RS 380OL: Asian Religions Online

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Office Hours: TTH 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a general survey online course that introduces students to the major religious traditions of the Asia. Through posted lectures, discussions, assigned readings and papers, students will gain a broad and basic knowledge of the Asian religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto and Shamanism. Each religion will be studied under the following five principal divisions: origin and development, literature, teachings, ritual and worship, ethics and institutions. As we study these traditions, we will have an opportunity to reflect critically upon some thematic connections that tie various traditions together at the same time they illustrate their differences.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES for RS380OL:

(1) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the traditional and modern contexts of the religious traditions of India, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

(2) Students will demonstrate knowledge of the principal beliefs, major symbols, sacred texts, rituals, and practices of the religions studied.

(3) Students will be able to interpret Asian religious texts.

(4) Students will be able to recognize the cultural and interpretational diversity within Asian religious communities.

General Education SLOs: Comparative Cultural Studies/ Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies and Foreign Languages

Goal: Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.

GE SLOs:

1. Describe and compare different cultures;

2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;

3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;

4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society;

5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Participation/Posting (60 pts. x 0.5 or 30 pts. equivalent): Your participation in the Forums (accessed via m1.csun.edu; login using your CSUN ID and password) is very important and will count towards 30% of your grade. Each student must post at least three (3) thoughtful responses per week in any two (2) or more of the Discussion Forums for that week. Each post should be about a paragraph long (~150 words) and is rated/worth up to 2 pts. You may, of course, post more than three posts per week, and I will count your three highest-rated/graded posts; but keep in mind, you must post during the week of that discussion or it will not be counted at all.

Your posts should offer insight, critique or further discussion based on my initial thread or other students’ posts. Good posts (“2” rating) will demonstrate critical thinking skills and reflect assigned readings. Weak posts (“0” or “1” rating) will be those short one or two-sentence responses, which do not offer much insight or contribute to further discussion. Also, I will ask you to post a Weekly Summary of what you learned after each week - this will also count towards your participation/posting requirement. I will monitor your participation and guide the discussions accordingly.

So, for each week of participation in Discussion Forums, you can receive up to six (6) points total (3 posts X 2 pts. = 6 pts. per week) and you will be only required to post for ten (10) weeks (so, 6 pts. per week X 10 weeks = 60 pts. total). Be sure to track your points earned per week for ten weeks. The total points earned will be multiplied by 0.5 at the conclusion of the course to figure out your participation points; so, 30 pts. total possible. You will be asked to give me this number so that I can confirm it with my calculations at the end of the course.

(2) Two papers\* (3 full pages, ~750 words, excluding quotes; 15 pts each, 30 pts.), which is based on the analysis of Asian religious texts. See guidelines on moodle. The prompt for each paper is available for viewing from the beginning of class so students are encouraged to submit early.

(3) An open-book midterm examination (20 pts.), which includes identification and discussion of key terms and concepts, interpretation of a sacred Asian religious text, and short essays. Important\*\* Do not miss the midterm since it is a timed-exam (see further guidelines on moodle); emergency situations will be considered only with documentation. Students who missed the midterm will only be allowed to take the exam within 3 days of the midterm with a 4-pt. penalty assessed; after the 3-day “grace period,” students who missed the midterm will be given a “0” for their grade. There is no final exam.

(4) Research paper\* (4 full pages, ~1000 words, 20 pts.), which explores in some depth about some aspect of Asian religions of your interest (further guidelines are given on moodle). The prompt for the final research paper is available for viewing from the beginning of class so students are encouraged to submit early.

\*Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise. In Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, plagiarism is “an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended, or given a less severe disciplinary sanction…” So when in doubt, make sure to cite (use APA or MLA style; APA recommended). The instructor reserves the right to request an electronic version of the paper. Also, late submission of writing assignments (two papers and the research paper) will be penalized according to the discretion of the instructor (e.g., 1-5 pts. within one week; ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED PAST ONE WEEK OF THE DUE DATE).

Important\*\*\* You will be required to submit all assignments via moodle (m1.csun.edu). Be sure to submit your assignments using Microsoft Word .doc or .docx attachments (Note: I cannot open .wps or other obscure versions; or simply type in your text). I will give you one warning if you submit your file incorrectly; if it happens again, you will be assessed a penalty point for not following directions. If in case you receive a “0” for an assignment you submitted, that means I was not able to open your file, so you must resubmit that assignment to my email, klee@csun.edu by the date set by me (note: if you do not resubmit by the due date, you will be given a “0” for the assignment. I will do my best to post grades/comments to your papers within one week after submission.

Extra Credit (Optional; worth up to 4 pts.): Visit and write a short report (2 full pages, ~500 words) discussing religious motifs observed at the Japanese garden at the Huntington Library Botanical Gardens in Pasadena or in paintings/sculptures seen at LACMA, Getty Center, or Norton Simon Museum (note: you must scan/take a photo of and attach your entrance ticket to your report to receive full credit). This report should relate what was seen to some aspect of our class; due by the last day of class, NOT ACCEPTED AFTER.

