

Asian Religions, RLGS 265
Alfred University Spring 2013

Class meetings: Tu-Fri 11:20 - 12:10 p.m., 104 Kanakadea Hall

Professor: Dr. Wakoh Shannon Hickey

Office hours: 2nd floor, Kanakadea Hall

Tuesday & Thursday 5:30-6:30 p.m.; Wednesday 4-6 p.m., mornings by appointment.

Please note: The *worst* time to catch me is immediately before class, especially if you have significant questions or concerns. I will be focused on getting organized for class, and unable to give you adequate attention. Please come during office hours or make an appointment.

Phone: 607-871-2704

Email address: wakoh@alfred.edu

OVERVIEW

This course provides a brief introduction to the major religious traditions originating in India, China, and Japan: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. We will consider basic teachings, practices, and historical developments in each tradition, including changes brought about by modern science, colonialism, and globalization. If time permits, we may discuss some new religious movements sparked by globalization.

Why This Class Matters

Understanding Asian religions will help you to recognize and understand your own cultural perspective, as well as other cultures present in the United States and around the world. It will help you to understand those who differ from you more sympathetically, and to work with them more effectively. You will learn a variety of perspectives on the nature of Ultimate Reality, how we should live, and our ultimate purposes. The reading, writing, thinking, and speaking skills you develop here will serve you throughout your academic life, and make you more valuable as a professional.

Methods

Students will read primary and secondary literature, take notes on lectures, study maps, complete writing assignments, participate in classroom discussions, watch films, take online quizzes and in-class exams, and perform self-assessments, and may experiment with contemplative practices.

Required Text

Invitation to World Religions, Brodd et al., Oxford University Press

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

Level 1, Remembering:

- Define key vocabulary, texts, people, and/or ritual practices in each tradition.
- Identify different kinds of theism (or non-theism) in the traditions studied.
- Describe major rituals, festivals, and/or observances in each tradition.
- Identify the major sub-groups within each tradition.

Level 2, Understanding:

- Compare traditions in terms of the:
 - ways they understand and describe ultimate reality (creeds, myths, scriptures)
 - core problems or questions they try to address
 - moral guidelines and ethical values they consider important
 - rituals they practice and objects they regard as sacred
 - attitudes about gender

Level 3, Applying:

- Apply broad theories or principles to particular cases: e.g., Albanese's 4 Cs, Tweed's definition of religions, Smart's seven dimensions of religion.

Level 4, Analyzing:

- Explain how and why the religious traditions we study have changed over time
- Explain why traditions that share certain beliefs (e.g., samsara and karma, or yang/yin) diverge.
- Explain how religious traditions are affected by modernization, colonialism, and globalization.
- Reflect on your own social location and how it shapes your assumptions, attitudes, and choices, and explain why people whose social locations differ from yours might operate from different assumptions and attitudes, and make different choices.

Level 5, Evaluating:

- Discuss whether you believe various religious claims are persuasive, and why or why not.
- Assess your own learning: strengths, areas for improvement, and insights, and evaluate your own performance.

GRADING

Final grades are based on the following:

- Two in-class exams (weight: 20 percent each, or 40 percent total).
- 14 quizzes (2 for each of 7 chapters, 2 lowest scores will be dropped), 40 percent.
- One short paper, graded ✓, ✓+ or ✓-, 10 percent of total.
- Preparation for and participation in class, 10 percent of final grade. This element includes attending class, preparing questions to discuss in class, and contributing actively and thoughtfully to class discussions.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic or Other Difficulties: If you are having academic or personal difficulties that affect your ability to do your work, and/or need information about support services available on campus, please see the professor right away. She will help you find appropriate resources on campus.

Disability: If you have a disability and need an accommodation to help you succeed in class, please let the professor know right away. All such information will be treated as confidential.

A Note from Special Academic Services re: Students with Disabilities:

Alfred University is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact Dr. Aubrey Elmore at the Office of Special Academic Services located in Crandall Hall, or call (607) 871-2148. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Many accommodations require early planning; therefore requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any requests for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

Tutor Services/Requests:

The office of Special Academic Services offers personalized help in the form of individual and group tutoring. Please contact Beth Niles at (607) 871-2148 for more information. Also, contact your instructor for additional support.

Writing Help:

Whether you are having trouble getting started on a writing assignment or need a little help with editing along the way, the Writing Center offers individual assistance to meet your needs. To make an appointment, go to my.alfred.edu/writing and click on the link "sign up here."

Religious Concerns: Students who need to miss class in order to participate in the religious observances of their own traditions may do so, but they must make arrangements with the professor *in advance* to make up any required work.

Athletes: Students who must miss class to participate in athletic events must notify the professor at the beginning of the semester *and* by e-mail at least one week before each class to be missed, and must make arrangements to get notes from class, contribute to class teamwork, and submit assignments timely. The one-week requirement will be waived in case of unscheduled playoff, but you should let the professor know as soon as possible of an expected absence.

Lateness and Absences: You are expected to arrive in class on time and attend all class meetings. If unforeseen circumstances will make you late, please make every effort to notify the professor before class, or ask a fellow student to do so. After the first week of class, you will be allowed **two** unexcused absences. After that, every unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by one increment, e.g., from a B+ to a B. (Missing four classes is equivalent to missing a week of the course.) *It is possible to do all the work and still fail the course because of*

unexcused absences. If you know in advance that you must miss a class, notify the professor by phone or e-mail at least 48 hours in advance. Prearranged absences will not affect your grade (but you should ask classmates or the professor to inform you about class discussions, and complete assigned work timely). If you are ill, contact the professor by phone or e-mail as soon as you know you are too ill to attend class. Do not attend if you have a fever or are contagious.

