

Asian Religions and Islam

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 199, FALL 2016, Meeting Time: WF 2-3:15

Professor Todd T. Lewis

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays 1-2; and by appointment

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Course Description:

An Introduction to the major religious traditions of Asia, ranging from those indigenous to South Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism) and East Asia (Daoism and Confucianism, Shinto), and including Islam

Course Description: A survey of the major religious traditions of Asia: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Daoism, Confucianism, including Islam in Asia. For the introduction to each tradition, the course will outline its history and introduce the primary texts, core beliefs, and central ritual practices. A sense of the spectrum of distinctive individual ways of being religious is also our concern. The course will include a museum visit to survey artistic expressions of faith and require visits to local sanctuaries (Hindu temple, mosque, Buddhist meditation center) to experience the spiritualities of practice. The state of each religion today will also be covered.

Coursework: Map; Midterm and Final Exams; 3 short papers

Content. Since the time devoted to each tradition is limited, your commitment to textbook readings and readings of texts in translation is essential. This course provides an overview to the central cultural traditions of Asia, including Islam, and will provide a good introduction for the study of Asia.

Participation. All students are expected to participate actively in the coursework, share in the discussion, ask questions to help make unclear topics understood, and to make use of the office hours. Participation is part of the course grade.

Reading assignments should always be completed *before* the designated class and analyzed carefully. Lectures will *supplement* the required readings, not replace them. Please consult if you are interested in exploring other pertinent subjects. *Bring copies of the sacred texts assigned for specific days, according to the syllabus; if you have a question on that day's readings, there will be a chance to ask at the start of each class.*

Grading:

1. Map Assignment.....	5	4. Mid-term Quiz.....	15
2. Papers (2) 10/15.....	15	5. Final Examination.....	40
3. Sacred Art Encounter Paper.....	15	5. Course Participation.....	10
			100 points

Required Textbooks: (All ordered from the Holy Cross bookstore.)

John Esposito, Darrell Fasching, Todd Lewis, *Religions of Asia Today (3rd ed.)* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Robert E. Van Voorst, *Anthology of World Scriptures: Eastern Religions.* Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth, 2006.

John Alden Williams, *The World of Islam.* Austin: University of Texas, 1994.

Course Moodle Readings /MCR/ [note: some new readings may be added during the term]

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments

Topic 1: **Foundations**

1. 8/31: First Class: Course Overview; What is a “Religious Tradition?”; The Burden of Ethnocentrism and Orientalism

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 3-26

Anthology of World Scriptures, 1-18

2. 9/2: Studying Religion Comparatively; Religion in Human Life; Shamanism; Skepticism

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 39-64

“Who is Uncle Donpa” , “Folktales from India I: Crossing a River, Losing a Self” and “Islam in Practice I” [MCR]



Topic 2: **Hinduism**

3. 9/7: Indus Valley Tradition; Vedic Religion

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 77-83; 85-88

Anthology of World Scriptures, 23-38; 45-46



4. 9/9: Upanishads and Monism, Caste and Dharma; Samkhya-Yoga Dualism

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 88-92; 95-99; 104;

Anthology of World Scriptures, 34; 38-53

“Folktales from India II: Outwitting Fate’ and ‘If God is Everywhere’ ” [MCR]

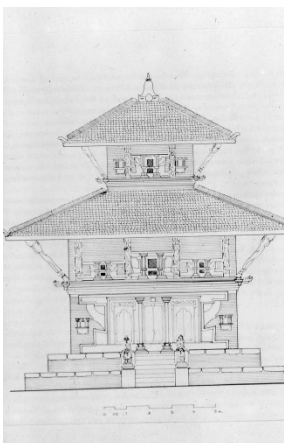
5. 9/14: Devotionalism to the Great Gods: Shiva, Vishnu, Devi

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 99-104;

Anthology of World Scriptures, 33, 35, 54-61

“Purana Readings I/II/III” [MCR]



6. 9/16: Bhakti, Puja, Temples, Gurus, Pilgrimage

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 123-142

Anthology of World Scriptures, 47; 64-65

“Heaven and Hell” [MCR]

Euro-Asia MAP ASSIGNMENT DUE

Topic 3:
Buddhism



7. 9/21: Founder and Context; Four Noble Truths

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 169-173; 175-185

Anthology of World Scriptures, 71-88

8. 9/23: Basic Teachings; Sangha and Monasticism; Buddhist Community

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 185-198

Anthology of World Scriptures, 89-90; 94; 98-100; 102-108

“Life History: Corporal Monk of Sri Lanka” [MCR]

9. 9/28: Rituals and Stupas; Meditation; Indic Mahayana Traditions

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 199-201; 212-219

Anthology of World Scriptures, 92-93; 109-113; 122-123; 101-102

10. 9/30: Heterodox Indic Religions [1] : Jainism

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 93-95; 118

Anthology of World Scriptures, 129-143



Topic 4:
Religions of East Asia

10/4: Paper #1 Due

**11. 10/5: Buddhism Diaspora; “Axial Age”; “Diffuse Religion”
Confucianism [1] : Life of Confucius in Context**

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 208-211; 257-271

Anthology of World Scriptures, 165-170

12. 10/7: Confucianism [2] : Mencius; Basic Teachings

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 276-8

Anthology of World Scriptures, 171-180

Fall Break 🏔️🍁🏞️🏠🌲🏔️

13. 10/19: Confucianism [3]: Basic Practices; Cult of Ancestors [via Panopto]

