

Religion and Social Change in Contemporary China and Japan

Rel 4936 (1304) & Rel 5338 (024A), Spring 2013

Prof. Mario Poceski (Religion Dept., University of Florida)



Class Time & Location

Mon, period 4 (10:40–11:30), & Wed, periods 4-5 (10:40-12:35), MAT 105.

Office Hours & Contact Information

Mon, 12:00–1:45 pm, and by appointment (1/7–4/22); 132 Anderson Hall; tel: (352) 273-2937; email: mpoceski@ufl.edu (to be used for all written communications); webpage: www.clas.ufl.edu/users/mpoceski/.

Course Description

The seminar examines the historical trajectories, essential features, and key roles of religion in contemporary East Asia, especially in relation to the major political transitions and social changes of the recent decades in China and Japan.

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites, although students will benefit if they have taken relevant courses such as *Chinese Religions*, *Asian Religions*, *Chinese Buddhism*, or *Introduction to Buddhism*.

Requirements

- Reading of assigned materials, class attendance, and participation in discussions (20% of the final grade).
- Class presentations, reading responses, and leading of discussions (10%).
- Paper abstract and annotated bibliography (10%), due by 4/3 (10 am).
- Research paper (60%), due by 4/22 (10 am).

Additional Graduate Students Requirements

In addition to the basic requirements, for graduate students there are extra expectations and requirements:

- Longer written assignments (see below).
- Higher expectations in regard to level of academic performance, including depth of critical analysis, clarity of presentation, and quality of writing.

Required Texts

Students need to have their own copies of the first four books on the list. The appropriate selections from the other volumes will be made available digitally, via e-Learning.

- ✚ Overmyer, Daniel L., ed. *Religion in China Today*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- ✚ Madsen, Richard. *Democracy's Dharma: Religious Renaissance and Political Development in Taiwan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- ✚ Reader, Ian. *Religion in Contemporary Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991.
- ✚ Covell, Stephen Grover. *Japanese Temple Buddhism: Worldliness in a Religion of Renunciation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.

- Poceski, Mario. *Introducing Chinese Religions*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009: 239-72.
- Goossaert, Vincent. "The social organization of religious communities in the twentieth century." Palmer, David A., et al., eds. *Chinese Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011: 172-190.
- Laliberté, André. "Contemporary issues in state-religion relations." Palmer, David A., et al., eds. *Chinese Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011: 191-208.
- Bell, Daniel. *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008: 3-18.
- Palmer, David A. *Qigong Fever: Body, Science, and Utopia in China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007: 1-28.
- Chang, Maria Hsia. *Falun Gong: The End of Days*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004: 60-95.
- Kohn, Livia. *Introducing Daoism*. London and New York: Routledge 2009: 188-204.

Recommended Texts

- Poceski, Mario. *Introducing Chinese Religions*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Ellwood, Robert S. *Introducing Japanese Religion*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Kasulis, Thomas P. *Shinto: The Way Home*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.



Course Schedule and Discussion Topics (Tentative)

W 1 <small>Jan 7 & 9</small>	Introduction [Poceski 239-72]
Part 1: China	
W 2 <small>Jan 14 & 16</small>	Religion, Politics, and Society [Overmyer 1-31, 89-106; Goossaert 172-190; Laliberté 191-208]
W 3 <small>Jan 23</small>	Confucianism and Popular Religion [Overmyer 32-88; Bell 3-18]
W 4 <small>Jan 28 & 30</small>	Islam and Christianity [Overmyer 145-198]
W 5 <small>Feb 4 & 6</small>	Messianic Movements and Healing Cults [Overmyer 199-214; Palmer 1-28; Chang 60-95]
W 6 <small>Feb 11 & 13</small>	Buddhism and Daoism [Overmyer 107-144; Kohn 188-204; Madsen xiii-xxvi]
W 7 <small>Feb 18 & 20</small>	Religious and Political Change in Taiwan I [Madsen 1-84]
W 8 <small>Feb 25 & 27</small>	Religious and Political Change in Taiwan II [Madsen 85-157]
W 9	Spring Break
Part 2: Japan	
W 10 <small>Mar 11 & 13</small>	Traditions, Frameworks, and Perspectives [Reader xi-76]
W 11 <small>Mar 18 & 20</small>	Practices and Institutions [Reader 77-167]
W 12 <small>Mar 25 & 27</small>	Old Needs and New Religions [Reader 168-243]
W 13 <small>Apr 1 & 3</small>	Temple Buddhism in Japan [Covell 1-89]
W 14 <small>Apr 8 & 10</small>	Priests, Money, and Funerals [Covell 90-197]
W 15 <small>Apr 15 & 17</small>	Movie week: <i>The Funeral</i> (Osōshiki お葬式; UF video 719, 2336)
W 16 <small>Apr 22 & 24</small>	Presentation of student research



Grading

- The final grade will be based on each student's individual performance and his/her fulfillment of the course requirements, as stipulated in the syllabus.
- The same course rules and expectations apply equally to all students—no student is entitled to special consideration or unique treatment. Other extraneous or irrelevant factors, including student's personal desires or expectations about grades, will not be taken into account. Students should also not expect retroactive changes or other dubious forms of grade modification.
- Students should take all assignments and other course requirements very seriously. There will be no opportunities to do additional work for extra credit or better grade.
- No incomplete grades will be given, except in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the students should contact the instructor no later than a week before the last day of classes.
- Final grades will be computed on this scale: A = 100–94%; A- = 93.9–90%; B+ = 89.9–87%; B = 86.9–83%; B- = 82.9–80%; C+ = 79.9–77%; C = 76.9–73%; C- = 72.9–70%; D+ = 69.9–67%; D = 66.9–63%; D- = 62.9–60%; E = 59.9% or less.

