

# DePaul University

*Department of Religious Studies*

## Syllabus

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**245-83-501: Religion in Japanese History, Society & Culture**  
**Loop TuTh 11:50-1:20**  
**Winter Quarter, 1999**  
**Michael Bathgate**

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Course Description: The religions of Japan represent a diverse configuration of religious institutions, practices and beliefs, including traditions indigenous to Japan, as well as Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism from China, and (more recently) Christianity from the West. This course will provide an overview of Japanese religious history, from the earliest historical records to the present. It will take into account not only the social, political and cultural contexts within which these various religious traditions have come into contact, but also the ways in which they have interacted with one another (sometimes in mutual support, sometimes in competition) to produce the characteristic religious landscape of Japan.

Course Objectives: The purpose of this course is to assist students in achieving a basic familiarity with the religious history of Japan, taking into account the persistent themes of religious pluralism and interaction, as well as the interrelation between elite religion and folk religion. More generally, this course is intended to assist students in developing those intellectual virtues (including tolerance and humility, but also rigorous critical thinking skills) necessary to explore, appreciate, and understand ways of thinking and living other than their own. Finally, through class interaction and written assignments, it will provide an opportunity for students to develop the expressive communication skills necessary to formulate and engage complex issues.

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Course Requirements: Final grades will be calculated against a 400-point scale, based upon the following requirements:

- (1) Satisfactory completion of three take-home writing assignments on assigned topics. These include:
  - a. two short (one page) essays (50 points each),
  - b. one longer (3-5 pages) final paper (100 points).

All writing assignments will be graded with regard to content, style, and clarity of thought. Please see the

"Guidelines for Papers" at the end of this syllabus for other requirements of a successful written assignment.

(2) Satisfactory completion of two in-class examinations. Each exam is worth 100 points.

(3) Regular, punctual attendance and reasonable participation in class discussions. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned material, and are responsible for any material missed due to absence. Strictly speaking, attendance and class participation will not be part of your grade, but they will seriously affect your ability to do well on exams and writing assignments. They are also the mark of a good student, and will certainly influence the disposition of the instructor—an important factor if one's final score is on the boundary between letter grades.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the customary 10 percent divisions. That is:

A=90% to 100% (or 360+ points) B=80% to 89% (or 320+ points)

C=70% to 79% (or 280+ points) D=60% to 69% (or 240+ points)

Required Texts:

(1) Robert S. Ellwood and Richard Pilgrim. *Japanese Religion: A Cultural Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985.

(2) Reading Packet - Contains translations of primary texts from a variety of sources, as well as useful secondary material covering topics not found in Ellwood and Pilgrim. The copy center will assess a fee to cover the cost of duplication and binding.

Office Hours: I will be available after each class to speak with students, but students are encouraged to contact me by phone or by email to arrange an appointment at another time if necessary. If you have any questions about scheduling, grading, assignments, the course in general, or if you simply would like to chat, please don't hesitate to let me know. Remember that it is the responsibility of any student who is unsure of the grading scale or course requirements to ask the instructor for clarification.

## **PROVISIONAL COURSE SCHEDULE**

Please prepare for each class by reading the materials assigned according to the following schedule. All essays are to be submitted in class on the due date listed. Any essays submitted after that time will be considered late, and will have points deducted.

As the semester unfolds, it may become necessary to modify the schedule of readings and/or the due dates for assignments. Any such changes will be announced at least a week in advance. Remember that it is the responsibility of all students to keep abreast of any such schedule changes and to prepare their readings and/or assignments accordingly.

### Introduction to the Course

Tues, 1/5 Introduction to methods and issues.

Readings: *Japanese Religions*, pp. 1-17.

### Earliest Themes in Japanese Religion

Thurs, 1/7 Of Gods and Humanity

Readings: Packet, pp. 2-4.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 18-23.

Tues, 1/12 Ancient Japanese Mythology

Readings: Packet, pp. 5-8.

### Continental Influence I: Introduction to the Chinese Religious World view

Thurs, 1/14 The Tao of Society: Confucianism

Readings: Packet, pp. 9-19.

Tues, 1/19 The Tao of Heaven and Earth: Taoism and Chinese Popular Worship

Readings: Packet, pp. 20-22.

### Continental Influence II: Introduction to the Buddhist Religious World view

Thurs, 1/21 The Buddha and His Teachings

Readings: Packet, pp. 23-41.

Tues, 1/26 Buddhism After Buddha

FIRST ESSAY DUE

### The Power of Foreign Religions

Thurs, 1/28 Religion and the Developing Japanese State

Readings: Packet, pp. 42-47, 52-53.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 23-27, 50-53, 133-136.

Tues, 2/2 Buddhism in Nara

Readings: Packet, pp. 48-51, 54.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 27-31.