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 278-279

Anthology of World Scriptures, 181-189

14. 10/21: Daoism [1]: Lao Tzu and Xuang Zi

Guest Lecturer: Gary DeAngelis

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 271-276;

Anthology of World Scriptures, 195-207

15. 10/26: Daoism [2] Philosophical Thought and Applied Traditions

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 275-276; 280-281

Anthology of World Scriptures, 212-213

“The Fundamental Substances: Qi, Blood, Jing, Shen...” [MCR]

“Excerpts from the Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Medicine” [MCR]

**16. 10/28: Confucian Tradition [4] : Imperial Traditions [with Daoism]
Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi**

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 283-286

Anthology of World Scriptures, 178-181; 205-206; 186-190

“The Four Books: Introduction and *Great Learning* with Zhu Xi’s Commentary” [MCR]

17. 11/2: Daoist Traditions [3] : Ritualism; Alchemy of Immortality

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 274-275

Anthology of World Scriptures, 208-216

“Scripture on the Divine Elixirs...”, “Inward Daoist Training: *Neiye*”, Daoist Life Paths” [MCR]

18. 11/4: Mahayana in East Asia [1]: Lotus Sutra & Pure Land Schools

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 202; 207-210

Anthology of World Scriptures, 92-3; 94-97

“Life of a Contemporary Buddhist Priest, Japan” “Auntie Li: Modern Chinese Lay Woman” [MCR]



**19. 11/9: Mahayana Buddhism in East Asia [2] :
Chan/Zen School;
Chinese “Three Faiths” Tradition**

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 203-204; 288-294; 306-315; 209-210

Anthology of World Scriptures, 116-117

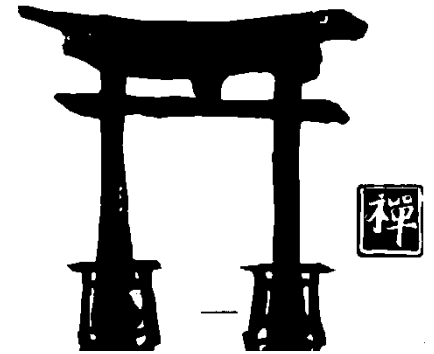
“Zen Stories” [MCR]

20. 11/11: Japan and Shinto; Christianity in Asia

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 281-283; 113-116; 220-222;
227-228; 291-292

Anthology of World Scriptures, 221-230



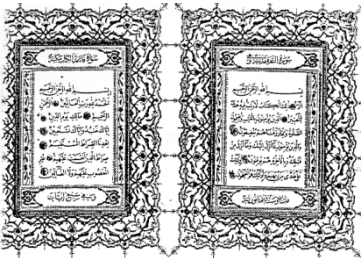
Topic 5: **Islam**

21. 11/16: Muhammed and his Context; Islam and Abrahamic Faiths

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 347-358

The World of Islam, 36-65



22. 11/18: The Qur'an; Muslim Belief and Theology; Sharia; Sunni and Shia

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 358-362

The World of Islam, 7-35, 66-108; 140-150; 170-182

23. 11/30: Sufism; Islam in Asian Diaspora

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 362-363

The World of Islam, 109-139

24. 12/2: The Hajj to Mecca

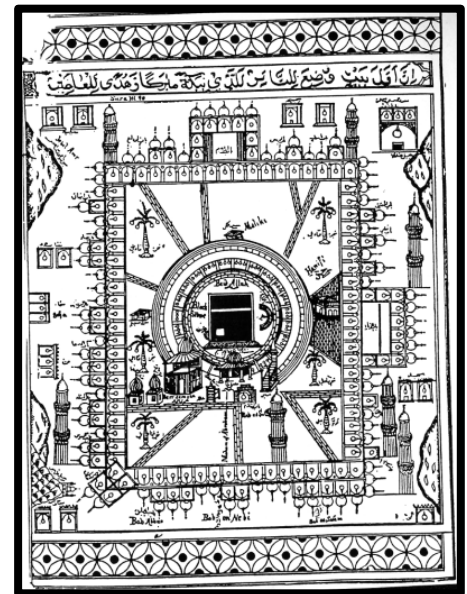
Heterodox Indic Religions [2]: Sikhism

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, [S] 108-112; 118-119; 140-141

Anthology of World Scriptures, 147-161

“Islam in Practice II: Life Histories, Iran” [MCR]





Topic 6:

The Modern and Postmodern Era in Asia

25. 12/7: Colonialism & Westernization; “New Religions”

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today; 26-36; 64-73; 83-85; [B] 219-239; [EA] 294-305; 330-334
[I] 363-368

26. 12/9: Ongoing Developments: “Fundamentalism” , “Nationalism as Religion” , Globalization

Required Reading:

Religions of Asia Today, 112-126; 142-164; [B] 240-252; [EA] 315-325; 338-342; [] 377-379; 401-410

“The Wu-Tang Daoist Manual by Rza” [MCR]

Reading Period: Review Session

Exam Period: Comprehensive Final