Grading % (out of 100 total points): 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, 66-69 D+, 60-65 D, <60 F.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Oxtoby, Willard G. and Amore, Roy C.,eds. World Religions: Eastern

Traditions, 3rd ed. (Oxford Univ. Press; earlier edition OK). 0195426762

Stoler Miller, B., trans. The Bhagavad-Gita : Krishna's Counsel in Time of War

(Bantam Classics). 0553213652

Herrigel, E. Zen in the Art of Archery. (Vintage Spiritual Classics). 0-375-70509-0

Hoff, Benjamin. Tao of Pooh. (Penguin). 0-14-006747-7

RECOMMENDED:

Lee, K. The Prince and the Monk (SUNY Press). 978-0-7914-7021-3; also available on amazon.com

Online Readings:

Gale Virtual Reference Library (GVRL) can be accessed via CSUN Library website under “Find Resources” then “Database A-Z”

VIDEO Suggestions:

Available through CSUN Library, 2nd floor Media, or local video stores

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 – About Religion. Read Oxtoby/Amore (OA), Ch. 1

Online Readings (GVRL):

“Religious Experience.” Ann Taves.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 11. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p7736-7750.

Hindu Traditions

Week 2 – The Vedic Period and the Indus Valley Civilization. OA, Ch. 2

Week 3 – The Formation of Classical Hinduism. VIDEO: “Gandhi”

Week 4 – The Upanishads and the Way of Knowledge. Read Stoler’s

translation of The Bhagavad-gita.

Week 5 – The Bhagavad-gita and the Way of Devotion. Paper #1 due

Online readings (GVRL):

“Indus Valley Civilization.” Jonathan Mark Kenoyer.

Encyclopedia of India. Ed. Stanley Wolpert. Vol. 2. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. p258-267.

“Vedas.” R. N. Dandekar.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 14. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p9549-9552.

“Upanishads.” William K. Mahony.

Contemporary American Religion. Ed. Wade Clark Roof. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1999. p758-760.

“Vishnu and Avatāras.” David M. Knipe.

Encyclopedia of India. Ed. Stanley Wolpert. Vol. 4. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. p216-221.

“Law and Religion: Law and Religion in Hinduism.” Richard W. Lariviere.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 8. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p5343-5347.

Sikh Traditions

Week 6 – Teachings of Guru Nanak and the Khalsa. OA, Ch. 3

Online Readings (GVRL):

“Sikhism.” Arvind-Pal S. Mandair.

Encyclopedia of India. Ed. Stanley Wolpert. Vol. 4. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2006. p65-70.

Jaina Traditions

Week 7 – Mahavira and the Sects of Jainism. OA, Ch. 4. VIDEO: “Spiritual India:

A Guide to Jainism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism”

Online Readings (GVRL):

“Jainism.” Paul Dundas.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 7. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p4764-4772.

Buddhist Traditions

Week 8 – The Life and Teachings of Siddhārtha. OA, Ch. 5; VIDEO:

“The Little Buddha” or “Buddhism: Footprints of the Buddha”

Week 9 – The Sangha and the Spread of Buddhism.

Week 10 – Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Week 11 – The Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism. VIDEO: “Kundun”

Midterm

Online Readings (GVRL):

“Buddha.” Frank E. Reynolds and Charles Hallisey.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p1059-1071.

“Four Noble Truths.” John Ross Carter.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 5. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p3178-3180.

“Saṃgha: Saṃgha and Society in South and Southeast Asia.” H. L. Seneviratne.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 12. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p8076-8081.

“Bodhisattva Path.” Paul Williams.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p996-1000.

“Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī.” KARMA LEKSHE TSOMO.

Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003. p489-490.

“Dalai Lama (1935-), Spiritual Leader, Head of State.” Robert A. F. Thurman. Contemporary American Religion. Ed. Wade Clark Roof. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1999. p171-172.

Japanese Traditions

Week 12 – Zen, Pure Land, Nichiren and Shinto. OA, Ch. 7. Read Herrigel’s Zen in the Art of Archery. VIDEO: “The Last Samurai” or “Kokoro: The Heart Within”; Paper #2 due

Online Readings (GVRL):

“Zen.” Steven Heine.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 14. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p9943-9951.

“Pure Land Schools.” A. W. BARBER.

Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. Vol. 2. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003. p706-709.

“Shinto.” Genzo Yamamoto.

New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. Ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz. Vol. 5. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005. p2208-2210.

“Bushido.” Diane Skoss.

New Dictionary of the History of Ideas. Ed. Maryanne Cline Horowitz. Vol. 1. Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005. p251-253.

Chinese & Korean Traditions

Week 13 – Confucianism of Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi. OA, Ch. 6

Week 14 – Daoism of Laozi and Zhuangzi. Korean Shamanism. Read Hoff’s Tao of Pooh.

Online Readings (GVRL):

“Chinese Religion: An Overview.” Daniel L. Overmyer and Joseph A. Adler.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 3. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p1580-1613.

“Confucius.” Julia Ching.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 3. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p1933-1937.

“Ren and Yi.” Kwong-Loi Shun.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 11. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p7751-7752.

“Feng Shui.” Paula Ford-Martin.

The Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine. Ed. Jacqueline L. Longe. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Detroit: Gale, 2005. p740-743.

“T'ai Chi.” Leonard C. Bruno.

The Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine. Ed. Deirdre S. Blanchfield and Jacqueline L. Longe. Vol. 5. 2nd ed. Detroit: Gale, 2002. p3237-3238.

“Korean Religion.” Francisca Cho.

Encyclopedia of Religion. Ed. Lindsay Jones. Vol. 8. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. p5228-5237.

Current Issues

Week 15 – Asian Religions in the World Today. OA, Ch. 8.

Research paper due

Extra credit due