Mobile Phone: Turn volume off and put it away before class begins. If you send text messages or otherwise use your phone without permission during class, the professor will collect and hold it until the end of class.

Reading Schedule: Complete the assigned readings *before* we begin discussing it in class.

Ground Rules for Class Discussion: The classroom must be a productive and respectful environment for everyone, and religion can be difficult to discuss. Participants hold a wide variety of religious, moral, and political beliefs. In both the academy and society at large, human knowledge and community depend upon our ability to engage in civil discussions of such differences. You should be able to argue for your own positions on the basis of evidence and reason. You are *encouraged* to question or disagree with one another and the professor, respectfully. Insulting others' character, beliefs, or practices is not acceptable.

Because personal integrity is fundamental to both good scholarship and good citizenship, you are also expected to uphold the university's standards for academic and personal integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, or harassment of any kind *will not be tolerated*.

All reference sources must be completely and correctly cited. If you have questions about how to cite a particular type of source, please ask. The instructor may require writing assignments to be submitted to www.turnitin.com before they are submitted to the instructor.

First violations of the Academic Dishonesty policy will result in a failing grade on the assignment. If the violation is severe, or if there is a second violation, it will be reported formally, in writing, to your dean and the University Provost, and will become part of your permanent academic record (unless you appeal and are exonerated). If your dean and the provost receive two formal, written reports of academic dishonesty from one or more instructors, you will be dismissed from the university. Two violations *in this course* will result in automatic failure of the course. *You are expected to inform yourself about and abide by school policies regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and harassment*. If you have questions about these policies, ask the professor right away.

Alfred's Student Code of Conduct may be viewed here:

http://my.alfred.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/student_policies.code_of_conduct_0708.cfm

Alfred's policy on Academic Dishonesty may be viewed here:

http://my.alfred.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/academic_policies.academic_regulation Ug.cfm#700

Other campus policies and resources can be found here:

<http://my.alfred.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/policies.menu.cfm>

Asian Religions Schedule of Readings & Assignments. CHECK AT LEAST WEEKLY. MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Week 1	Jan	Introduction to the Course and to Religious Studies	Read for NEXT class
Tue	22	Babbling, Syllabus, Academic Religious Studies	Read Syllabus, Ac Dis policy
Wed	23	Quiz: Syllabus, Academic Integrity. "Religion": What are we talking about?	Buy Text, Start Ch. 1
Thu	24	"Religion": What are we talking about?	Bring text to class
Fri	25	Intro to the text, Chapter Goals, Efficient Reading, Glossaries, Quizzes	Read Chapter 1 (all)
Week 2	Jan	Basic concepts, Chapter 4 Hinduism	
<i>Mon</i>	28	Complete Ch. 1 M/C, T/F quizzes online by midnight.	
Tue	29	Review Chapter Goals, Review & Reflection Questions; modernization, secularization, globalization, multiculturalism.	
Wed	30	Types of theism, exclusivism --> pluralism (refer to Ch. 1 glossary)	Chapter 4, 83-94
Thu	31	Hinduism: Brahman, karma, samsara, moksha	94-98
Fri	1-Feb	4 Stages, 4 goals, 4 varnas	
Week 3	Feb	Hinduism: Vedas, Yogas, Epics, Puranas, Puja	99-116
Week 4	Feb 14-15	Hinduism: Life-Cycle Rituals, Holidays, Pilgrimage, Historical Development In class Thur. & Fri.: Film: "Shortcut to Nirvana"	116-143
Week 5	Feb.	Finish Hinduism, Begin Ch. 5 Buddhism	
<i>Mon</i>	18	Complete Chapter 4 M/C, T/F quizzes online by midnight.	
Tue	19	Hinduism review	Chapter 5, 145-165
Wed- Fri	20-22	Buddhism basics	Extra credit: See "The Buddha" at Herrick or online
Week 6	Feb- Mar	Chapter 5 Buddhism: 3 Vehicles, Meditation. Women, Zen	166-187

Notice how the pattern of class repeats:

After each Chapter (religious tradition), you will complete 2 quizzes on that Chapter (Multiple Choice and True/False) at the Textbook Companion Website and e-mail the results to: asianreligions@alfred.edu. Then we will begin the next chapter. So at the beginning of each new chapter you will take an in-class quiz on the *previous* one, as a review, as well as doing the reading for the *current* chapter. This will help you make connections among the traditions.

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Week 7	Mar.	Buddhism: Historical Development, Buddhist Modernism	187-209; Sharf: Losing Our Religion
<i>Mon</i>	5	Complete Chapter 5 M/C, T/F quizzes online by midnight.	
Thu	7	Review, comparisons	
Fri	8	Midterm Exam	
Week 8	Mar.	Spring Break	Write precepts Paper
Week 9	Mar.	Chapter 6 Jainism	Chapter 6 (all)
Tue	19	Precepts paper due	
Fri	22	Review/comparisons	
Week 10	Mar.	Chapter 7 Sikhism	Chapter 7 (all)
<i>Mon</i>	25	Complete Chapter 6 M/C, T/F quizzes online by midnight.	
Week 11	Apr.	Chapter 8 Chinese Diffuse Tradition, Confucianism	Chapter 8, 264-274, 279-291, 300-305
<i>Mon</i>	1	Complete Chapter 7 M/C, T/F quizzes online by midnight.	
Week 12	Apr.	Chapter 8 Daoism	Chapter 8, 275-281, 291-300, 305-313
Week 13	Apr.	Chapter 9 Shinto	Chapter 9 (all)
<i>Mon</i>	15	Complete Chapter 8 quizzes online by midnight.	
Week 14	Apr.	Case Study: Departures	
<i>Mon</i>	22	Complete Chapter 9 quizzes online by midnight.	
Week 15	Apr-May	Review	