

**Religious Studies Department
University of California, Riverside**

**Syllabus RLST 005
Introduction to Asian Religions
Summer 2019
(07/29/2019- 08/31/2019)**

Lectures: Monday & Wednesday, 09:10 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.

Room: Sproul Hall 2355

Discussion Sections and Room: see iLearn.

Instructor:

Dr. Muhamad Ali

Office Hours: Monday, 12:30-01:30 p.m.

Teaching Assistant:

Course Description

The Master said, "Only one who bursts with enthusiasm do I instruct; only one who bubbles with excitement do I enlighten. If I hold up one corner and a person cannot come back to me with the other three, I do not continue the lesson."

Analects 7.8, 5th century BCE.

Asia cannot be well understood without comprehension about varied expressions of religious belief and practice, their history and impacts upon contemporary development. This introductory course is to familiarize students with the ways in which sacred realities and practices have become an important and dynamic factor in Asia. Many religions have originated from Asia, such as Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism/Taoism, and Shinto, although other religions, such as Christianity and Islam, have penetrated much of Asia as well. Particular emphasis will be given upon the religions' origins, beliefs/doctrines, scriptures, rituals, practices, and contemporary issues. In order to be successful in the course, students need to be curious, appreciative, and critical.

Learning Objectives

- **Developing Academic Skills:** a. Thinking critically of religion in general and of religions in Asia in particular; b. Reading texts and speaking about religion critically; c. Writing academic essays about religion.
- **Understanding Key Concepts,** such as religion, the sacred, scripture, belief, ritual, and practice.
- **Understanding Key Topics:** the historical and geographical origins of religions, their histories, scriptures, deities, beliefs and doctrines, rituals, cultural expressions, differentiation, interaction and adaptation, and recent developments.

Requirements and Grading

- **A Short Essay** about “*what I know and what I don’t know about religion in general and religions in Asia AND what I want to learn from this course*”: 2 pages, double-spaced, due in class on Monday, July 29th or Wednesday, July 31st = 2.5% of the total grade.
- **Midterm Exam** in class, on **Monday, August 21th**, 09:10 a.m. -11:00 a.m. =25%.
- **Term Paper**, 4-5 pages, double-spaced; due in class on **Monday, August 26th**. An electronic file submitted through Safe Assignment AND a hard copy in class. No email or proxy. = 20 %
- **Final Exam** in class, on **Friday, August 30th, 2019**, 08:00 a.m.– 10:00 a.m. = 25 %
- **A Short Essay** about “*what I have learned from this course and what I want to pursue next*”. 2 pages, double-spaced. Due in class, **Friday, August 30th**, = 2.5 %.
- **Attendance and Participation** = 10 %
- **TA-led discussion section** = 15 % (Please see your TA’s requirements and grading): Discussion Session will address ‘Discussion Questions’ provided in the textbook as well as any questions the TA and students have.

Please Note:

- There will be no extensions, no incompletes, and no late work.
- No essay assignment will be accepted late without prior approval which will only be given in cases of medical or family emergency (with written proofs submitted to instructor or TA)
- Each student should attend all the lectures unless there is a medical or family emergency. The TA has attendance policies, so please follow them.

Required Reading/Textbook:

Roy C. Amore, Amir Hussain, and Willard G. Oxtoby, Fifth Edition, ***World Religions: Eastern Traditions*** (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019) or any earlier edition (Page numbers in this syllabus are based on the fifth edition, so please check the page numbers of each chapter and section).

Please also read Discussion Sessions, Glossary, Further Reading, Recommended Website at the end of each chapter.

Additional Readings for your papers and assignments:

1. John Y. Fenton et al, *Religions of Asia*, Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, Third Edition.
2. Robert E. Van Voorst, *Anthology of World Scriptures: Eastern Religions*, Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007. OR Robert van Voorst, *Anthology of Asian Scriptures*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2001.
3. Jonathan Z. Smith, “Religion, Religions, Religious”, in Mark C. Taylor, ed., *Critical Terms for Religious Studies* (* ilearn) and readings posted on iLearn under “Course Materials”

The textbook is available on Reserve at Rivera Library. Some of the films can also be accessed and viewed in the Media Library.

