

ANS 301R [#31770], CTI 310 [#34180], RS 302 [#44130]
HISTORY OF THE RELIGIONS OF ASIA
UTC 3.102
Fall 2013

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This course surveys the central beliefs and patterns of life of living religious traditions of Asia. It will focus particularly on the basic texts or narratives of these traditions, on their essential histories, and on the concepts of humanity, the world, and the divine that are distinctive of each. In addition, the course will explore not only what people believe religiously but also what they do religiously. Part of the course, therefore, will consider the ways of life, forms of social action, and rituals practiced by different communities. Not all Asian traditions can be included in a one-semester survey. The traditions chosen have large numbers of adherents, have particular historical significance, and represent different cultural areas.

By the end of the course, students will have a understanding of the basic histories and orientations of the major religious traditions originating in Asia.

Written Assignments and Attendance:

Written assignments comprise three interpretive essays on primary texts assigned in the course, a midterm exam, and a final exam. The final exam is scheduled on Wednesday, December 11, 2:00-5:00 pm. Please do not make travel arrangements to leave Austin before that date since we are not able to change the time of the final.

The final grade for written work will be determined as follows:

Midterm	20%
Three essays	45%
Final	35%

Regrettably, excessive unexcused absences (beyond 4) or persistent failure to prepare the assignments on time or both can result in a reduction of up to one full grade. On the other hand, vigorous and informed participation in class discussions can help a grade, especially a marginal one. Other factors, such as a student's progress or effort in the course, may also affect final grades for the class. If we increase the weight of a later grade, we will do so only if it helps student's final grade.

Grading:

This class uses plus/minus grading on a scale of 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 87-89 B+, 83-86 B, 80-82 B-, 77-79 C+, 73-76 C, 70-72 C-, etc.

Posted Materials:

Assignments, handouts, and some additional materials will be posted on Blackboard. You can access the Blackboard site for this course from <http://courses.utexas.edu/>.

Special Needs:

At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructors by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Academic Honesty:

Be careful not to copy the work of peers or to use material without proper attribution. Nothing can be more disastrous for your grade or for your college record than to be found to have violated the University rules on academic honesty. Students who violate these rules are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course or dismissal from the University or both. If you have any questions about properly utilizing sources, check with the TA or instructor.

Global Cultures Flag:

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. All the assignments in this course will concern the practices, beliefs, and histories of Asian cultural groups, both past and present.

Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas:

This course counts towards the Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas, a 6-course sequence in the great books, ideas, and controversies that have shaped Western civilization. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts/> or email the academic director, Lorraine Pangle, at [lorraine.pangle@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:lorrainepangle@austin.utexas.edu).

Religious Holy Days:

By UT policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least two weeks prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you miss an examination or an assignment in order to observe a religious holy day, we will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA

- 20 The Unity and Diversity of Islam Renard, *Seven Doors to Islam*, “Foundations”
23 Islam in South Asia

BUDDHISM

- 25 Introduction to Buddhism Oxtoby & Amore, pp. 178-205
27 The Buddha’s Life *Jātaka* stories, *Buddhacarita (The Life of the Buddha)*
30 The Buddha’s Life *Buddhacarita (The Life of the Buddha)*

October

- 2 The Four Noble Truths Selection from E. Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*: “The Questions of King Milinda”
4 The Four Noble Truths Selection from J. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*: “The Path”
7 The Four Noble Truths
9 The Four Noble Truths Selection from J. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*: “Meditation”
11 Mahāyāna: Bodhisattvas Oxtoby & Amore, pp. 205-251
14 Mahāyāna: Buddhas **Essay** on *The Life of the Buddha*
16 Mahāyāna: Emptiness & Mind Only “The Heart Sūtra”
18 Vajrayāna
21 Vajrayāna
23 **Midterm Exam**

CHINESE TRADITIONS

- 25 Themes in Chinese Religion Oxtoby & Amore, pp. 256-294
28 The Confucian Tradition “The Metal-Bound Coffin” “Filial Exemplars”

30 The Confucian Tradition "Mencius"

November

1 The Daoist Tradition Oxtoby & Amore, pp. 294-326
Zhuangzi

4 The Daoist Tradition *Zhuangzi*

6 The Daoist Tradition *Daodejing* Book I, pp. 157-177

8 Religious Daoism

11 Buddhism in China "Mulian"

13 Buddhism in China **Essay** on *Zhuangzi*

JAPANESE TRADITIONS

15 Shintō Film: "Man, Gods, and Nature in Japan"

18 Shintō Oxtoby & Amore, pp. 330-338

20 Shintō

22 History & Religion in Japan Oxtoby & Amore, pp. 338-362

25 History & Religion in Japan

27 Folk Transformations

30 Zen

December

2 Zen *Basho's Narrow Road*

4 Zen *Basho's Narrow Road*

6 New Religions

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 11, 2:00-5:00 pm