

Fall 2004

**RELIGIONS OF ASIA
RELIGIOUS STUDIES 5 - Sections 1**

- INSTRUCTOR:** Shigeo H. Kanda
- OFFICE:** Trinity Hall 244
- OFFICE HOURS:** MW: 10:00 am-11:00 am
M: 5:30 pm-6:30 pm
T: 9:00 am-11:00 am
- TELEPHONE:** 898-4165 or 898-5661 (Dept. Office)
Email: skanda@csuchico.edu (no attachments)
- COURSE TIME / PLACE:** MWF- 9:00- 9:50 am – Tehama106
- REQUIRED TEXTS:** Oxtoby, W., World's Religions: Eastern Traditions (2nd edition)
Smith,H., The World's Religions
Van Voorst, R., Anthology of Asian Scriptures

Selected Readings on Reserve in Library
- COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** See attached documents.
- GRADING PROCEDURES:** **A. Two mid-term and final exams evaluated as equal in weight.**

Dates to be announced. No make-ups!!! Stay healthy, exercise, eat well, and say your prayers and/or chant your mantras. Exams include multiple choice and essay questions. Expect the **first exam** by the end of the fifth or sixth week of the semester.

Final Exam Date: Monday, December 13, 2004 -10:00 am-11:50 am . Date is firm, no exceptions.

B. One paper (do not exceed 5 pages, excluding cover page, endnotes, and bibliography):

Papers due: December 8, 2004 (Wednesday). No late papers!!!

Suggested topics will be handed out after the first mid-term. Submit a brief statement in writing of what your topic will be before submitting final essay.

C. Regular class attendance a must !!! Class discussions/participation highly encouraged. From time-to-time roll will be taken to verify regular attendance. Class participation

is highly encouraged, so be prepared to raise questions and express how you "feel" about these religions.

D. You are required to attend 4 university-sponsored, on-campus cultural events, preferably "Asian" in scope, during the semester. Part of your class participation requirement will be met when you submit a brief written statement describing each event you attended. **Submit all written statements no later than December 8, 2004 during the class hour.** Cultural events are: musical performances, drama, art exhibits, public lectures, a fine-arts demonstration, poetry readings, etc. I will lower final grade, if you fail to submit these cultural events

GRADING: Letter Grade: A-F or C/NC

This course meets the General Education requirements of area C, section 3. In light of this fact, this course will provide students with readings in primary sources. In addition, this course will fulfill not just one but all three of the sub-requirements of area C-3, which include the following: 1) a critical historical reading of the material under study (and involving several centuries of both theistic and non-theistic metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical thought); 2) an analytic study of several major problems in these areas that include reference to the history of these problems; and 3) attention to more than one major artistic, literary, or philosophical figure in relation to a significant issue of either current public or intellectual import (including biographical information, development of the problems dealt with, and critical appraisal of the figures' achievements).

You must take course for grade if you are applying it to General Education.
Course satisfies the Non-Western Studies requirement of General Education.

Students with Certified Disabilities:

Please notify instructor of any special needs relating to your disability within the first two weeks of the semester. We will make every effort to facilitate your success in this course. Please note that you may be required to show documentation of your disability. Contact DSS Office for procedures.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND EXPECTATIONS

This course introduces a Brahmacarin (student of religion) to some of the salient features of the religious traditions and cultural symbols associated with Asian civilizations. The course covers Hinduism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Sikhism and Shintoism will also be briefly discussed. Students are expected to study the assigned reading materials. As the course develops the students should familiarize themselves with a few "mantram" (technical terms that could help the initiate to accumulate karma for a better grade in the course) related to those traditions under discussion. A list of terms and some factual, historical information will be available from time-to-time in lectures, handouts, and in the readings.

The order in which each tradition will be studied is as follows:

1. Hinduism/Jainism/Zoroastrianism/Sikhism (6-7 weeks)
2. Buddhism (Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana) (5-6 weeks)
3. Chinese Religions (Taoism and Confucianism) (3-4 weeks)

Periodically, students will have an opportunity to see videos on each of the above religious traditions. Tantric acts of a "left-handed" sort will not be shown since they may be contrary to the established norms and rituals of CSU, Chico. We can discuss the subject, but cannot publicly demonstrate it in an "exoteric fashion."

