

RELI 1014 Syllabus

Asian Religions

Fall 2013

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Instructor: Holly Jordan

Email Address: hjl@vt.edu

Class Time/Room: TTh 9:30-10:45 a.m., Major William 334. CRN: 15927

Office Hours/Office: Wednesdays 2-4 p.m. and by appointment, Lane Hall 211 (first bay, second floor)

Liberal Education Information:

Three credits. Satisfies CLE Areas 2 and 7.

Course Description:

Religion and Culture Course Description: The nature of "religion," approaches to understanding "religion," traditional and contemporary features of Asian "religions" (including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto), including their manifestations in the USA and their involvement in critical issues in a global context. (3H,3C).

Texts for the Course:

The required textbook for this class is Willard G. Oxtoby's World Religions: Eastern Traditions, Third Edition. In addition, PDFs and links will be posted on Scholar. Please bring that day's readings every day to class.

Course Structure and Rules of Conduct:

The structure of our classes will change from session to session. Some days will rely more on lecture; others will be student-led. As this is a class happening in real time, a day's scheduled events may change if there is an item in the news worth bringing to the table. As unstructured as this sounds, I do have a few rules. First, just be the adults you are. I expect everyone to treat both the material and each other with respect. Religious *tolerance* is expected from each student. At no time will you have to discuss your personal religious beliefs, but if you do, assume that you will be treated with courtesy. I am big fan of Virginia Tech's *Principles of Community*. They will be in force in any academic setting: class, Scholar, blogs. Please be aware of them and act accordingly: <http://www.vt.edu/diversity/principles-of-community.html>.

Second, come to class on time. If you are consistently late to class without explanation, your participation grade will suffer.

Third, use whatever technology you need to do well in this class (computers, iPads, Kindles, etc.), even if that means quickly looking up a word on your phone's dictionary. That being said, use your technology wisely. If something your doing with your tech is distracting to me or someone else, we may need to have a talk. Bring whatever you need to do well.

Finally, check your email. Set Scholar up to forward messages to your email if you are not good at checking Scholar often. Check your email before class daily to make sure there have not been last-minute handouts or articles sent out.

Attendance Policy:

Come to class. Come to class prepared. If for some reason, you are not prepared that day, still come to class. You are paying for this degree. Come to class.

If you are absent, you still must complete any work due that day. You will be allowed two unexcused absences this semester (I don't feel like it/It's too pretty outside/I just want to eat lunch/etc. days). Use them wisely. More than two will affect your participation grade. Legitimate situations may arise during the semester that keep you from class (illness, family death, religious holiday, etc.). If you plan to be absent for a session, please notify me via email before that session. If you are unable to attend class unexpectedly, please notify me before the next class session with the reason for your absence. Absences ultimately will only be considered "excused" if proper documentation (doctor's note, etc.) is provided within a week of the absence.

Grades Breakdown:

- Hinduism Exam (10%) – For each religion, there will be an online reading quiz covering the information from the Oxtoby text. This can be taken any time during the semester but no later than the last day of lecture about that religion. The quiz will be objective (multiple choice, true/false, matching). There will be a study guide posted in Resources on Scholar.
- Hinduism Paper (15%) – Students will turn in a scholarly analysis paper after we finish studying each religion. Students will pick from predetermined topics or have the opportunity to choose their own topic in conjunction with me. Details (length, format, etc.) are available on Scholar.
- Buddhism Exam (10%)
- Buddhism Paper (15%)
- Confucianism/Daoism/Shinto Exam (10%)
- Confucianism/Daoism Paper (15%)
- Group Presentation (10%): Happening at three times throughout the semester, these presentations will look the secondary religions of Asia. Students will present once during the semester, and sign-ups for presentations will happen early in the semester. Requirements for the presentations are posted under "Resources" on Scholar. Students' grades for presentations will be graded along the following criteria:
 - *Report of individual and group contributions*
 - *Written portion of group project*
 - *Presentation in class*
- Participation (15%): Based on attendance and involvement in class discussions.
- Students in this course will be graded on a plus/minus system (i.e. A, A-, B+):
A: 100-93, A-: 92-90, B+: 89-87, B: 86-83, B-: 82-80, C+: 79-77, C: 76-73, C-: 72-70, D+: 69-67, D: 66-63, D-: 62-60, F: 59-0

Academic Integrity

I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in this class. On all projects, I will make sure students are aware of the expected outcomes and project guidelines. All work will be appraised under the guidelines of Virginia Tech's Honor Code: <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

Students Requiring Accommodations:

If you are a student with special needs or circumstances, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible during my office hours or see me before or after class.

Tentative Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction

August 27 – Introduction to the course

August 29 – Introduction to the course continued; Introduction to technology in this course
(bring your laptop/tablet)

Readings: Oxtoby, Chapter 1

Week 2: Introduction to Hinduism

September 3 – Introduction to Hinduism/Framing Questions

Readings: Oxtoby, Chapter 2

Note: Signups for group projects will happen in-class today.

September 5 – Hinduism Q&A (based on Chapter 2); Ancient Indian religion

Week 3: Hinduism: History and Pantheon

September 10 – Classical Hinduism and Pantheon

September 12 – Ritual and Life-Cycle Ceremonies

Week 4: Hinduism: Holidays and Life-Cycle Ceremonies

September 17 – Women and Hinduism; Modern Hinduism

September 19 – Hinduism Wrap-up; Hinduism exam due by midnight on Scholar.

Week 5: Jainism and Sikhism

September 24 – Jainism presentations

Readings (everyone): Oxtoby, Chapter 4

September 26 – Sikhism presentations

Readings (everyone): Oxtoby, Chapter 3

Note: Hinduism Paper due by midnight on 09/27 on Scholar.

Week 6: Introduction to Buddhism

October 1 – Buddhism/Framing Questions

Readings: Oxtoby, Chapter 5

October 3 – Buddhism Q&A (based on Chapter 5); Life of the Buddha

Week 7: Buddhism: Traditions

October 8 – The 3 Jewels, the 3 Baskets; the 8 moral precepts; Establishment of Buddhism

October 10 – Theravada Buddhism

Week 8: Buddhism: Traditions and Denominations

October 15 – Mahayana Buddhism

October 17 – Mahayana continued; Vajrayana Buddhism

Week 9: Buddhism: Film

October 22 – Begin *I <3 Huckabees*

October 24 – Finish *I <3 Huckabees*

Week 10: Buddhism: Wrap-up

October 29 – Buddhism – Art, Architecture, Buddhas

October 31 – Buddhism – Final Thoughts; Buddhism exam due by midnight on Scholar.

Week 11: Introduction to Chinese Religion

November 5 – Early Chinese Religion/Framing Questions

Readings: Oxtoby, Chapter 6

November 7 – Chinese Religion Q&A (based on Chapter 6); Life of Confucius

Note: Buddhism paper due by midnight on November 8 on Scholar.

Week 12: Confucianism

November 12 – Early Confucianism

November 14 – Neoconfucianism; Confucianism in Korea and Japan; Women in Confucianism

Week 13: Daoism

November 19 – Daoism

November 21 – Neo-Daoism. Confucianism exam due by midnight on Scholar.

Week 14: THANKSGIVING BREAK (No Class)

Week 15: Japanese Religion

December 3 – Shinto Introduction; Creation

Readings: Oxtoby, Chapter 7

December 5 – Modern Japanese Religions

Week 16

December 10 – Shinto Presentations

December 12 – Reading Day

“Final” Exam

December 19 – Confucianism/Daoism paper due by noon on Scholar.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Any changes to this syllabus will be made available to students as soon as possible.