

RELG3433 RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF CHINA AND JAPAN
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
ST. THOMAS UNIVERSITY
FALL 2005 MWF 11.30-12.20 AM

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Students are welcome to contact me on e-mail or phone or drop by my office.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

China and Japan are known for rich and ancient cultural heritages closely related to their religious traditions. Therefore studying the religions of China and Japan-- when focussed on the practice and conceptual aspects-- will bring a clearer understanding of these cultures. When studied in tandem, the practice and textual canon enrich our understanding of China and Japan. Thus in this course an attempt is made to study texts as well as the practice. Since it is impossible to cover all the canonical works and practice in a single course, I have selected six themes with a view to provide a basic understanding of the religious traditions of China and Japan.

They are:

1. Religion and the body,
2. Religion and transcendence,
3. Religion and State,
4. Ritual and Festival,
5. Women and Religion,
6. Contemporary religion.

Basic historical and geographical background will be provided in class for the subjects of study. There are no prerequisites for this course and the course uses translated texts.

COURSE TEXTS

Course readings are placed on reserve (short term loan) in the library.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Critically examine the concepts of Chinese and Japanese religions.
2. Analyse the variety and complexity of religious experiences.
3. Learn the terminology of Chinese and Japanese religions.
4. Collaborate the canonical and lay aspects of understanding of religion.
5. Consider the differences and similarities of various religious traditions.

COURSE EVALUATION

Analysis/assessment of course readings 30%

Each student is to write a single page analysis/or assessment of the readings in the course pack and submit at the beginning of the class. Keep a journal of all the writing you have done for this course. It is due twice in the term Oct. 21 and Dec.2. Each student then works in group sharing his/her analysis with the other members of the group. Each group may consist of 2 or 3 members.

Peer reviews 20%

Each student should review at least two of the analyses or assessments prepared by the other students. To be submitted in the journal.

Presentation 20%

Each student makes an oral presentation to the class on a subject of his/her own choice on which he/she will write a final research paper. The presentations are 15 minutes in length.

Final research paper 20%

The student can select any topic related to the course. The paper must reflect your research and show a clear understanding of the chosen subject. The paper should be 8 pages in length i.e., approximately 2000 words including bibliography and citations. Students are required to save copies of their personal work- research paper, drafts etc. and required to submit these if requested.

Participation 10%

Regular attendance and participation is an important requisite of this course. Absence from more than one week of classes incurs penalty and loss in this mark.

A late penalty of 5% per day applies to all student work unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor or appropriate medical excuse is provided.

Academic integrity

It is the responsibility of the students to familiarize themselves with the senate regulations of the university with regard to the academic integrity and abide by the regulations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

9 Sept.2005. Introduction, scope, methodology and evaluation procedures

THEME I: RELIGION AND THE BODY

WEEK 2

12. Sept. 2005 Introduction to Chinese religions

14. Sept. 2005

Micheal Saso, "The Taoist Body and Cosmic Prayer," 231-247, Sarah Coakley. Ed., *Religion and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

16. Sept. 2005 Organization of Groups

WEEK 3

19. Sept. 2005 Introduction to Japanese Religions

21. Sept. 2005 Micheal Pye, "Perceptions of the Body in Japanese Religions," 248-261, Sarah Coakley, *Religion and the Body*.

23. Sept. 2005 Group Work

THEME II: RELIGION AND TRANSCENDENCE

WEEK 4

26. Sept. 2005 Introduction to Daoism

28. Sept. 2005 Robert E. Allinson, "The Paradox of self-transformation," 143-156, *Chuang-Tzu for Spiritual Transformation*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.

30. Sept. 2005 Group Work

WEEK 5

3. Oct. 2005 Introduction to Zen

5. Oct. 2005 Toshihiko Izutsu "Meditation and Intellection in Japanese Zen Buddhism," 49-71, Yusuf Ebish, Ileana Marculescu. Ed., *Contemplation and Action in World Religions*. Rothcochapel, Washington: University of Washington, 1978.

7. Oct. 2005 Library project

THEME III: RELIGION AND STATE

WEEK 6

10. Oct. 2005 Thanksgiving day. No Classes.

12. Oct. 2005 Kai-Wing Chow, "Lineage Discourse: Gentry, Local Society and the State," 71-98. *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994.

14. Oct. 2005 Group work

WEEK 7

17. Oct. 2005 Introduction to Shinto

19. Oct. 2005 Helen Hardacre, "Religious Freedom under the State Shinto," 114-132. *Shinto and the State*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

21. Oct. 2005 Class presentation

THEME IV: RITUAL AND FESTIVAL

WEEK 8

24. Oct. 2005 Chinese Religions

26. Oct. 2005 Robert L. Chard, "Rituals and the Scriptures of the Stove Cult," 3-55, David Johnson, Ed., *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion*, California: Wilsted & Taylor, Oakland, California, 1994.

28. Oct. 2005. Class presentation

WEEK 10

31. Oct. 2005 Japanese Religions

2. Nov. 2005 Nicola Liscutin, "Mapping the Sacred Body: Shinto Versus Popular Beliefs at Mt. Iwaki, in Tsugaru," John Breen, Mark Teeuwen, Eds., *Shinto in History: Ways of Kami*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.

4. Nov. 2005 Class Presentation

THEME V: WOMEN AND RELIGION

WEEK 11

7. Nov. 2005. Group Work

9. Nov. 2005 Kai-Wing Chow, "Ritualism and Gentry Culture: Lineage and Women," 204-223, *The Rise of Confucian Ritual*.

11. Nov. 2005 Remembrance Day. No Classes.

WEEK 12

14. Nov. 2005 Group Work

16. Nov. 2005 Ellen Schattschneider, *Immortal Wishes*, Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2003. 145-173.

18. Nov. 2005 Class Presentation

THEME VI: CONTEMPORARY RELIGION

WEEK 13

21. Nov. 2005 Group Work

23. Nov. 2005 Lai Chi- Tim, "Daoism in China Today, 1980-2002," 87-122, Daniel L. Overmeyer, Ed., *Religion in China Today*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

25. Nov. 2005 Class Presentation

WEEK 14

28. Nov. 2005 Group Work

30. Nov. 2005 Ian Reader, "Contemporary Buddhist Tracts for the Laity: Grassroots Buddhism in Japan," 713-725, Donald S. Lopez Jr., Ed., *Religions of Asia in Practice*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.

Dec 2 Last day of classes. Papers and journals due.