The requirements for the course (*marga* or *yoga* necessary for achieving *moksha*, *nirvana*, or *wu-wei*) are as follow:

1. Study the assigned reading materials and those on reserve in the library.
2. Attend class regularly. Avoid missing too many lectures. If you miss a lecture, get notes from another *Brahmacarin*.
3. Be ready to discuss the material in class.
4. Take all three exams as scheduled. Dates will be announced two weeks in advance. **No make-ups. Avoid planning** to attend a friend's wedding, funerals for your grandparents, vacation trips with mom and/or dad to Europe, Cabo, or Cancun (Asia - an exception?), or schedule job interviews on exam day. Expect the **first exam** by the end of the fifth or sixth \ week of the semester.
5. Submit a paper not to exceed 5 pages. Failure to submit a paper will automatically lower one's final grade for the course. Submit brief statement in writing of what your paper topic will be prior to writing up final essay. A list of suggested topics will be handed out after first midterm exam. **NO COMPASSION (KARUNA) FOR LATE PAPERS.**
6. Submit in writing two university-sponsored cultural events, as discussed above.
7. Selflessly chant your favorite mantram in a samadhi-like fashion and hope to achieve a higher rebirth before the final exam or liberation. *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo Om, Shanti, Shanti, O God Help Me !!!*

As tanha-seekers of the *Brahman*, you are welcome to see me in my monastic cell (Trinity 244) for "private discussions"(or *satsang*). I encourage you to do so if this course amounts to a *koan*. Since I do not respond to prayers nor engage in mind-reading (I have not yet attained *kensho/wu-wei*), come by and see me at the designated office hours or by appointment.

OM SHANTI

THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA

Reading Assignments for the Brahmacharin

I. Introduction: The Study of the Asian Religious Experiences and Cultures

Read: Smith, The World's Religions, Point of Departure.
Oxtoby, The World's Religions: Eastern Traditions, Introduction.
Van Voorst, Asian Scriptures, pp.1-21.

II. The Religions of India

Read the materials carefully since they will definitely affect the kind of rebirth you will experience in the life to come. These readings have karmic ("brownie points") effect.

A. *Introduction to Basic Hindu Concepts and Indian Diversity*

Read: Smith, The World's Religions, Chapter II: Hinduism
Van Voorst, pp. 23-30; 36-49.

The discussion will focus on the symbols and concepts of religion in India and the problem of defining what is the *Dharma* of Hinduism. Such basic concepts as *karma*, *samsara*, *moksha*, *yoga*, *marga*, *Brahman-Atman*, *avidya*, etc. will be discussed. Current debate on how India's religious origins must be assessed will be discussed.

B. *Antecedents of India's Religious Traditions (linga, yoni, soma, and deities)*

Read: Oxtoby, pp.12-20.
Van Voorst, pp. 30-36 and pp. 157-68 (Zoroastrianism).
J. Z., Smith, editor , article on "Zoroastrianism" in
Harper-Collins Dictionary of Religion. (On Reference Shelf-
BL 31 H37 1995)

The formation of religion during the Indus-Valley and Aryan Periods (3000-1000 BCE) will be discussed as the basis for much of contemporary Indian worship and practices. The set of readings above might seem to confusing or boring to you (a typical reaction of those in *avidya*). Hang on!!! These texts reflect a diversity of religious experiences and thinking.. Note the importance of ritual sacrifices (*soma* sacrifices), the veneration of many gods, the power of the Brahmins, and the worldly and/or non-worldly character religion. A brief comparison will be made with what is later called Zoroastrianism will be made, as well as the current discussion refuting an "Aryan Conquest Theory."

C. *Pre-Upanishadic and Brahmanic Teachings*

Read: Oxtoby, pp.20-27.
Van Voorst, pp. 36-49.

Note the dramatic shift in thinking a from polytheism-henotheism to monism, i.e. the "oneness" of all existent things as "sacred" or divine. These are the basis for India's esoteric teachings or mysticism, cosmology, mythology, the *dharma*, etc. The above readings are statements from the ancient Indian seers, who discovered the Supreme Consciousness by transcending the world of change

and/or impermanence (with *soma*?) . A brief discussion of Buddhism and Jainism will be included here.

D. Aranyaka Upanishads—Vedanta—“End of the Veda” and the Jainist Movement

Read: Oxtoby, pp. 27-32 and Chapter 3 (on Jainism)
Van Voorst, pp.117-134 (on Jainism).
J.Z. Smith, article on “Jainism” in HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion (On Reference Shelf0 BL 31 H37 1995)

Attention will be given to the problem and knowledge of “Self” as the way to eternal liberation. The concepts of *karma*, *samsara*, *moksha*, and *Brahman-Atman*, *sanatana dharma* . *the 6 darshanas* , etc.) will be explained.

E. Patanjali and Raja Yoga

Read: Oxtoby, pp.54-56.
VanVoorst, pp. 50-52.
Smith, pp.99-102

If you are interested in this topic, there are many books written by respectable gurus.

F. Popular Piety/Worship: Devotional Hinduism (Theism) and Later Developments

Read:
Oxtoby, pp.32-54; 56-67;71-121 and 127-47 (Sikhism)
Van Voorst, pp. 53-69 and 137-155 (Sikhism)

The Gita is the gospel of Hinduism and discloses the Krishna as an *avatar* of the divine (call it Vishnu or Brahman). Reading this text assures one of those *karma* that bear no fruits, except the “nectar of liberation.” *Om shanti*. Included Is a discussion of Sikhism.

REVIEW FOR MID-TERM EXAM