

ANS 301R [32155], CTI 310 [29340], R S 302 [42860]

**HISTORY OF THE RELIGIONS OF ASIA**

Spring 2019

Joel Brereton

This course surveys the central beliefs and patterns of life of living religious traditions of Asia. It will focus particularly on the basic texts or narratives of these traditions, on their classical expressions and essential histories, and on the concepts of humanity, the world, and the divine that are distinctive of each. In addition, the course will explore not only what people believe religiously but also what they do religiously. Part of the course, therefore, will consider the ways of life, forms of social action, and rituals practiced by different communities. Not all Asian traditions can be included in a one-semester survey. The traditions chosen originated in Asia, have large numbers of adherents, possess particular historical significance, and represent different cultural areas. By the end of the course, students will have a understanding of the basic histories and orientations of these religious traditions.

**Written Assignments and Attendance:**

Written assignments comprise three interpretive essays on primary texts assigned in the course, two exams, and a final interpretive essay. The final essay is due at the time scheduled for the final exam, Saturday, May 18, at 2pm.

The final grade for written work will be determined as follows:

First exam (midterm)	20%
Second exam (end of term)	20%
First essay	10%
Second and Third essays, each	15%
Final essay	15%
Attendance	5%

We allow up to three unexcused absences. Beyond that number, one point for each unexcused absence may be deducted from the ten points for attendance. Vigorous and informed participation in class discussions can help a grade, especially a marginal one, as can other factors, such as a student's progress or demonstrated effort in the course.

**Computers, Tablets, Smartphones:**

Please do not use computers, tablets, smart phones, or the like in class. I know this request sounds downright Luddite, but these devices inhibit class discussion. I use presentation software in class and I will post presentations after class.

**Grading:**

This class uses the standard UT grading scale of 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, etc. The lower number for each grade is the minimum mark for that grade.

**Posted Materials:**

Assignments, handouts, and additional materials will be posted on Canvas. You can access the Canvas website for this course from <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>

**Special Needs:**

At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Students may contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY, <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability>

**Academic Integrity:**

Be careful not to copy the work of peers or to use material without proper attribution. Whether you are quoting or paraphrasing, you need to indicate the source on which you draw. Nothing can be more disastrous for your grade or for your college record than to be found to have violated the University rules on academic honesty. Students who violate these rules are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course or dismissal from the University or both. If you have any questions about properly utilizing sources, check with the TA or instructor.

**Global Cultures Flag:**

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. All the assignments in this course will concern the practices, beliefs, and histories of Asian cultural groups, both past and present.

**Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas:**

This course counts towards the Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas, a six-course sequence in the great books, ideas, and controversies. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts/> or email the academic director, Professor Lorraine Pangle, at [lorrainepangle@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:lorrainepangle@austin.utexas.edu).

### Religious Holy Days:

According to UT policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least two weeks prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you miss an examination or an assignment in order to observe a religious holy day and you have given timely notification, we will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable period before or after the absence.

### Required Texts:

Willard Oxtoby, Roy Amore, and Amir Hussain, *World Religions: Eastern Traditions* (4th or 5th edition). Oxford University Press.

R.K. Narayan, tr., *The Rāmāyaṇa*. Penguin.

Aśvaghōṣa, *The Buddhacarita: Life of the Buddha*. Patrick Olivelle, tr. On Canvas.

Burton Watson, tr., *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. Columbia University Press. [B. Watson, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* is the same book with a different system of transcription and can replace *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*]

Basho, Matsuo, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. On Canvas or at <https://minookatap.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/the-narrow-road-to-the-deep-north.pdf>

With the exceptions of *The Buddhacarita: Life of the Buddha* and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, all the above books will be available on reserve at the PCL. Note that there is an electronic version of *Zhuangzi* available through the library. Additional assigned readings, which have their titles in quotation marks, will be available on the Canvas site.

