

INTRODUCTION TO EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS




Z

Religion 3300


University of Georgia

Spring 1999

 Professor Russell Kirkland

 Peabody Hall 221

MW 2:30-3:00 and by appt.

 2-2880

"Were one asked to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto."

C William James (1842-1910), *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902)

❖ THE PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The academic study of religion is a systematic exploration of the visions, values, and activities by which people of past and present have understood and shaped their life-experiences. This course is a course in the subdiscipline known as "the history of religions." The goal of such courses is to promote a mature sensitivity to the world's religious traditions, within their proper historical contexts. Such a course is not intended to steer you either toward or away from any particular tradition. Not is it intended to serve as an element of any spiritual search in which you might be personally engaged. Rather, its goal is for you to achieve an accurate understanding of certain societies' religions on those societies' own terms, and to evaluate those religions in a manner that is both properly critical and properly sympathetic. If you want an experience that is "spiritually fulfilling" to you personally, go to a religious center of your choice and practice there. You are here to study religion. If you wish to practice religion (or, in the more common parlance of America today, to "find yourself," to "deepen your spirituality," or to "attain enlightenment"), you are in the wrong place.

This course (formerly REL 401, "Religion in Asian Cultures") does not pretend to be a comprehensive exploration of religion in all "non-Western" cultures, or even in all Asian cultures. (The course that attempts the broadest such survey is Religion 1002, and its Honors equivalent, Religion 2002H.) This course focuses on certain major traditions that evolved in East Asia, particularly in China and Japan. (Elements of those traditions that evolved in Korea will receive brief notice.) We will begin with the classical traditions of Confucianism and Taoism, which underlie much of later East Asian religion (even elements of East Asian Buddhism, such as "Zen"). Then we will turn our attention to Buddhism, which originated in India (ca. 500 BCE) and was later introduced into China (1st century CE) and into Japan (6th century CE). We will then examine the Japanese tradition of Shinto, and focus more specifically upon the development of new Japanese forms of Buddhism.

For some students, this course will fulfill some of the functions of RELI 1002: it (1) will introduce many elements of the religions of East Asia, (2) will identify key concerns and values of each tradition, and (3) will work to undo certain the misunderstandings about Asian religions that flourish in modern times (in Asian and the West alike). But this course will also differ from RELI 1002, in several important respects. In addition to the narrower geographic focus, this course requires more intensive reading of major Asian texts (in translation), and it has more specific thematic goals. First, it

emphasizes the historical and cultural processes by which specific traditions evolved, focussing (1) upon the interplay of those traditions, and (2) upon the consequent evolution of new forms within each tradition. In particular, we will explore (1) the diverse religious developments in Later Taoism, and (2) certain new East Asian forms of Buddhism, especially Ch'an ("Zen") and Pure Land. We will also give very careful attention to the "post-colonialistic" approaches that are beginning to help us overcome inherited misinterpretations of the religions of East Asia. In addition, this course is designed to provide a broad and solid foundation from which students may pursue more intensive study of specific East Asian religions in the pertinent 4000-level courses.

You are welcome to chat with the instructor after class, during office hours, or at other arranged times. The time before class, however, is **not** a good time to consult with the instructor. Feel free to leave a voice-mail message (☎ 2-2880) at any time.

TEXTS (Available at the bookstore)

1. Required:

Chinese Religions, by Julia Ching

The Taoist Experience: An Anthology, edited by Livia Kohn

Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings, translated by Burton Watson

Zen Enlightenment: Origins and Meaning, by Heinrich Dumoulin.

2. Recommended:

A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, translated by Wing-tsit Chan

The Buddhist Religion, by Richard Robinson and Willard Johnson (4th edition: 1997)

Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity, by Byron Earhart (3rd edition).


Other assigned readings will be made available (1) on reserve (marked below thus *), (2) on the instructor's webpage (<http://www.uga.edu/religion/rk>), or (3) as handouts. Recommended readings are listed below in square brackets.

Beware trying to use the internet as an educational tool, particularly in regard to non-Western religions. Most of what you will find there using ordinary search methods is garbage. In academic terms, the quality of what you find about non-Western religions on the web is far inferior to the quality of what you find in the average public library, and public libraries are virtually useless for those involved in higher education. With a very few exceptions, responsible scholars do **not** put their research on the web. Such solid and reliable material appears only in your university **LIBRARY**, in scholarly books and journals. So **do not attempt to "do research" on the web!** Your instructor will recommend websites that may be useful in certain ways for studying non-Western religions, but unless instructed otherwise, you should **plan to do all of your research in your university library.**

REQUIREMENTS

 Regular class attendance [10% of course grade]

 Timely completion of **all** required readings (reflected in your tests and papers)

 A midterm exam [30% of course grade]

 An essay on an assigned topic [30% of course grade]

 A final essay exam [30% of course grade].

At the end of the course, borderline grades are usually rounded up; in such cases, the instructor may take into account various elements of your performance, such as the consistency of your performance, the constructiveness of your class participation, etc.

