



Asian Religions

Philosophy and Religion 232

UNCW Fall 2019

9:30-10:45 am; Bear Hall 261

Dr. Beverley McGuire

Office: Bear Hall 244

Phone: (910) 962-2879

E-mail: mcguireb@uncw.edu (preferred method of contact
– expect a reply within 24 hours; if you have not heard
from me within that time span, then email me again)

Office hours: by appointment

Course Description:

This course provides a historical and thematic overview of major religious traditions of Asia, including Confucian, Taoist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, Buddhist, and Japanese religions. We will consider ways in which Asian religious practitioners have attempted to understand the nature of the world, human society, and a person's place within them. In examining religious traditions that in many ways seem wholly foreign or “other” in comparison to Western religions, our emphasis will be on the internal logic of each, on the resources that each provides for the construction of meaning, value, and moral vision.

Required Text:

- Randall L. Nadeau, *Asian Religions: A Cultural Perspective*. New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2014. (ISBN: 978-1118471968; \$30.95)

Any other readings will be available through the course website on Canvas, with full bibliographic information – noted by “Canvas” in the syllabus.

Course Website:

To access the course website, go to <https://learn.uncw.edu/> Enter your Username and Password. A copy of the syllabus, readings (other than the required texts), announcements, discussion forums, videos, and other course documents will be available on the site.

Course Goals:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and describe ethical and religious aspects of traditions that have shaped Asian society in the past and present
- Compare and contrast assumptions about the nature of the world, society, and humankind, and how such assumptions influence beliefs, practices, and behaviors of practitioners within these global traditions
- Develop the vocabulary, skills, and sensitivity for effective cross-cultural work

--- COURSE SCHEDULE ---

Note: All readings, videos and assignments in the syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week One: Course Introduction

August 22: Course Introduction

Week Two: The Confucian Tradition

August 27: Chinese perspectives
Watch documentary: "Last Train Home" (2011)
August 29: The Confucian Tradition
Read *Asian Religions*, p. 21-57

Week Three: The Confucian Tradition

September 3: Social Ritual
ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE BY 8 AM
September 6: Unpacking Confucian texts

Week Four: The Taoist Tradition

September 10: Taoist perspectives
Watch documentary: "Taoism: A Question of Balance"
September 12: The Taoist Tradition
Read *Asian Religions*, p. 61-101

Week Five: The Taoist Tradition

September 17: Non-Action
ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE BY 8 AM
September 19: Unpacking Taoist texts

Week Six: The Hindu Tradition

September 24: Religion & consumption
Watch video: "Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion"
Read selections from Sanjay Patel's *The Little Book of Hindu Deities*
September 26: The Hindu Tradition
Read *Asian Religions*, p. 103-138

Week Seven: The Hindu Tradition

October 1: Mindfulness of Consumption
ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE BY 8 AM
October 3: Unpacking Hindu texts

Week Eight: The Sikh Tradition

October 8: The Sikh Tradition
Watch Documentary: "Knights of God"

Read Pashaura Singh, "Sikh Traditions." In *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*, edited by Willard Oxtoby, Roy Amore, and Amir Hussain. Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 104-145.

October 10: **FALL BREAK (No Class)**

Week Ten: The Sikh Tradition

October 15: Mindful Speaking
ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE BY 8 AM

October 17: Unpacking Sikh texts

Week Eleven: The Jain Tradition

October 22: **NO CLASS (Professor at Conference)**

October 24: The Jain Tradition
Watch documentary: "The Last Life of Nirmala"
Read Anne Vallely, "Jaina Traditions." In *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*, edited by Willard Oxtoby, Roy Amore, and Amir Hussain. Fourth Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 147-183.

Week Twelve: The Jain Tradition

October 29: Mindful Walking
ASSIGNMENT 5 DUE BY 8 AM

October 31: Unpacking Jain Texts

Week Thirteen: The Buddhist Tradition

November 5: Buddhist Perspectives
Watch documentary: "Home To Tibet"

November 7: The Buddhist Tradition
Read *Asian Religions*, p. 141-206

Week Fourteen: The Buddhist Tradition

November 12: Meditation
ASSIGNMENT 6 DUE BY 8 AM

November 14: Unpacking Buddhist Texts

Week Fifteen: Japanese Religions

November 19: Japanese Perspectives
Watch documentary: "Shugendo Now"

November 21: Japanese Religions
Read *Asian Religions*, p. 209-235

Week Sixteen: Japanese Religions

November 22: **NO CLASS (Professor at Conference)**
ASSIGNMENT 7 DUE BY 8 AM

November 24: **THANKSGIVING BREAK (No Class)**

Week Seventeen: Conclusion

December 3: Final Reflection

TAKE-HOME TEST DUE BY FRIDAY DECEMBER 5 AT 8 AM

Course Requirements:

PRESENCE & PARTICIPATION (102 points total)

You are expected to be present, prepared, and actively participate in class. Please do not disturb class by entering late or leaving early unless it is absolutely necessary. Any more than three absences will incrementally adversely affect your grade; if you miss more than six classes, you will receive an F for the course. A pattern of weak participation will adversely affect your grade in the course. **Cell phones must be turned off, and no laptops are allowed in the classroom.** Scientific studies have shown that taking notes by hand rather than by laptop is more effective for learning, so in our classroom, you are not allowed to use your laptop or other electronic devices. (See the following paper for more: Pam Muller and Daniel Oppenheimer, "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking," *Psychological Science* 25.6 (June 2014): 1159-1168).

SEVEN ASSIGNMENTS (14 points each; 98 points total)

For each religious tradition that we study, you will complete an assignment – due on the dates above – that brings your experience together with the readings. You should include *at least* two citations from the readings (with page numbers in parenthesis) in your assignment.

ONE TAKE-HOME TEST (100 points)

The take-home test will be posted on the course website a week in advance, and it will be due on Friday December 5 at 8 am. It will be open-note and open-book, and it will consist of short answer questions and an essay question. I will give individual feedback on those within 48 hours.

Course Grades:

Grades for the course will be based on a combination of the following means of evaluating student performance:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) 25% (100 points) | Presence & Participation |
| (2) 30% (120 points) | Assignments |
| (3) 20% (80 points) | Reflective Journal Entries |
| (4) 25% (100 points) | Take-Home Exam |

The grading scale for the course will be as follows:

93 – 100% = A	73 – 76.9% = C
90 – 92.9% = A-	70 – 72.9% = C-
87 – 89.9% = B+	67 – 69.9% = D+
83 – 86.9% = B	63 – 66.9% = D
80 – 82.9% = B-	60 – 62.9% = D-

77 – 79.9% = C+

below 60% = F

With 500 points to be earned during the course, 470 points would be an A, etc.

WRITING SERVICES

The University Learning Center
DePaolo Hall 1056 & 1003, first floor
910.962.7857

Hours:

Sunday, 2 pm – 9 pm
Monday-Thursday, 8 am – 9 pm
Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

<http://www.uncw.edu/ulc/writing/center.html>

TAC (TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE CENTER)

Phone: 910.962.HELP (4357)

Email: tac@uncw.edu

Webpage (for hours, online appts): <http://www.uncw.edu/ITSD/help/TAC.html>

PLAGIARISM

All written work in this course must be original to you. If you consult outside texts, please cite the sources in proper format. This pertains to all external sources (books, journals, newspaper articles, etc.). I will report all suspected cases of plagiarism to the Office of the Dean of Students for review. For further information, please review the Student Academic Honor Code at: <http://uncw.edu/odos/honorcode/>

If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible.