

RELIGION 100

Introduction to Religion: Buddhism and Christianity

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In this course, we will explore two of the world's major religious traditions, Buddhism and Christianity, with special attention to Buddhism and Christianity in the United States and to Buddhist and Christian spiritual practices, primarily Zen Buddhist meditation and Christian verbal prayer. The course includes visits to a Buddhist community and a Christian community. Each student will also explore religion in his or her own family, writing a paper based on interviews with family members. This course fulfills a Humanities distribution requirement for Oxford College and fulfills 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 Christianity;
- explore and reflect critically on Buddhist and Christian 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 & VIDEOS

Books:

- Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*
- Sandra S. Frankiel, *Christianity: A Way of Salvation*
- Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen*
- C. S. Lewis, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*

Readings available on electronic reserve* (except the first one, which I will hand out at our first class meeting):

- Huston Smith, *The World's Religions*: ch. I, "Point of Departure"
- Charles Prebish, "Charles Prebish Surveys the Buddhist Landscape," *Shambhala Sun*, March 2002.
- 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*: ch. 4, "At the Marrow: Practice and Belief," pp. 93-103 ("Zen")
- Huston Smith, *The World's Religions*: ch. VIII, "Christianity"
- V. A. Howard and J. H. Barton, *Thinking on Paper*: ch. 1, "Writing Is Thinking"; ch. 2, "From First to Last Draft"
- Martin E. Marty, "Protestant Christianity in the World and in America," pp. 29-34, from Jacob Neusner, ed., *World Religions in America: An Introduction*
- Andrew M. Greeley, "The Catholics in the World and in America," from Jacob Neusner, ed., *World Religions in America: An Introduction*
- Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*: ch. 29, "Mental Prayer"; ch. 30, "Distractions"; ch. 31, "The Gift of Understanding"
- Taitetsu Unno, *River of Fire, River of Water: An Introduction to the Pure Land Tradition of Shin Buddhism*: ch. 1, "The Historical Legacy"; ch. 2, "The Color Gold"; ch. 5, "Primal Vow"; ch. 6, "Nembutsu: The Name that Calls"
- Ruben L. F. Habito, *Living Zen, Loving God*: "Seeing into One's Nature" and "The Enlightened Samaritan"

***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. From the “Choose an Instructor” menu, choose “Boykin, Kim.”
 - c. Click “Lookup Classes.”
 - d. 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.

Videos:

- *Heart of Tibet: An Intimate Portrait of the 14th Dalai Lama*
- *The Taizé Community*
- *Merton: A Film Biography*
- *The Still Point: Introduction to Zen Meditation*

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance, preparation, and participation (10% of your grade). Attendance in class, careful preparation for class, and active class participation are expected and are important for the learning process in this course. Please do the readings before the class for which they are assigned, and *bring the texts(s) for the day to class with you*. (Note that this means you will need to print out the reserve readings; you can’t just read them online.) For most class sessions, preparation also includes completing brief written assignments—labeled with a “S” in the schedule—intended to enhance your understanding of the reading and to develop your skills for engaged reading. You will not hand these in, so they may be handwritten. We will often use these as the basis for class discussions and activities. Please be on time for class. (Arriving late will be particularly discourteous and awkward in this class, since our classroom is quite full and you will have to squeeze around other people to find a seat.)

2. Two quizzes, one on Buddhism and one on Christianity (20% each), based on the readings, lectures, videos, and class discussions.

3. Two 4-page papers* on visits to religious communities (15% each). Each student will visit one Buddhist community and one Christian community to be a participant/observer in a service, meditation session, or similar event. I will give you a list of suggested communities for site visits. (You may visit communities not on this list, with my *prior* permission.) Since part of the purpose of these visits is for you to encounter religious traditions with which you are unfamiliar, Christian and Buddhist students should not visit a community from their own denomination or tradition. Each paper should include, first, 3 to 3 1/2 pages of detailed *description* of your visit (the place, the people, the event, etc.) and, second, half a page to a page of *reflection* (a thought or two about the visit or arising from it—e.g., theological reflections, sociological or anthropological analyses, comparisons with your own religious tradition or community, musings on the role of religion in your life).

4. A 10- to 12-page paper* on the history of religion in your family (20%). Interview *at least three* members of your family, from your parents’ generation or before, including, if possible, at least one member of your grandparents’ generation. Ask about their religious (and/or nonreligious) history and what they know of their ancestors’ (non)religious history; and ask about their (non)religious views and practices. These “interviews” may be done in person or by phone, letter, or email. If you do the interviews in person or by phone, you may want to tape them (with the interviewee’s permission). At least two of your interviews should be completed by Tues., Nov. 29, when we will discuss them in class. Based on your interviews, 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.

