ancestors in ancient East Asia.
 •IAR 187-194
- Thurs. 5/18 **Confucianism**
 During this class we will explore life of Confucius, the founder of the Confucian tradition, as well as the key teachings of the Confucian tradition, and their impact in East Asia.
 •IAR 195-204, 211-218, 224-228
Short Paper #1 Due
- Tues. 5/23 **Daoism I**
 During this class we will explore the history and key teachings of Daoism, and will have a discussion on Confucian and Daoist scriptural passages.
 •IAR 204-211, 218-223, 228-231
 •Discussion: Confucian & Daoist Literature (short readings on Camino)
- Thurs. 5/25 **Daoism II/ East Asian Buddhism I**
 We will continue our study of Daoism by viewing a documentary on the practice of Daoist and Daoist-related healing and meditative techniques in contemporary China. We will then begin our exploration of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition.
 •Video “Healing and the Mind: The Mystery of Chi” (1993, 58 min)
 •IAR 101-104

- Tues. 5/30 **East Asian Buddhism II: Pure Land and Zen**
 We will look closely at three most widespread traditions of East Asian Mahayana Buddhism, the Pure Land, Zen, and Vajrayana traditions. We'll then have discussion of Buddhist literature.
 •**IAR 104-106, 109-115, 117-129**
 •**Discussion: Buddhist Literature (short readings on Camino)**
- Thurs. 6/1 **Contemporary East Asian Spirituality**
 We will conclude our study of Confucianism, Daoism, and East Asian Buddhism with a viewing of a documentary on the annual Hungry Ghost Festival in Singapore.
 •**Video "A Month of Hungry Ghosts" (2009, 95 min)**
- Tues. 6/6 **Shintoism**
 We will survey the basic teachings and practices of Shintoism, Japan's indigenous religious tradition. We will then view a documentary illustrating key Shinto teachings and practices.
 •**IAR 239-263**
 •**Video "Shinto: nature, gods and man in Japan" (1996, 50 min)**
- Thurs. 6/8 **Midterm Review**
 We will dedicate the final class to an overview of key ideas and themes that we have covered during the East Asian section of this class.
- Tues. 6/13 **Midterm #2: East Asian Religions**
9:10 AM-12:10 PM. Location TBA
Short Paper #2 Due