Online e-Learning System

- The syllabus and other course materials are posted online via UF's e-Learning system [lss.at.ufl.edu].
- Students should not write to the instructor by using the email feature in e-Learning; instead, they should send written communications directly on the email address given above.

Attendance



- **Attendance** is **mandatory** for all students, starting with the first day of classes. Students who have problems with class attendance or punctuality should think twice before enrolling in this course.
- Active and informed **participation** in classroom discussions is expected from all students. In order to facilitate that, students are expected to read carefully all assigned readings before coming to class.
- **Absences** from class will have adverse effect on the final grade. After missing one (1) hour of instruction (unexcused), each subsequent unexcused hour will lead to an automatic 1% **reduction** of the final grade; there is no limit to this kind of grade deduction (i.e. student can fail the course due to a poor attendance record).
- Valid excuses for missed classes must be submitted *in writing* and in a timely manner, along with pertinent documentation (such as note from a doctor). Written excuses for planned absences—participation in athletic meetings or religious observances, for example—must be submitted in advance.
- Coming late, leaving early, being inattentive, and other forms of disruptive behavior can be counted as unexcused absences. For more on the university's attendance policies, see the Undergraduate Catalog.

Written Assignments

- When students are responsible for leading weekly discussion, they have to prepare a 300 (or 450 for grad students) word summary and response to the assigned reading(s). The **reading response** must be posted on e-Learning by 10am on Monday (the day of the pertinent class discussion). It should contain a brief summary of the relevant reading(s), student's critical response, and several topics for class discussion.

- The **abstract** and **bibliography** must clearly state the topic—i.e. provide provisional title—of the final paper. It should contain a short –150 words (250 for grad students)—abstract of the paper and at least 10 titles (15 for grad students) of academic publications pertinent to the student’s research topic, each of them annotated with a short summary of contents and a note on how it is relevant to the stated topic.
- For undergraduate students, the **final paper** should be 3,000-3,500 words, inclusive of notes and citations. Graduate papers should be 50% longer. There should be a bibliography at the end of the paper.
- Students are welcome to bring early drafts of their papers and ask for feedback/advice, but they have to do that in person during office hours.
- All written assignments must be submitted in **MS Word** and must follow standard academic format. Use standard font, such as Calibri 12, for all assignments, with 1.5 spacing and 1” margins. Do not forget to include paper title, course name, instructor name, date, and page numbers.
- Each written assignment must be **submitted digitally**, via e-Learning, before the final deadline.
- Students can receive bonus points for early submissions: 2 points for the final paper, if submitted by April 10 (10 am), and 1 bonus point for the abstract and bibliography, if submitted by March 27 (10am).
- **No late submissions** will be accepted under any circumstances. Students are encouraged to avoid procrastination and make early submissions, ideally at least a week before the final deadline.

Classroom Conduct

- All students are required to come to class on time, as late arrivals (and early departures) are very disruptive.
- Students are expected to be courteous and respectful, and abstain from disruptive behavior in the classroom that adversely affects others and is contrary to the pursuit of knowledge. Examples of such behavior include talking with someone, displaying active disinterest in the class (e.g. sleeping or inappropriate computer use), or putting down others. Phones should also be turned off during class. Offending students will be asked to leave.
- It is hoped that there will be lively debates and informed discussions. While there is room for individual opinions and disagreements, they have to be expressed in ways that are appropriate for an academic setting.

Office Hours and Communication

- Students are encouraged to come to office hours, especially if they have questions or need help with the course materials. The instructor will also be glad to discuss all relevant topics that, due to time constraints, are not covered in class in much detail.
- Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor directly and in person, preferably during office hours. Pleading ignorance or lack of common sense are not valid excuses for failures to fulfill requirements or abide by course policies.



Extracurricular

- The assigned readings and other seminar requirements, as described in this syllabus, are a basic minimum. Students (especially graduate students) are encouraged to take personal initiative to further broaden their

knowledge and improve their academic skills by doing additional readings, including materials written in Chinese and Japanese.

Plagiarism and Cheating

- Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties.
- For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure (posted online by the Dean of Students Office).

Disability

- A student who has a documented disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor in person at the beginning of the course so that appropriate arrangements may be made.
- The student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor, as early as possible. All arrangements for changes pertaining to the exams must be made at least one week in advance.

Other Notices

- Registration in the course implies that each student enters a contractual agreement with the instructor, whereas he/she is accountable for fulfilling all course requirements and adhering to the course policies.
- Students are responsible for knowing and following all schedules and instructions contained in this syllabus, as well as any other instructions given in class (remember, attendance is not optional).