*PAPERS:

Format: Papers should be double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides, and stapled (no covers, folders, 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.

Citing sources: When quoting, paraphrasing, or otherwise taking information from a text, you must cite your source. A concise guide to using quotations can be found at www.writingcenter.emory.edu/quotesource; a more detailed guide to quoting and paraphrasing can be found at www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QuotingSources.html. I would suggest using the Turabian/Chicago style for your footnotes 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 www.libs.uga.edu/ref/turabian.html for examples of note forms and bibliographic forms in this style.

Submitting papers: The four-page papers should be handed in at the beginning of the class period in which they are due. (If you cannot attend class that day, give your paper to a fellow student to hand in for you.) The final paper should be

given to Melissa Shrader, the administrative assistant for the Humanities Division, in Humanities 108, by 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14. Please do not email me your papers. ***I will not accept late papers*** in this class; please do not ask for extensions. Do your site visits early and get started on your papers early, so that if the event you planned to attend gets cancelled or 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.

GRADING SCALE: The “plus-minus” system will be used in this class (i.e., 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 www.emory.edu/OXFORD/CampusLife/Policies/honor.html). Let us all conduct ourselves honorably.

OFFICE HOURS

On Tuesdays, I will have “office hours” over lunch in the dining hall immediately after class and office hours in my office—Humanities 205—from 2:00 to 2:45 p.m. Please come talk to me so I won’t be lonely and bored! 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. If you cannot see me during these times, please see me after class (or email me) about arranging another time to meet.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS & ASSIGNMENTS

(subject to minor modifications, if necessary)

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

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

Thurs., Sept. 1: introductions—to the course and to each other

Tues., Sept. 6: religions as wisdom traditions

📖 Smith reading, ch. I.

✍️ Number the paragraphs of the reading. Write the paragraph numbers down the left side of a piece of paper, and for each paragraph, write a short phrase—*no more than five words*—indicating the central topic or main point of the paragraph. (You won’t be turning this in, so it’s fine to handwrite it. We will use this as the basis for a small-group exercise in class.)

BUDDHISM

Thurs., Sept. 8: the Buddha (& planning visits to Buddhist communities)

📖 Keown: ch. 2, and map 1 (in the front of the book).

✍️ On map 1, mark the locations where the Buddha was born, was enlightened, preached his first sermon, and died.

👉 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.)

Tues., Sept. 13: samsara, karma, rebirth

📖 Keown: ch. 3; you may skip the sections “The Buddhist Universe” & “The Three Spheres of Existence.”

✍️ Based on the reading, write brief definitions (one to two sentences each) of samsara and karma.

Thurs., Sept. 15: the Four Noble Truths

📖 Keown: ch. 4.

✍️ Based on the reading, write brief definitions (one to two sentences each) of *dukkha*, *tanha*, origination-in-dependence, nirvana-in-this-life, and final nirvana.

Tues., Sept. 20: branches of Buddhism; Mahayana teachings

- 📖 Keown: 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.
- ✍️ In one sentence each, explain three significant differences between Mahayana Buddhism and the earlier form of Buddhism.

Thurs., Sept. 22: Vajrayana Buddhism, Tibet, & the 14th Dalai Lama (video: *Heart of Tibet*)

- 📖 Keown: pp. 79-81 (“Tibet”).
- ✍️ Based on the reading, write brief definitions of Vajrayana, tantra, and Dalai Lama.

Tues., Sept. 27: Buddhism in the United States

- 📖 Prebish article (you may skip the sidebar “Searching for a Center?”).
- 👉 Some questions you should be able to answer after reading Prebish: What types of Buddhism do “convert” Buddhists and “ethnic Asian” Buddhists gravitate toward? Which forms of American Buddhism do and do not focus on meditation? What is Soka Gakkai?
- 📖 Seager reading.
- ✍️ Based on the Seager reading, write brief definitions of Pure Land, Amida, shinjin, and Nembutsu.
- 📖 Coleman reading (start where I drew the big arrow).
- ✍️ Based on the Coleman reading, write brief definitions of zazen, kinhin, koan, and sesshin.

