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RELS360

Course Summary

Course : RELS360 **Title :** East Asian Religions

Length of Course : 8 Weeks

Prerequisites : N/A; **Credit Hours :** 3

Course Description:

This course introduces East Asia's major religions, covering the geographical, historical, ethical and comparative dynamics of these four religious traditions in the countries or territories of China, Mongolia, Tibet and Hong Kong, Taiwan, North and South Korea, and Japan. This will include the inclusive nature and coexistence of these religions such as “The Three Great Doctrines” of Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism in China and other areas, and Shinto and Buddhism in Japan, along with their indigenous folk traditions.

Course Scope:

This course deals with theoretical and practical concerns regarding East Asian Religious Studies. From a comparative viewpoint, the indigenous religions of the geographical regions will be studied along with the historical development and modern form of these religious beliefs and practices and how they interact on the world stage.

Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- CO1: Describe the history and geography of East Asian religions.
- CO2: Compare the doctrinal aspects of these religions.
- CO3: Examine the ethical systems of the religions in their culture.
- CO4: Appraise the contemporary social dynamics of these religions in terms of gender, politics, human rights, economics and consumerism, and global relations.

Outline

Week 1: Indigenous Asian Folk Religions

Learning Objectives

- Identify the major aspects of indigenous folk religions, such as animism and ancestor worship.
- Examine the inclusive nature of folk religions and their syncretistic nature.
- Evaluate how folk religions interact with their more developed world religions in rural and urban settings.

Readings

- (all readings are accessed via Course Content > Week > Learning Materials > Readings & Resources > Weekly Library Guide)
- Deming, Ch. 3
- Filial Piety, Ch. 11 (ed. Chan, Ch. 11 written by Ivanhoe)
- Optional: Wong, Defining Chinese Folk Religion, pp. 153 – 170

Assignment

- Introduction Post – due Thursday
- Week 1 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday

Week 2: Philosophical Taoism

Learning Objectives

- Identify the legendary and historical origins of Taoism
- Assess the story of Lao Tzu (Laozi) and the Tao Te Ching (daodejing).
- Explain the taijitu or what is commonly called the Yin-Yang symbol and its meaning.

Readings

- Kirkland, Ch. 3
- Chan, Filial Piety, Ch. 1 (transl. by Chan, written by Tomohisa).
- Rachel Carson, Silent Spring, Chapter 3: Elixirs of Death

Assignment

- Week 2 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday

Week 3: Religious Taoism

Learning Objectives

- Identify the aspects of supernatural Taoism/Daoism historically.
- Assess the life of the traditional Taoist Temple and Priests and Rituals.
- Evaluate the art of Tai Chi and the I-Ching.
- Critique the morality of Taoism

Readings

- Mou, p. 87 – 100 (Xiuping).
- Mou, pp. 177 – 190 (Guangbao).

Assignment

- Week 3 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday

Week 4: Confucius

Learning Objectives

- Assess the life of Confucius from an historical perspective.
- Critique the role his life in history as endemic in Chinese culture today.

Readings

- Schuman, Ch.6

Assignment

- Week 4 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday
- Week 4 Paper/Project Proposal

Week 5: Confucianism

Learning Objectives

- Identify the Five Classics of Ancient China
- Assess the Five Virtues and Five Relationships and the Analects

- Critique the role of Confucianism in the history of China and in the world today.

Readings

- Kim, Ch. 1 and 4
- Confucius, The Analects (Book I)

Assignment

- Week 5 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday

Week 6: Mahayana Buddhism

Learning Objectives

- Identify the major stages of the life of Siddhartha Gautama
- Assess the Four Noble Truths & the Eightfold Noble Path
- Distinguish between Mahayana & Theravada Buddhism

Readings

- Deming, Ch.2

Assignment

- Week 6 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday

Week 7: Tibetan Buddhism

Learning Objectives

- Identify the geography of Tibet
- Assess the significance of the Dalai Lama
- Evaluate the special aspects of Tibetan Buddhism.

Readings

- Deming, p. 62 – 103
- The Dalai Lama, Worlds in Harmony (Choose one of the Chapters and write your initial Discussion Post on that topic; the “chapters” are only three to five pages long).

Assignment

- Week 7 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday

Week 8: Shinto in Japan

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate the history of Shinto within the particular geography of Japan.
- Assess the syncretistic nature of Shinto with Buddhism.
- Critique the relation of Shinto in Japan's history in the 20th century as a "national religion."

Readings

- Deming, Ch. 4 Japanese Religion

Assignment

- Week 8 Discussion – Initial post due Thursday, two participation posts due Sunday
- Final Paper/Project – Due Sunday

Evaluation

- Weekly Discussions (75% of your total grade for the class)
- Assignment 1 Due Week 4 (10% of your total grade for the class)
 - This is a proposal for your Final Paper/Project. The proposal should be about 250 words of text outlining the general idea/theme of your paper or project. It should also include an annotated bibliography of three scholarly sources from the APUS Library, which can include assigned course materials, including the textbook. Please see the Assignment tab for specific instructions and the grading rubric.
- Assignment 2 Due Week 8 (15% of your total grade for the class)
 - For the Final Paper/Project, the student may choose to do either a MS Word research paper in APA or MLA Style, or a PowerPoint presentation incorporating all the standard "best practices" of PowerPoint presentations. Final papers should be between 1500 – 2000 words. PowerPoint presentations should be 12 – 15 slides and incorporating best practices, would run about 30 minutes in presentation mode. Please see the Assignment tab for specific instructions and the grading rubric.

Materials

Deming, Willoughby, and Willoughby Deming. *Understanding the Religions of the World: An Introduction*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/apus/detail.action?docID=2009831>. Three Chapters

Chan, T. (2004). Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History. In *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History*. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203413883> p. 189 - 202

Wong, Wai Yip. "Defining Chinese Folk Religion: A Methodological Interpretation." *Asian Philosophy*, vol. 21, no. 2, May 2011, pp. 153–170. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/09552367.2011.563993.

Kirkland, Russell. *Taoism : The Enduring Tradition*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/apus/detail.action?docID=200075>. *The Course of the Taoist Tradition*, p. 73 – 113;

Chan, Alan, and Sor-Hoon Tan. *Filial Piety in Chinese Thought and History*, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004. ProQuest Ebook Central, p. 12 - 28

Mou, Zhongjian. *Taoism*, BRILL, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/apus/detail.action?docID=848692>. Two Chapters.

Guangbao, Z. (n.d.). From the Fundamentals of Philosophical Taoism to the Inner Alchemy of Religious Taoism. In *Taoism* (Vol. 2, pp. 177–190). https://doi.org/10.1163/9789047427995_010

Schuman, Michael. "Confucius: And the World He Created." *Confucius*, Basic Books, 2015. One Chapter.

Kim, Young-oak, and Jung-kyu Kim. *Great Equal Society, The: Confucianism, China And The 21st Century*, World Scientific Publishing Company, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/apus/detail.action?docID=1561224>. One Chapter

Lama, The Dalai. *Worlds in Harmony : Compassionate Action for a Better World*, Parallax Press, 2009. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/apus/detail.action?docID=905786>. One short student selection of 3 – 5 pages.