

HISTORY OF RELIGIONS OF ASIA

ANS 301R / R S 302 / CTI 310 · Fall 2018

Instructor: Dr. Oliver Freiberger

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This course offers a survey of major religious traditions of Asia (Hinduism, Buddhism in South and East Asia, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto). It focuses on the historical development of their beliefs, practices, rituals, and customs in social context. The course will combine lectures with class discussions on readings. At the end of the semester, students will have a basic knowledge of the beliefs and practices of those religious traditions, have read important religious texts and discussed issues pertinent to the religions' adherents, and have a more refined sense of how the category "religion" may be applied. All this enables students to develop a greater awareness of global cultural diversity and will, hopefully, spark the desire to study some of those religions more deeply.

Course materials:

1. Willard G. Oxtoby, Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, eds. *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
2. R. K. Narayan, *The Mahabharata: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
3. *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*, translated by Burton Watson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
4. Readings provided as PDF files on Canvas.

Grading

Attendance/participation: 20%

Two quizzes: 20% (10% each)

Two short essays: 20% (10% each)

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 20%

Grading scale: 93–100: A. 90–92: A-. 87–89: B+. 83–86: B. 80–82: B-. 77–79: C+. 73–76: C. 70–72 C-. 67–69: D+. 63–66: D. 60–62: D-. 0–59: F.

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. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

Scholastic dishonesty

Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct>.

Students with disabilities

The Faculty Council's Educational Policy Committee states, "Providing a quality educational experience for all students includes adapting the instructional environment to accommodate the educational needs of students with information about Services for Students with Disabilities through the course syllabus." At the beginning of the semester, students should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office (phone 471-6259), which will prepare an appropriate letter to the instructor to guide you. See also the SSD website at

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/>.

Important dates

Sep. 14 Essay on Mahābhārata due

Sep. 24 Quiz 1
 Oct. 19 Midterm exam
 Nov. 5 Essay on Zhuangzi due
 Nov. 16 Quiz 2
 TBA Final exam

Schedule and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction; Indus civilization; Vedic religion (Aug. 29/31)
 Week 2: Vedic religion; classes, castes, and stages of life; epics (Sep. 5/7)
 Week 3: Hindu gods; bhakti (Sep. 10/12/14)
 Week 4: Hindu religious practice (Sep. 17/19/21)
 Week 5: Buddhist origins; the Buddha; Early teachings (Sep. 24/26/28)
 Week 6: Early Buddhist teachings; Monastic and lay communities; Theravāda (Oct 1/3/5)
 Week 7: Mahāyāna; Vajrayāna (Oct. 8/10/12)
 Week 8: Vajrayāna; Buddhist practice (Oct. 15/17/19)
 Week 9: Chinese traditions: introduction; Ancient traditions; Confucius (Oct. 22/24/26)
 Week 10: Confucianism; Daoist foundations and practices (Oct. 29/31/Nov. 2)
 Week 11: Chinese Buddhism: arrival and development (Nov. 5/7/9)
 Week 12: Interactions between traditions (Nov. 12/14/16)
 Week 13: Ancient Japanese traditions; Shintō (Nov. 19)
 Week 14: Shintō; Japanese Buddhism (Nov. 26/28/30)
 Week 15: Japanese Buddhism (Dec. 3/5/7)
 Week 16: Review (Dec. 10)

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus during the semester.