

RELIGION 100

Introduction to Religion: Buddhism and Islam

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In this course, we will explore two world religions, Buddhism and Islam, with special attention to Zen Buddhism and Sufism. The course includes visits to a Buddhist community and a Muslim community. Students will also explore religion in their own families, writing a paper based on interviews with relatives. This course fulfills a Humanities distribution requirement for Oxford College and General Education Requirement V. C. for Oxford College and Emory College.

COURSE GOALS

In this course, you can expect to

- acquire a basic knowledge and understanding of Buddhism and Islam;
- explore and reflect critically on Buddhist and Muslim views of the human condition and how to live a good human life and on your own views and their origins;
- hone your intellectual skills, especially your skills for engaging texts, writing clearly, and using writing not just as a way of expressing thoughts but also as a way of thinking.

TEXTS

Required books:

- Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (0-19-285386-4).
- Reza Aslan, *No god but God* (paperback: 0-8129-7189-2; hardback: 1-4000-6213-6).
- Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, preferably the 2000 edition (0-385-26093-8), but an older one is okay.
- Kabir Helminski, *The Knowing Heart: A Sufi Path of Transformation* (1-57062-566-2).

Recommended books:

- John Bowker, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (0-19-861053-X). This is a handy reference book that you might find helpful this semester and beyond for understanding world religions.
- V. A. Howard and J. H. Barton, *Thinking on Paper* (0-688-07758-7). The two chapters that we'll be reading from this book will be available on electronic reserve, so it isn't necessary to buy the book, but this is an excellent writing guide that you might find helpful for the rest of your academic career and beyond, so you might want to buy it.

Required readings, available on electronic reserve*:

- Richard Hughes Seager, *Buddhism in America*: ch. 5, "Jodo Shinshu: America's Old-Line Buddhists," pp. 51-53, 64-69.
- James William Coleman, *The New Buddhism: The Western Transformation of an Ancient Tradition: "Zen"* (pp. 93-103).
- V. A. Howard and J. H. Barton, *Thinking on Paper*: ch. 1, "Writing Is Thinking," and ch. 2, "From First to Last Draft."
- John L. Esposito, "Islam in the World and in America," from Jacob Neusner, ed., *World Religions in America*.

*To access electronic reserves:

1. Go to the Oxford library homepage: www.emory.edu/OXFORD/Library.
2. Move the pointer to "Reserves & Course Materials," and on the pop-up menu click "Course Reserves."
3. Enter your Emory login ID and password in the boxes, and click "Sign In" (or hit return).
4. If this is the first time you are accessing the reserves for this class, add the class to your list of classes:
 - a. Click "Add a class."
 - b. Under "Search by Instructor," type "boykin" and click "Search" (or hit return).
 - c. From the "Choose an Instructor" menu, choose "Boykin, Kim."
 - d. Click "Lookup Classes."
 - e. Click "click here to add."
5. Click on the course number or title to see the list of reserves for the class.
6. Click on a reading to download it.
7. Print it out. (Since you need to bring the readings to class, you can't just read them online.)

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and preparation, including reflection papers (20% of your grade).

Attendance in class and preparation for class are expected and are important for the learning process in this course. Readings need to be completed before the class for which they are assigned. *Please bring the text(s) for the day to class with you.* (Note that this means you'll need to print out the reserve readings; you can't just read them online.) Please be on time for class. If you're late, see me at the end of class to be sure I've marked you late instead of absent. If you will be missing a class for a religious holiday, please let me know in advance.

Reflection papers* (labeled with a "📖" in the schedule): For most class sessions, preparation includes a short written assignment—half a page to a page, single-spaced—intended to enhance your understanding of the reading, to develop your skills for engaged reading, and to give you an opportunity to articulate your thoughts about the issues being raised in the course. We will sometimes use these reflection papers as the basis for class discussions and activities.

There are two parts to each reflection paper. The assignment for part one is specified in the schedule and will vary from class to class. Part two of every reflection paper is a paragraph or so of reflection about, or arising from, something in the day's reading.

The reflection papers will be graded check, check-plus, or check-minus. (A check-plus indicates a paper that shows an exceptionally clear understanding of the reading, includes an exceptionally insightful or thoughtful reflection, and is well written. A check-minus indicates a serious misunderstanding of the reading or failure to do what was assigned.) If you miss a class, turn in the reflection paper for that class at the next class you attend; after that, I will not accept the paper.

Grading: You get two "free" absences, and I will disregard two missing or check-minus reflection papers. Other than these "freebies," if you attend every class and get a check or check-plus on every reflection paper, you will get an A for this part of your grade. Other than the "freebies," if your total number of absences plus your total number of missing or check-minus reflection papers—*regardless of the reason for each absence and each missing paper*—is more than eight, you will get an F for this part of your grade. If your attendance and number of check or check-plus papers is between those extremes, you'll get a grade between A and F. Basically, each absence over two and each missing or check-minus paper over two will lower this part of your grade about a notch, e.g., from A to A– or from A– to B+.

2. Two tests, one on Buddhism and one on Islam (15% each), based on the lectures, readings, handouts, and videos. Format: short answer, multiple choice, and fill in the blanks. (See schedule for dates.)

3. Two 4-page papers on visits to religious communities (15% each).

Visits: Each student will visit one Buddhist center or temple and one Islamic center or masjid (mosque) to be a participant/observer in a meditation session, prayer service, class, or similar event. I will give you a list of suggested communities for these visits. If you know a Buddhist or a Muslim who is part of a religious community in the area, I would encourage you to ask if you can attend an event with them. Since part of the purpose of these visits is for you to encounter religious traditions with which you are unfamiliar, if you are Buddhist or Muslim, you should visit a community that is part of a different branch or ethnic tradition of your own religion. When you visit, learn as much as you can: be observant; read bulletin boards; pick up free literature; talk with members and/or leaders of the community; if there's a discussion time, ask questions; if there's a social time, stay and chat.

Papers*: The paper on your visit has two parts. First, your paper should include 3 to 3 1/2 pages of *detailed description* of your visit, including the place (location, facilities, décor, etc.), the people (demographics, attire, demeanor, etc., of the participants and leaders), and what happened during your visit (including your thoughts and feelings during the visit, if you wish to include them). Second, your paper should include half a page to a page of *thoughtful reflection*: a well-developed thought or two about the visit or arising from it (e.g., comparisons with your own religious tradition or community, musings on the role of religion in your life, theological reflections, sociological or anthropological analyses). Your paper should be at least 3 1/2 pages long and no more than 4 1/2 pages long.

If you would like me to read a draft of your paper and give you some feedback and suggestions for revision, please give me a hard copy or email it to me at least *one week before the due date*.

These papers should be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date (see schedule). If you cannot attend class that day, give your paper to a classmate to hand in for you, or hand it in at an earlier class period. **I will not accept late papers;** please do not ask for extensions. Do your site visit early so that if the event you planned to attend gets cancelled or you get lost and miss the event or you get sick when you were planning to go, you still have plenty of time to plan another visit; and get started on your paper early so that if you get sick or have computer problems or something else comes up just before the deadline, you can still turn the paper in on time.

4. A 9- to 10-page paper on the history of religion in your family (20%).

Family interviews: Interview *at least three* members of your family, from your parents' generation or before, including, if possible, at least one relative who raised you and at least one member of your grandparents' generation. Ask about their

religious (and/or nonreligious) history, practices, and views and what they know of their ancestors' (non)religious history, practices, and views; and ask about your own (non)religious upbringing. These "interviews" may be done in person or by phone, letter, or email. If you do the interviews in person or by phone, you will probably want to take notes, and you may want to tape the interviews (with the interviewee's permission). *At least two* of your interviews need to be completed by Tuesday, April 18, when we will discuss them in class. The reflection paper for that day will also be based on the interviews.

Paper*: Based on your interviews, as well as what you already knew about your family's (non)religious history, write a history of (ir)religion in your family, starting as far back as you can in your family tree, up to and including yourself. Note that the interviews are your *research* for the paper but are not *part* of the paper. Tell the story of your family, including yourself, in your own words and organized in your own way. Feel free to use occasional quotations from relatives who said things that were particularly interesting, articulate, or otherwise quotable, but these quotations should generally be no longer than a phrase or a sentence, possibly two sentences. (There is no need for any sort of formal citation of your family interviews.) I would encourage you to use subheadings for the major sections of your paper. Your paper should be at least 9 full pages long and no more than 10 pages long.