The following schedule is subject to change according to the unfolding dictates of *karma* and the shifting course of the *Dao*.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
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### HINDUISM

*January*

23	Introduction & the Traditional Hindu World	“Indra and the Ants”
25	The Traditional Hindu World	Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 30–103, 5ed. pp. 29–107, “Hindu Divinities”
28	The Story of Rāma	<i>The Rāmāyaṇa</i> , “Rāmāyaṇa Who’s Who”
30	The Story of Rāma	<i>The Rāmāyaṇa</i>

## February

- |   |                                |  |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | The Story of Rāma              | <i>The Rāmāyaṇa</i>  |
| 4 | Images of Beauty: Kṛṣṇa        | “Baby Kṛṣṇa,” “Kṛṣṇa and Kāliya,” “Stolen Clothes,” “Rāsālīlā”   |
| 6 | Images of Power: Śiva and Devī | “Brahmā, Vishnu, and the Liṅga of Śiva,” “Śiva and the Pine Forest Sages,” “Durgā and the Buffalo Demon” |
| 8 | Images of Power: Śiva and Devī |  |

## ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA

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|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 11 | The Unity and Diversity of Islam | “Foundations,” Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 383–399, 5ed. 400–419 |
| 13 | Islam in South Asia              | <b>Essay</b> on <i>The Ramayana</i>                   |

## BUDDHISM

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|----|--------------------------|---|
| 15 | Introduction to Buddhism | Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 186–217, 5ed. pp. 199–231  |
| 18 | The Buddha’s Life        | “Mahākapi (Great Monkey) Jātaka,” <i>Buddhacarita: The Life of the Buddha</i>                     |
| 20 | The Buddha’s Life        | <i>Buddhacarita: The Life of the Buddha</i> ,<br>“Buddhacarita Parinirvāṇa (Death of the Buddha)” |
| 22 | The Four Noble Truths    | “The Questions of King Milinda”   |
| 25 | The Four Noble Truths    | “Path”  |
| 27 | The Four Noble Truths    |   |

## March

- |   |                        |   |
|---|------------------------|---|
| 1 | The Four Noble Truths  | “Meditation”                              |
| 4 | Mahāyāna: Bodhisattvas | Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 217–261, 5th ed. 232–280 |

6	Mahāyāna: Buddhas	<b>Essay</b> on <i>The Life of the Buddha</i>
8	Mahāyāna: Emptiness	“Heart Sūtra”
11	Mahāyāna: Mind Only	
13	Vajrayāna	
15	<b>First Exam</b>	
18-23		Spring Break

### CHINESE TRADITIONS

25	Three Schools / Four Traditions	Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 264–304, 5th ed. pp. 281–322
27	Chinese Popular Religion	
29	Chinese Popular Religion	

#### *April*

1	The Confucian Tradition	“The Metal-Bound Coffin” “Filial Exemplars”
3	The Confucian Tradition	“Mencius”
5	The Daoist Tradition	Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 304–338, 5ed. pp. 322–358, <i>Zhuangzi</i>
8	The Daoist Tradition	<i>Zhuangzi</i>
10	The Daoist Tradition	“Laozi Daodejing Book I,” pp. 157-177
12	Religious Daoism	
15	Buddhism in China	“Mulian”
17	Buddhism in China	
19	Buddhism in China	<b>Essay</b> on <i>Zhuangzi</i>

## JAPANESE TRADITIONS

- 22 Shintō “Nature, Gods, and Man in Japan” (view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PsNjG5CTgU>)
- 24 Shintō Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 342–355, 5ed. pp. 359–373
- 26 Shintō
- 29 Zen Oxtoby, 4ed. pp. 351–379, 5ed. pp. 373–399
- May*
- 1 Zen
- 3 **Second Exam**
- 6 Zen Poetry *Basho’s Narrow Road*
- 8 Bashō *Basho’s Narrow Road*
- 10 Bashō *Basho’s Narrow Road*
- 18 **Final Essay**