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS "CHINESE/JAPANESE RELIGION"?

The Academic Study of Religion

"On the Academic Study of Religion in American Colleges and Universities" (American Academy of Religion Task Force Report, extracts; HANDOUT)

Issues in the Study of Asian Religions

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 1-9; Byron Earhart, *Japanese Religion*: 1-5

PERSPECTIVES ON ANCIENT CHINESE RELIGION

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: [15-22] 22-28 [28-32] 33-35, 38-39, 45-46, 49-50

SELF, SOCIETY, AND LIFE IN THE WORLD:

THOUGHT AND RELIGION IN EARLY CHINA

SELF AND SOCIETY: CONFUCIANISM AND MOHISM

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 51-69

Confucius: Chan, *Source Book*: 18-48: *The Analects*

Mo-tzu's Criticism of Confucius:

Kirkland, "The Book of *Mozi (Mo-tzu)*" (on webpage); and Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 72-77

Mencius: Chan, *Source Book*: 51-60, 65-66 (2A:6), 72-74 (3B.9 - 4A:10), 75 (4A:17), 78-79 (7A:1-5), 80 (7A:15), 82 (7B:31)

Hsün-tzu: Chan, *Source Book*: [116-24] 128-35

Confucianism, Heaven, and History: Kirkland, "Tung Chung-shu" (on webpage)

Confucianism Today : Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 82-84

 ***Film***: "A World of Ideas: Bill Moyers with Tu Wei-ming"

SELF, SOCIETY, AND THE NATURAL ORDER: CLASSICAL TAOISM

Kirkland, "The *Tao te ching*," "Varieties of 'Taoism' in Ancient China," et al. (on webpage)

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 85-96

Chan, *Source Book*: 139-76: The *Tao te ching* (Better translations: Henricks, D. C. Lau)

Chan, *Source Book*: 177-79: Readings from *Chuang-tzu* [Watson, *Chuang Tzu*]

SELF-PERFECTION THROUGH INSIGHT AND DISCIPLINE: LATER TAOISM

Kirkland, "Taoism," and other materials (on webpage)

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 102-4, 107-116, 117-18

Kohn, *The Taoist Experience*: as assigned

DOMESTICATING ALIEN PERSPECTIVES: **BUDDHISM AND ITS NEW FORMS IN CHINA**

THE WESTERN STUDY OF BUDDHISM

Robinson/Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (4th ed.): 1-6, 297-306 [306-9] 309-10

THE BUDDHIST TRADITION: THE INDIAN ROOTS

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 121-24

Robinson/Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (4th ed.): 7-20, 30-34 [34-62] 82-86, 99-104 [105-9]

Highly recommended: * Kitagawa/Cummings, *Buddhism and Asian History*: 3-6 [15-17, 18-20, 23-26] 51-57, 60-61, 71-76, 77-81 [83-87, 215-38, 341-49] 365-71, 395-405

THE INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM INTO CHINA

Robinson/Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (4th ed.): 170-81 [186-96]

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 124-29 [132]

[* Kitagawa/Cummings, *Buddhism and Asian History*: 139-49, 257-65]

BECOMING A BUDDHA: DISCIPLINE AND "ENLIGHTENMENT" IN THE CH'AN TRADITION

Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions*: 138-41

Kirkland, "Zen's Debt to Confucianism" (on webpage)

Robinson/Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (4th ed.): [86-90] 199-210

Dumoulin, *Zen Enlightenment*: [3-13] 25-76

Chan, *Source Book*: [430-40: The Platform Sutra]

444-49 (On the Encounter with the Ch'an Master)

RELIGION IN JAPAN:

THE HARMONIZATION OF INDIGENOUS AND FOREIGN TRADITIONS

SHINTŌ AND JAPANESE RELIGION

Earhart, *Japanese Religion*: [1-17] 29-37, 68-71

JAPAN'S ENCOUNTER WITH BUDDHISM

* Kitagawa/Cummings, *Buddhism and Asian History*: 159-162 (top)

Earhart, *Japanese Religion*: 39-45

JAPAN'S DOMESTICATION OF BUDDHISM

Robinson/Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (4th ed.): 247-50

* Kitagawa/Cummings, *Buddhism and Asian History*: 164-72

[Earhart, *Japanese Religion*: 77-92]

THE ZEN TRADITION IN JAPAN: "WHAT ENLIGHTENMENT??"

👤 **Film:** "*The Land of the Disappearing Buddha*" (from *The Long Search*)

Earhart, *Japanese Religion*: 97-104

Dumoulin, *Zen Enlightenment*: 77-84, 88-101 [102-124] 125-38, 154-56

[* Sato, et al., *Unsui: A Diary of Zen Monastic Life*]

PURE LAND BUDDHISM: THE BUDDHISM THAT WESTERNERS IGNORE

Robinson/Johnson, *The Buddhist Religion* (4th ed.): [109-113] 113-15, 196-98, 253-55