Thurs., Sept. 29: quiz on Buddhism

CHRISTIANITY

Tues., Oct. 4: Jesus the Christ; Christianity as a wisdom tradition (& planning visits to Christian communities)

*Rosh Hashanah;
Navaratri;
1st day of Ramadan*

- 📖 Smith reading, pp. 317-46.
- ✍️ For each of the six major sections of this reading, write one sentence capturing the main point.
- 👉 Consider which churches you would be most interested in visiting, and bring your calendar to class. (In class, we will form groups for church visits.) Or if you know someone who attends a nearby church—not a service on the Oxford campus—you might want to ask if you can go along with them.

Thurs., Oct. 6: the development of Christianity in late antiquity

- 📖 Frankiel: pp. 1-28.
- ✍️ In each paragraph of the reading, circle a word or short phrase indicating the main topic of the paragraph.

Tues., Oct. 11: [no class: semester break]

Thurs., Oct. 13: Christianity in the Middle Ages; European reformations; writing

Yom Kippur

- 📖 Frankiel: pp. 28-48.
- ✍️ In each paragraph of the reading, circle a word or short phrase indicating the main topic of the paragraph.
- 📖 Howard & Barton reading.
- ✍️ 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.

Tues., Oct. 18: discussion of Buddhist site visits

Sukkoth

- 📄 paper due: Buddhist site visit

Thurs., Oct. 20: new worlds; modern developments; ecumenism: Taizé (video: *The Taizé Community*)

Birth of the Bab

- 📖 Frankiel: pp. 48-56.
- ✍️ In each paragraph of the reading, circle a word or short phrase indicating the main topic of the paragraph.

Tues., Oct. 25: Protestantism, especially in the United States

*Shemini Atzereth;
Simchat Torah*

- 📖 Smith reading, pp. 356-62.
- ✍️ In one sentence each, summarize Smith’s two main points about Protestantism.
- 📖 Marty reading.
- ✍️ Summarize each of the six sections of the Marty reading in one sentence.

- Thurs., Oct. 27:** **Catholicism, especially in the United States** (video: *Merton: A Film Biography*)
 📖 Smith reading, pp. 346-52.
 ✍ In one sentence each, summarize Smith's two main points about Catholicism.
 📖 Greeley reading (including endnotes).
 ✍ In one sentence, explain what Greeley is doing in the first two paragraphs of the chapter. Choose two of the nine statements in the second sentence of the chapter, and for each one, write in one sentence how Greeley might reply.

Tues., Nov. 1: **quiz on Christianity**
All Saints Day;
Diwali

BUDDHIST & CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL PRACTICES (✍ Written assignments TBA.)

- Thurs., Nov. 3:** **Zen practice: introduction to Zen training** (video excerpt: *The Still Point*)
Eid-al-Fitr 📖 Kapleau: ch. I, lectures 1-6, 8, 11; & pp. 327-338.
- Tues., Nov. 8:** **Zen practice: shikantaza & koan practice**
 📖 Kapleau: ch. I, pp. 7-9 (from "At the time of" through "which satori confers."), lecture 7; & ch. II.
- Thurs., Nov. 10:** **Zen practice: sesshin, kensho, enlightenment**
 📖 Kapleau: ch. V, pp. 199-240; & ch. VIII.
- Tues., Nov. 15:** **discussion of Christian site visits**
 📄 paper due: Christian site visit
- Thurs., Nov. 17:** **Zen practice & Christian contemplative prayer**
 📖 Merton reading (I would suggest reading the last chapter first).
- Tues., Nov. 22:** **Christian verbal prayer**
 📖 Lewis: pp. 3-39.
- Thurs., Nov. 24:** **[no class: happy Thanksgiving!]**
- Tues., Nov. 29:** **discussion of family interviews**
 ✍ At least two of your interviews need to be done by today. Bring to class whatever notes you have for your paper (e.g., notes from your interviews, letters, printouts of email, drafts of sections of your paper).
- Thurs., Dec. 1:** **Christian verbal prayer**
 📖 Lewis: pp. 40-82.
- Tues., Dec. 6:** **Christian verbal prayer**
 📖 Lewis: pp. 83-124.
- Thurs., Dec. 8:** **Christian verbal prayer & Shin Buddhist practice**
rohatsu; Immaculate Conception 📖 Unno reading.
- Tues., Dec. 13:** **course wrap-up**
 📖 Habito reading.
- Wed., Dec. 14:** **paper due: history of religion in your family**
 📄 Give your paper to Melissa Shrader, the administrative assistant for the Humanities Division, in Humanities 108, **by 2:00 p.m.**