

RELIGIONS OF ASIA
RELS A310 and A748
TR 4:55 - 6:10
Bobet 212
Spring I 2006

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OBJECTIVE: To come to an understanding of the major religious traditions of Asia by studying their histories, worldviews, methods of achieving their ultimate goals, ethics, artistic expressions, and social institutions. This will include a study of original classical and popular texts (in translation). Popular expressions in the Asian traditions studied will be examined as well as classical teachings, philosophies, theologies, and organized worship cults. Digital images will be shown in class to illustrate the different religions studied and their art. Since this will be the first semester after the Katrina disaster in New Orleans, the research assignment for term papers on Asian religions will be religious responses to disasters. [See *Religious Studies Dept. goals I, II, III, IV.*]

TEXTBOOKS:

Donald S. Lopez, ed., *Religions of Asia in Practice* (Princeton, 2002). LOPEZ
James Fieser and John Powers, *Scriptures of the World's Religions* (McGraw Hill, 1998).
FIESER & POWERS.

ARTICLES ON BLACKBOARD:

Articles from John L. Esposito, ed., *The Oxford History of Islam* (Oxford, 1999).
ESPOSITO.

- T Jan. 10 INTRODUCTION
definition of key terms; description of Basic Religion
- R Jan. 12 HINDU TRADITION - The Vedas and Vedic Basic Religion
LOPEZ, 3-11.
FIESER & POWERS, pp. 1-4, 7-18.
- T Jan. 17 HINDU TRADITION - The Upanishads, Yoga, and Social Structures
LOPEZ, 11-15, 19-20.
LOPEZ: Patrick Olivelle, "Ascetic Withdrawal or Social Engagement," 122-35.
FIESER & POWERS, 4-7, 18-25, 26-30, 44-53
- R Jan. 19 HINDU TRADITION - Classical Hinduism: Theism, Theology, Tantra
LOPEZ, 20-30, 36-41.
LOPEZ: Tony K. Stewart, "The Exemplary Devotion of the 'Servant of Hari,'" 136-49; Richard H. Davis, "The Origin of Linga Worship," 150-61.
FIESER & POWERS, 25-26, 30-44
- T Jan. 24 HINDU TRADITION – Lived Hinduism, Women, Contemporary Developments
& Issues
LOPEZ, 43-50.
LOPEZ: Rachel Fell McDermott, "Bengali Songs to Kali," 51-72; Ann Grodzins
Gold, "Mother Ten's Stories," 94-108

- R Jan. 26 HINDU TRADITION
VIDEO: "330 Million Gods," (50 min.); review for exam
- T Jan. 31 QUIZ #1 (Hinduism)
EXAM #1 (50 pts.) - Hinduism - 1 discussion question and 5 identifications
- R Feb. 2 BUDDHIST TRADITION – Theravada
LOPEZ, 165-96.FIESER & POWERS, 73-81, 81-98.
- T Feb. 7 No class.
- R Feb. 9 **OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TERM PAPER ARE DUE. (5 pts. will be deducted from the paper's final grade if the outline and bibliography are late.)**
BUDDHIST TRADITION – Theravada
LOPEZ: Donald K. Swearer, "Consecrating the Buddha," 197-205; Charles Hallisey, "Auspicious Things," 237-51;
VIDEO: "Footprints of the Buddha" (50 min.)
- T Feb. 14 QUIZ #2 (Theravada Buddhism)
BUDDHIST TRADITION - Mahayana – philosophy & practice
LOPEZ: Luis O. Gomez, "The Whole Universe as a Sutra," 216-21; T. Griffith Foulk, "Daily Life in the Assembly," 252-69.
FIESER & POWERS, 98-108.
- R Feb. 16 BUDDHIST TRADITION - Mahayana - Pure Land, Zen, folk Buddhism
LOPEZ: Sallie B. King, "Awakening Stories of Zen Buddhist Women," 270-81; Daniel B. Stevenson, "Death-Bed Testimonials of the Pure Land Faithful," 282-92; Chun-fang Yu, "A Sutra Promoting the White-robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons," 350-58; Ian Reader, "Contemporary Zen Buddhist Tracts for the Laity: Grassroots Buddhism in Japan," 713-24.
FIESER & POWERS, 116-18, 120-23.
- T Feb. 21 BUDDHIST TRADITION - Mahayana – Vajrayana
LOPEZ: Donald S. Lopez, "A Prayer for Deliverance from Rebirth," 556-71; Donald S. Lopez, "A Prayer Flag for Tara," 583-87
FIESER & POWERS, 109-16.
VIDEO: "Kalachakra: The Wheel of Time" (30 min.)
- R Feb. 23 QUIZ #3 (Mahayana Buddhism)
EXAM # 2 (50 pts) - Buddhist Tradition - 1 discussion question and 5 identifications
- T Feb. 28 NO CLASS – MARDI GRAS.
- R Mar. 2 CHINESE RELIGIOUS TRADITION VIDEO: "A Question of Balance" (50 min.)

