

REL 130 EB – INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIONS

Spring 2012
MWF 1:40-2:40
Asbury Hall 202

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Office hours: MW 3:00-4:30 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class covers four major Asian religious traditions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism (or Taoism). In focusing on these specific Asian religious traditions we will consider the origins, developments, practices, and philosophical perspectives of those individual traditions in detail. We will also explore meaningful comparative analyses of these traditions, examining the various ways that they have influenced each other and responded to shared human concerns.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS**EXAMS**

Final grades will be based in part on three equally weighted exams. These exams will be essay papers, each 5 to 7 pages in length. Each will address specific questions provided in advance and requiring you to actively and critically engaged material from three individual units of the course: (1) Hinduism, (2) Buddhism in India, and (3) religions of China.

READING AND VIEWING QUESTIONS

Over the course of the semester we will read several primary sources from the respective traditions that we are covering. We will also view several documentary films illustrating these religions as lived traditions. For most but not all of these readings and films you will be given questions to help you focus your engagement with these materials and to help you prepare material for your semester exams.

NB: you will be reading texts originally composed in foreign languages by people who lived in worlds historically, culturally, and conceptually different from your own. Understanding these texts is difficult. It is not impossible. You will need to give yourself an adequate amount of time and make serious effort to understand these texts.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Failure to attend, prepare for, and participate in class will negatively affect your course grade. However, because students at DePauw are *expected* to attend, prepare for, and participate in class, neither attendance nor in-class participation will directly factor into your final grade. In other words, you will not be directly rewarded for meeting basic requirements for being a student at DePauw. Frequent absence, lack of preparation, and a reluctance to engage the material through classroom discussion will significantly impair your ability to adequately consider semester paper topics, to express your views in writing, and to perform adequately on exams. Should you miss a class for any reason it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from a fellow student (not from your instructor). I am, however, available during office hours and by appointment to discuss any questions or problems you may encounter regarding the course material.

GRADES

Your final course grade will be determined by your performance on the assigned semester papers and reading/viewing questions mentioned above. Each of these four components represents 25% of your final course grade.

Paper 1: 25% of final grade

Paper 2: 25% of final grade

Paper 3: 25% of final grade

Reading questions: 25% of final grade

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to uphold the standards for academic honesty established at DePauw.

Students should familiarize themselves with the relevant section of the student handbook:

<http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbooks.asp?ID=521&parentid=518>

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and University administered activities and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located in Harrison Hall, 302 A, 765-658-6267.

It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation with faculty and staff members within the first two weeks of class or within one week of the letter's receipt. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Prothero, Stephen R. *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World--and Why Their Differences Matter*. New York: HarperOne, 2010.
- Miller, Barbara Stoler. *The Bhagavad-Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*. New York: Bantam Books, 2004.
- Confucius, and Edward G. Slingerland. *The essential analects: selected passages with traditional commentary*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 2006.
- Laozi, Burton Watson, Stephen Addiss, and Stanley Lombardo. *Tao Te Ching*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1993
- **Additional, required readings** (marked with an asterisk * in the course schedule below) are available electronically through Moodle

COURSE SCHEDULE

M – Jan. 30: course introduction

W – Feb. 1: Thinking about religion

* Miner - “Body Rituals Among the Nacirema”

* Berger - “Religion and World Construction”

INDIC RELIGIONS**HINDUISM**

F – Feb. 3: Introduction to Hinduism

Prothero – pp 131-138

M – Feb. 6: Vedic Hinduism

Film: “Altar of Fire”

W – Feb. 8: Vedic Hinduism

Prothero – pp 138-144

* “The Primeval Sacrifice”

F – Feb 10: Vedic Hinduism

* *The Law Code of Manu* - “Creation” (pp 13-22)

M – Feb. 13: Philosophical Hinduism

Prothero – pp 144-150

* *Chandogya Upanishad* (part six)

W – Feb. 15: Philosophical Hinduism

* *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*

F – Feb. 17: Devotional Hinduism

Prothero – pp 150-159 (“Devotional Hinduism”, “Trinity” and “Puja”)

M – Feb. 20: Devotional Hinduism

Prothero – pp159 – 164

Film: “Hinduism: 330 Million Gods”

W – Feb. 22: Devotional Hinduism

The Bhagavad-gita pp 23 – 72 (“The First Teaching” through “The Sixth Teaching”)

F – Feb 24: Devotional Hinduism

The Bhagavad-gita pp 73 – 108 (“The Seventh Teaching” through “The Eleventh Teaching”)

M – Feb 27: Devotional Hinduism

The Bhagavad-gita pp 109 – 146 (“The Twelfth Teaching” through “The Eighteenth Teaching”)

W – March 1: **EXAM I**

BUDDHISM

F – March 3: Mainstream Buddhism

Prothero – pp 169 – 177

* “The Noble Search”

M – March 6: Mainstream Buddhism

Prothero – pp 177 – 184

W – March 8: Mainstream Buddhism

* “The Way to Meditation”

F – March 10: Mainstream Buddhism

Prothero – pp 184 - 186

* *Questions of King Milinda*

M – March 13: Mainstream Buddhism: Sangha

Film: “Buddhism: In the Footprint of the Buddha – India”

W – March 15: Mahayana Buddhism: skillful means

Prothero – pp 186 – 190

* *The Lotus Sutra* “Expedient Devices” and “Parable”

F – March 17: Mahayana Buddhism: Buddhas

* *The Lotus Sutra* “The Lifespan of the Thus-Come One”

M – March 20 : Mahayana Buddhism: bodhisattvas

* *Way of the Bodhisattva* (selection)

W – March 22: Mahayana Buddhism: emptiness

Prothero – pp 193 – 196

* *The Heart Sutra*

F – March 24: Zen and Tantric Buddhism

Prothero – pp 190 – 91, 196 - 198

* “Autobiography” of the Sixth Patriarch

M – March 26: *spring recess*

W – March 28: *spring recess*

F – March 30: *spring recess*

M – April 2: **EXAM II**

SINITIC RELIGIONS

CONFUCIANISM

- W – April 4: Confucianism
Prothero – pp 101 – 109
- F – April 6: Confucianism
Prothero – pp 109 – 115
The Analects Books VII and X (pp 86 – 91, 101 – 105)
- M – April 9: Confucianism
Prothero – pp 115 – 118
* *The Analects* Books II, III and IV (pp 63 – 75)
- W – April 11: Confucianism
* *The Book of Rites* selections
- F – April 13: Confucianism
* “Han Yu’s Memorial on Buddhism”
- M – April 16: Confucianism
Prothero – pp 119 – 120

TAOISM

- W – April 18: Taoism
Prothero pp 289 – 293
- F – April 20: Taoism
Tao te ching Book I (pp 5-42)
- M – April 23: Taoism
Prothero – pp 293 – 299
Tao te ching Book II (pp 45 -88)
- W – April 25: Taoism
Prothero – pp 299 – 303 (*wuwei, dao, de*)
- F – April 27: Taoism
* *Zhuangzi* (selection)
- M – April 30: Taoism
* *The Neiye*
- W – May 2: Taoism
Prothero – pp 303 – 307
* “The Law of the Spirits”
- F – May 4: Taoism
Prothero – pp 279 – 288
* *Spellbinding*
- M – May 7: Taoism
Prothero – pp 307 – 311
* *Xiang'er Commentary*
- W – May 9: Taoism
Film: “Taoism: A Question of Balance – China”

Final Exam: May 12 (Sat) 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.