The paper is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, May 2. If you cannot attend class that day, give your paper to a classmate to hand in for you, or hand it in at an earlier class period. **I will not accept late papers;** please do not ask for extensions. Get started early on your interviews and on writing the paper so that if you get sick or have computer problems or something else comes up just before the deadline, you can still turn the paper in on time.

***PAPERS:**

Format: Reflection papers should be single-spaced; the other papers should be double-spaced. Papers should be printed in a 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides, and stapled (no covers or paper clips, please). There is no need for a separate title page; just put your name, the name or number of the course, and the date at the top the first page (that part can be single-spaced). Single-sided or double-sided printing is fine. Please do not email me your papers.

Citing sources: In your reflection papers, if you quote or paraphrase one of the course texts, you don't need to include a full citation of the text; just put the page number in parentheses.

The site visit papers and family history paper do not need to include references to texts, but if you do quote, paraphrase, or otherwise take information from a text—e.g., one of our course texts, a reference book on religion, a religious community's Web site, or a pamphlet you picked up when visiting a religious community—you must cite your source. A concise guide to using quotations can be found at <http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/quotesource>. A more detailed guide to quoting and paraphrasing can be found at <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>. I would suggest using the Turabian/Chicago style for your notes and bibliography—that is, the form described in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (a book you might want to own), which is based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*. See <http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/turabian.html> for examples of note forms and bibliographic forms in this style. If you're familiar with the MLA style, that's fine too. I am less concerned about the format of your citations than I am about your acknowledging your sources in *some* manner, so it is much better for you to include an "improperly" formatted citation than no citation.

GRADING SCALE: The "plus-minus" system will be used in this class (that is, not just A, B, C, etc., but A, A–, B+, etc.).

HONOR CODE: Our work together in this course—and all that we do at Oxford—is governed by the Oxford College Honor Code, which includes "the responsibility for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work" (see the Oxford College Catalog, pp. 96-99, or <http://www.emory.edu/OXFORD/CampusLife/Policies/honor.html>). Let us all conduct ourselves honorably.

APPOINTMENTS

I would be glad to meet with you on Tuesday afternoons, either over lunch in the dining hall immediately after class or in my office, Humanities 205, between 1:30 and 2:45. Email me or see me before or after class to make an appointment. (It's fine to see me at the end of class to make an "appointment" for that afternoon.) Feel free to come see me (or email me) not only to discuss issues directly related to the course but also if you'd just like to talk about religion or college or whatever.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

(subject to minor modifications)

★ All assignments are to be completed **before** the class for which they are assigned.

★ Please bring the text(s) for the day to class with you.

Thurs., Jan. 19: introduction to the course

BUDDHISM

Tues., Jan. 24: the Buddha

- 📖 Keown: ch. 2, and map 1 (in the front of the book).
- 📖 (See #1 under “Requirements” for details about the reflection papers.) *Part 1*: Keown says that the most important events in the life of the Buddha are his birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and death. For each of these events, write one or two sentences capturing the most important details. *Part 2*: reflection (some possible topics: something you find especially peculiar or interesting in the story of the Buddha; striking similarities and/or differences between the story of the Buddha and the story of an important figure from your own religious tradition; your own transformative encounter with the reality of death).

Thurs., Jan. 26: Buddhist teachings: samsara, karma, rebirth

- 📖 Keown: ch. 3; you may skip the sections “The Buddhist Universe” & “The Three Spheres of Existence.”
- 📖 *Part 1*: Based on the reading, write brief definitions (one to two sentences each) of samsara and karma. *Part 2*: reflection (some possible topics: If the Six Realms are understood as states of mind, which realms are you most familiar with? How does the notion of karma compare with your own understanding of actions and their consequences?).

Tues., Jan. 31: Buddhist teachings: the Four Noble Truths (& planning visits to Buddhist communities)

- 📖 Keown: ch. 4.
- 📖 *Part 1*: Based on the reading, write brief definitions (one to two sentences each) of *dukkha*, *tanha*, origination-in-dependence (a.k.a. dependent origination), nirvana-in-this-life, and final nirvana (a.k.a. *parinirvana*). *Part 2*: reflection (some possible topics: Does it seem to you that *dukkha* is an intrinsic part of human life? What do you think of the diagnosis that our suffering arises from craving?).
- ☞ Decide which Buddhist communities would be your top choices to visit, given your interests and schedule (you may want to browse some of their Web sites), and bring your calendar to class. (We will form groups to visit specific communities on specific days, with someone in each group who has a car and is willing to drive.)