[F Mar. 3 M-T grades due]

- T Mar. 7 CHINESE RELIGIOUS TRADITION - Basic Religion and Confucianism
 LOPEZ, 295-99.
 LOPEZ: Donald Harper, "Spellbinding," 376-85; Stephan Bokenkamp, "Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices," 386-95; Ellen Neskar, "Shrines to Local Former Worthies," 405-17. FIESER & POWERS, 147-73.
- R Mar. 9 **FIRST DRAFT OF TERM PAPER IS DUE. (5 pts. will be deducted from the final grade of a late paper.)**
CHINESE RELIGIOUS TRADITION – Daoism
 LOPEZ, 299-304
 LOPEZ: Livia Kohn, "Laozi: Ancient Philosopher, Master of Immortality, and God," 330-41; Paul W. Kroll, "Body Gods and Inner Vision: *The Scripture of the Yellow Court*," 359-65. FIESER & POWERS, 175-209.
- T Mar. 14 CHINESE RELIGIOUS TRADITION – Popular Religious Expressions
 LOPEZ: Terry F. Kleeman, "The Lives and Teachings of the Divine Lord of Zitong," 342-49; Jean DeBernardi, "Teachings of a Spirit Medium," 366-75; Valerie Hansen, "The Law of the Spirits," 396-404; Catherine Bell, "Stories from an Illustrated Explanation of the *Tract of the Most Exalted on Action and Response*," 439-47.
- R Mar. 16 QUIZ #4 (Chinese tradition)
ISLAM – Origins & Scriptures (Quran & Hadith)
 FIESER & POWERS, 398-441.
- T Mar. 21 ISLAM – Sharia, Shiite Islam, Sufism, and South Asia
 LOPEZ, 30-36
 FIESER & POWERS, 442-55
- R Mar. 23 ISLAM – Women
 LOPEZ: Marcia Hermansen, "Women's Celebration of Muhammad's Birth," 73-78.
 VIDEO: "A Veiled Revolution" (30 min.)
 Discussion of texts in FIESER & POWERS on women.
- T Mar. 28 ISLAM – Radical Islamist Movement
 BLACKBOARD: David Cook, "Suicide Attacks or 'Martyrdom Operations' in Contemporary Jihad Literature" (pdf format, 38 pages)
 VIDEO: "Behind the Veil: Afghan Women under Fundamentalism" (26 min.)
- R Mar. 30 EXAM #3-A (25 pts) - Chinese Religious Tradition
- T Apr. 4 Quiz #5 (Islam)
 EXAM #3-B (25 pts.) - Islam
- R Apr. 6 **FINAL DRAFT OF TERM PAPER IS DUE. TERM PAPERS MUST BE UPLOADED TO BLACKBOARD BY THIS DATE. (5 pts. will be deducted from the final grade of a late paper.) - TURN IN 2 HARD COPIES OF YOUR PAPER (One will be graded and returned to you.)**
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

- T Apr. 11 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
- R Apr. 13 NO CLASS – EASTER HOLIDAY
- T Apr. 18 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
- R Apr. 20 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Review.

EXAM #4 (50 pts.): on student term papers
Thursday, April 27, 4:30 – 6:30

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The 4 exams (50 pts. each) count two-thirds of the final grade. The remaining third of the final grade will consist of the term paper (40 pts.), class discussion (20 pts.), participation on the discussion board (20 pts.), and 4 true-false quizzes counting 5 pts. each (20 pts.).

GRADING SCALE: A - 92%; B - 83%; C - 71%; D - 65%.

There will be no make-up exams except in cases of severe illness or if there is a family emergency. In either case, the instructor should be called at once.

There will be no make-up quizzes. A total of five quizzes will be given. If all the quizzes are taken, at the end of the semester one of these will be dropped and the scores of four quizzes will be applied to the final grade. If the student misses a quiz, that will be the one dropped. If the student misses additional quizzes, the student's grade will be diminished by the number of quizzes missed.

Discussion in this course is expected and encouraged. Participating in class discussion demonstrates to the instructor that the student is reading and engaging with the assignments. The discussion grade will also take into account the student's attendance record. The discussion grade will include a 10-minute presentation of the student's research and class discussion of that research at the end of the semester.

A discussion board will be set up for continued discussion outside of class. Students should feel free to initiate threads, post items of interest, such as news articles, ask questions, and express their opinions on the discussion board. Full participation on the discussion board should involve at least three postings per week.

The research paper of a graduate student should be at least 20 pages typed and double-spaced; an undergraduate research paper should be 10-12 pages typed and double-spaced. The instructor must approve the student's term paper topic. Students are to select a topic relating to Asian religions that explores the theme of religious responses to disasters. These disasters could be the tsunami in the Indian ocean and southeast Asia, wars in Afghanistan (and even Iraq, although this is the Middle East), terrorism in Sri Lanka or elsewhere, the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and/or Nagasaki, or the recent hurricanes that devastated the American gulf coast. The topic must be one for which there are adequate resources for a substantive research paper. If the responses of members of a local congregation are studied, students will need to include interviews in their bibliography and cite them in the paper.

On the date that the term paper is due, the paper must be uploaded to Blackboard (in rich text format) where other students can access it. On the date the term paper is due, two hard copies must be turned into the instructor. One of these will be graded and returned to the students. Papers that are not uploaded to Blackboard and for which two hard copies are not given to the instructor on the due date will be considered late. Five points will be deducted from the final grade of late term papers.

A bibliography and outline of the term paper are required well before the date the term paper is due. Students are to keep the instructor informed of their progress on the research paper. A rough draft of the term paper is required to be turned in for comments by the instructor. The final draft of the term paper is due at the end of the semester. **Five points will be deducted from the grade of a paper when the deadlines below are not kept.**

- R Feb. 9 OUTLINE & BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TERM PAPER IS DUE.**
- R Mar. 9 FIRST DRAFT OF TERM PAPER IS DUE.**
- R Apr. 6 FINAL DRAFT OF TERM PAPER IS DUE.**