### Development of Japanese Buddhism

Thurs, 2/4 Japan as Buddhist

Readings: Packet, pp. 55-64.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 31-35, 54-56.

Tues, 2/9 Buddhism as Japanese

Readings: Packet, pp. 65-71.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 56-60, 105-107.

Thurs, 2/11 EXAM ONE

### Japanese Folk Religion

Tues, 2/16 Religion outside the Capital

Readings: *Japanese Religions*, pp. 75-77, 122-125.

Thurs, 2/18 The Folk Religious World view

Readings: *Japanese Religions*, pp. 96-104.

### Medieval Religion

Tues, 2/23 Popular Buddhism I: Pure Land Buddhism

SECOND ESSAY DUE

Readings: Packet, p. 72.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 35-39, 60-64.

Thurs, 2/25 Popular Buddhism II: Nichiren

Readings: Packet, pp. 73-76.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 77-80, 119-122, 139-141.

Tues, 3/2 Warrior Rule, Zen and the Confucian Revival

Readings: *Japanese Religions*, pp. 39-42, 117-119, 136-139.

### Religion in Pre-modern and Modern Japan

Thurs, 3/4 Tokugawa Religious Ideology

Readings: Packet, p. 77.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 42-46.

Tues, 3/9 Meiji Religious Ideology

Readings: Packet, pp. 78-79, 89-98.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 47-49.

Thurs, 3/11 Japanese Religion Today

FINAL ESSAY DUE

Readings: Packet, pp. 80-88.

*Japanese Religions*, pp. 49-50, 126-133, 142-145.

March 15-20 FINAL EXAM WEEK

EXAM TWO (Time and Date TBA)

All essay assignments are to be prepared according to the following guidelines with respect to style, content and submission. Please read these guidelines carefully; deviations will be penalized.

Content: Papers are assigned to encourage students to think about the material covered in class. Since they are not research papers, students will not be required to consult additional materials.

All papers will be written in response to an assigned topic, and a substantial part of your score will involve your ability to consider this topic clearly and concisely.

Language: A combination of analytical rigor and cultural sensitivity is an important criterion of value in scholarly presentations. The language and overall tone of student papers should reflect the student's awareness of historical tensions and continuities within the material under consideration while avoiding parochialism or chauvinism. Furthermore, as an enterprise in modern scholarly writing, all student work should eschew overly colloquial or inappropriately gender-exclusive language. If you find yourself unsure of a style of argument or expression in your paper, consult the instructor.

Format: All papers should be typed, double-spaced, with one inch margins, in 12-point "Times New Roman" or a comparable serif font. This works out to approximately 300 words per page.

Each page should have the student's name and the essay number in the upper right-hand corner. Every page after the first must be numbered at the bottom of the page. For example:

Murasaki Shikibu

Essay #1

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No other titles, cover pages or report jackets are necessary. Papers not adhering to these format requirements will have points deducted.

Length: Essays are intended to evaluate students' ability to argue effectively on an assigned topic, not their ability to produce long lists of facts. Students are encouraged to be concise, employing evidence sufficient to make their point without adding excess material for its own sake. Papers containing large amounts of material irrelevant to their argument (or which collect evidence together without any clear argument) will not receive as high a score as papers which present facts that are structured around clearly elaborated arguments. At the same time, arguments put forward without any evidence at all cannot be distinguished from mere supposition.

In the end, each paper must strike its own balance between verbal economy and the need to support an argument.

Citation: Should you decide to quote a work other than your own, you must identify the quoted material by means of a citation, in parentheses, at the end of the quote. An adequate citation must include the name of the author or editor, the year of publication, and page number(s) cited. For example: (Ellwood and Pilgrim, 1985: 25) If you should find it necessary to quote material other than those books assigned in class, you must also include a list of those materials at the end of your paper, under the heading "List of Works Cited". Each listing must include the name of the author or editor, the title of the book, the location and name of the publisher, and the year of publication.

For example:

Stryk, Lucien (ed.). *World of the Buddha: An Introduction to Buddhist Literature*. New York:

Grove Press, 1968.

Material taken verbatim from another source must be identified by quotation marks or placed in an offset block quote. Original ideas and arguments from other works must also be cited. If a student presents work other than his or her own (whether from a textbook or the work of another student) without proper identification and citation, it will be considered plagiarism, and treated accordingly.

If you are unsure about these guidelines, consult the instructor.

Submission: Papers should be submitted in class on the assigned date. Any papers submitted after that time will be considered late, and will have points deducted from the total score. Under no circumstances will papers be accepted after the due date for the following assignment.

Rewrites: Some papers may benefit from revision, and may be rewritten. Revised papers will be accepted until the due date for the following assignment, and the revised score will be entered in place of the original score for the assignment. Since a revision is not always appropriate, you must consult the instructor before revising your essay.