Thurs., Feb. 2: branches of Buddhism; Mahayana teachings

- 📖 Keown: the box on p. 11; maps 2 and 3 (in the front of the book); ch. 5. Focus on these terms and concepts: Theravada, Hinayana, Mahayana, bodhisattva, emptiness, the Madhyamaka understanding of samsara and nirvana.
- 📖 *Part 1*: In one to two sentences each, explain three significant differences between Mahayana Buddhism and the earlier form of Buddhism. *Part 2*: reflection (some possible topics: Do you know anyone who really seems to try to put others’ well-being before their own? What do you think of the idea that liberation comes from simply seeing things as they really are?).

Tues., Feb. 7: Vajrayana Buddhism, Tibet, & the 14th Dalai Lama

- 📖 Keown: pp. 79-81 (“Tibet”).
- 📖 *Part 1*: Based on the reading, write brief definitions of Vajrayana and Dalai Lama. *Part 2*: reflection.

Thurs., Feb. 9: Buddhist teachings: ethics & compassion

- 📖 Keown: ch. 8, p. 96 through the top of p. 100, and the section “Skilful Means” (pp. 106–7).
- 📖 *Part 1*: One to two sentences each: 1. In Buddhist thought, what is the relationship between the natural order of the universe and the teachings of Buddhism? 2. In Buddhist thought, what is the relationship between the precepts and the virtues? 3. Define *ahimsa*. 4. Define *upaya*. *Part 2*: reflection.

Tues., Feb. 14: Buddhism in the United States

📖 Coleman reserve reading (start where I drew the big arrow).

📖 Seager reserve reading.

📄 *Part 1:* Based on the Coleman reading, write brief definitions of zazen and kinhin. Based on the Seager reading, write brief definitions of the Pure Land, Amida, and Nembutsu. *Part 2:* reflection.

Thurs., Feb. 16: TEST ON BUDDHISM

Tues., Feb. 21: writing

📖 Howard & Barton reserve reading.

📄 *Part 1:* Write in one sentence the *main point* of Howard & Barton, ch. 1; and write in one sentence the *effect* that ch. 1 is intended to have on the reader. Summarize, in one sentence each, the steps in the method outlined in ch. 2. *Part 2:* reflection.

ISLAM

Thurs., Feb. 23: the Five Pillars of Islam

📖 Aslan: pp. xv-xx; ch. 6, pp. 144-151.

📄 *Part 1:* Based on the reading, write one to two sentences explaining each of the Five Pillars of Islam. *Part 2:* reflection.

☞ Deadline to turn in a draft of your Buddhist site visit paper.

Tues., Feb. 28: pre-Islamic Arabia, Muhammad, & the beginnings of Islam (& planning visits to Muslim communities)

📖 Aslan: ch. 1; ch. 2 through p. 42.

📄 *Part 1:* Give each of the six major sections of today's reading (i.e., pp. 4-5, 5-18, 18-22, 23-24, 24-32, 32-39) a subtitle of ten words or fewer that captures the main topic of the section. *Part 2:* reflection.

☞ Consider which Muslim communities you would be most interested in visiting, and bring your calendar to class. (In class, we will form groups for visits.) Or if you know someone who is part of a Muslim community in the area, you might want to ask if you can go along with them.

Thurs., Mar. 2: PAPER DUE: BUDDHIST SITE VISIT; discussion of Buddhist site visits

Tues., Mar. 7: the Hijra & the early Muslim community; women in Islam

📖 Aslan: ch. 2, pp. 43-49; ch. 3.

📄 *Part 1:* Give each of the five major sections of today's reading (pp. 43-49, 50-53, 53-66, 66-71, 72-74) a subtitle of ten words or fewer that captures the main topic of the section. *Part 2:* reflection.

Thurs. Mar. 9: jihad; Islam and the "People of the Book"

📖 Aslan: ch. 4.