Disabled students: *“Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours.”*

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Week 1:

Monday, July 29th, 2019: Introduction: Syllabus, What is Religion, How humans are religious, Why Study Religion, Methods for the Study of Religion & Hindu Traditions Part 1: Origins; Classical Hinduism

Required Readings:

- Chapter 1: “Studying Eastern Religions”, by Amore & Hussain, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp.4-26
- Chapter 2: “Hindu Traditions”, by Narayanan, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 30-47.

Wednesday, July 31st, 2019: Hindu Traditions Part 2: Deities of classical Hinduism, Caste and the Laws of Manu, Vedanta, Yoga, Tantra, Hinduism in Southeast Asia, Colonialism, Reform and Revival. **A short essay is due in class.**

Required Reading:

- Chapter 2: “Hindu Traditions”, by Vashuda Narayanan, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 47-74

Week 2:

Monday, August 5th, 2019: Hindu traditions Part 3: Practice, Rituals, Arts, and Recent Developments & **Chapter 3**, Sikh Traditions Part 1: Guru Nanak, The Ten Gurus

Required Readings:

- “Hindu Traditions” by Narayanan, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 74-107
- “Sikh Traditions”, by Pashaura Singh, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 114-126

Wednesday, August 7th, 2019: Sikh Traditions Part 2: Scriptures, The Four Notions of Guruship, Institutions, Ethics, Practice, Differentiation, Recent Developments; Jaina Traditions Part 1: overview, the early Sangha, sacred literature, early literature, cosmology

Required Readings:

- “Sikh Traditions”, by Singh, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 126-155
- Pashaura Singh, “Sikh Dharam”, 130-148 (*iLearn)
- Chapter 4: “Jaina Traditions” by Anne Vallely, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp.160-172

Week 3:

Monday, August 12th, 2019: Jaina Traditions Part 2: major developments, reform, practice, expressive dimensions, recent developments; Buddhist Traditions Part 1: The Buddha, the Dharma, The Sangha

Required Readings:

- “Jaina Traditions”, by Valley, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby pp. 172 -195
- Chapter 5: “Buddhist Traditions”, by Roy Amore, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 200-224

Wednesday, August 14th, 2019: Buddhist Traditions Part 2: Early Buddhism, Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana, Interaction and Adaptation in East Asia, Cultural Expressions, Buddhism in the Modern World, Recent Developments

Required Reading:

- “Buddhist Traditions”, by Amore, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp.224 -276

Week 4:

Monday, August 19th, 2019: Midterm Exam in Class, 09:10 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.; Confucian Daoist Traditions Part 1: Origins, Confucius, Xunzi

Required Reading:

- Chapter 6: “Chinese and Korean Traditions”, by Terry Tak-ling Woo, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 282- 298

Wednesday, August 21st: Confucian & Daoist Traditions Part 2 (Chinese and Korean Traditions): Daoism, Laozi, Philosophical other kinds of Daoism, the Daodejing, Neo-Confucianism, Encounter with the West, Recent Developments

Required Reading:

- “Chinese & Korean Traditions”, by Tak-ling Woo, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp.282-354.

Week 5:

Monday, August 26th, 2019: Term Paper Due in Class (hardcopy in class and electronic copy via SafeAssignment); Shinto and others (Japanese Traditions): Origins, Literature, Foundations, Ritual, Practice, Recent Developments

Required Reading:

- Chapter 7: “Japanese Traditions”, by John K. Nelson, in Amore, Hussain & Oxtoby, pp. 360- 396

Wednesday, August 28th, 2019: Islam: Origins, Scriptures, Beliefs, Ritual, Practice, Recent Developments, & Current Issues in Religions

Required Readings:

- Michael Feener, “Islam: Historical Introduction and Overview” (*iLearn)
- Muhamad Ali, Chapter “Far from Mecca: Modern Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia” (*iLearn)
- Nelly van Doorn-Harder, “Islam in Southeast Asia”, (*iLearn)
- Chapter 8: Current Issues in Eastern Religions, by Amore & Hussain, pp. 402-418.

Friday, August 30th, 2019: Final Exam at 8:00 – 10 a.m. in the same room (final exam will cover Confucian, Daoist, and other Chinese traditions, Shinto and other Japanese traditions, Islam in Asia, part of the previous religious traditions, and the current Issues in Religion). [A short essay is due in class.](#)