📄 *Part 1:* 1. Explain Aslan's understanding of jihad. 2. What is Aslan's opinion of "the classical doctrine of jihad"? 3. According to Aslan, how does Islam understand its relationship to Judaism and Christianity? *Part 2:* reflection.

Tues., Mar. 21: traditionalism, the Quran, and the Shariah

📖 Aslan: ch. 6, pp. 152-170.

📄 *Part 1:* 1. Do Muslims believe that Muhammad performed miracles? 2. What is the Sunna? 3. What does Aslan think of the "Traditionalists'" view of the Quran and the Shariah? *Part 2:* reflection.

Thurs., Mar. 23: Shiism; Wahhabism & al-Qaeda; Islamic democracy

📖 Aslan: ch. 7, pp. 171-187; ch. 9, pp. 240-248; ch. 10, pp. 259-266.

📄 *Part 1:* 1. Based on the reading, write brief definitions of Shiism, Islamism, and Wahhabism. 2. What is Aslan's main point on pp. 259-266? *Part 2:* reflection.

Tues., Mar. 28: Islam in the United States

📖 Esposito reserve reading, from p. 180 to the end. (You may skip the rest of the chapter, but I included it because you might find it to be a helpful review.)

📄 *Part 1:* TBA. *Part 2:* reflection.

Thurs., Mar. 30: TEST ON ISLAM

ZEN

Tues., Apr. 4: **Zen: introduction to Zen training**

📖 Kapleau: ch. I, lectures 1-3, 5, 8, 11; and ch. IX, posture pictures & captions.

📄 *Part 1*: One sentence each: 1. According to Yasutani, what did the Buddha realize upon his enlightenment? 2. According to Yasutani, what is the best time of day for zazen? 3. What are makyo? 4. What is kensho (or kensho-godo)? 5. Why was Enyadatta happy to find her head? 6. What are “the three essentials of Zen practice”? 7. What’s the difference between a full-lotus and a half-lotus position? *Part 2*: reflection.

Thurs., Apr. 6: **Zen: koan practice**

📖 Kapleau: ch. II.

📄 *Part 1*: One sentence each: 1. What does the word *mu* mean literally? 2. What is the point of koan practice? 3. According to the sutras, does a dog have Buddha-nature? 4. What is Buddha-nature? 5. What is *ku* (*shunyata*), according to Yasutani? 6. With what sort of spirit or attitude should one practice Mu? *Part 2*: reflection.

☞ Deadline to turn in a draft of your Muslim site visit paper.

Tues., Apr. 11: **Zen: sesshin, kensho, & enlightenment**

📖 Kapleau: ch. V, Editor’s Introduction & the experience of Mr. K. Y.; and ch. VIII.

📄 *Part 1*: One sentence each: 1. According to Yasutani, what is the relationship between kensho and sesshin? 2. Why, according to Yasutani, is physical work (*samu*) part of Zen training? 3. Where was “Mr. K. Y.” when he had his kensho experience? 4. What does the eighth Oxherding Picture represent? 5. What does the tenth Oxherding Picture represent? *Part 2*: reflection.

Thurs., Apr. 13: **PAPER DUE: MUSLIM SITE VISIT; discussion of Muslim site visits**

Tues., Apr. 18: **AT LEAST TWO FAMILY INTERVIEWS DONE; discussion of family interviews**

📄 Instead of the usual reflection paper (but still a page or less, single-spaced):

Answer these questions for *at least two* of the relatives you interviewed:

- Who did you interview?

- Why did you choose to interview this particular person?

- How did the interview go? (E.g.: How did you feel about interviewing this person? How did this person feel about being interviewed? Were you able to learn much from this interview?)

- Of what you learned from this interview, what did you find most surprising or interesting?

SUFISM

Thurs., Apr. 20: **Sufism**

📖 Helminski, pp. TBA.

📄 *Part 1*: TBA. *Part 2*: reflection.

Tues., Apr. 25: **Sufism**

📖 Helminski, pp. TBA.

📄 *Part 1*: TBA. *Part 2*: reflection.

Thurs., Apr. 27: **Sufism**

📖 Helminski, pp. TBA.

📄 *Part 1*: TBA. *Part 2*: reflection.

Tues., May 2: **PAPER DUE: HISTORY OF RELIGION IN YOUR FAMILY; course wrap-up**