

**College of Charleston
Spring 2009**

**ASST-105-001: VALUE & TRADITION IN ASIAN CIVILIZATION
Tues, Thurs 10:50AM -12:05PM: ECTR 219**

Instructor: Dr. Elijah Siegler
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Office Hours: Weds 11-3 or by appointment

This course surveys major ideas and practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto, through the reading of short excerpts of primary religious texts. The course also considers the importance of religion in modern Asia, by focusing on important figures such as Gandhi, the Dalai Lama and Mao Zedong.

These **required texts** are available at the C of C and the University bookstores:
Gary Kessler, *Eastern Ways of Being Religious*, 2000 (“Kessler”)
Gary Kessler, *Shinto Ways of Being Religious*, 2000 (“Shinto”)
Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* translated by Addiss and Lombardo, 1993 (“Lao-Tzu”)
Note: Make sure you buy the above versions of the Tao Te Ching; there are dozens. The ISBN # is 978-0872202320.

There are also several required short readings listed as **ERs** in the schedule of classes. They are on Electronic Reserve online at ereserve.cofc.edu under my name (Siegler, Elijah). You will need the **password**, which will be provided on the first day of class. Please print these out.

Please bring the relevant book or printout to class.

All work must be original and all sources correctly cited. The university’s honor code will be strictly enforced. Students can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook, available online.

Assignments:

- *Attend class regularly and on-time, ready to discuss the reading and ask questions: **5%**
- * Be prepared for 4 “surprise” quizzes (to be announced the class before): 4 x 5%= **20%**
- * Take a midterm exam on Feb 26: **20%**
- * Take a final exam on April 30: **25%**
- *Submit a 5-6 pp. “comparative” essay on April 9: **20%**
- * Submit a 2-3 pp. “text analysis” essay (variable due date): **10%**
- * Bonus: There will be 3 opportunities to see a relevant film on a Tuesday night, and write a 2-3 pp. analysis of that film. (See last page of syllabus.)

Grading Scale: A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 61-62 F: 60 or below.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Tues 1/13: What is this class about?

Thurs 1/15: How and why are Asian religions studied?
Read: Studyreligion.org; Kessler pp. 3-6, 29-31 (1, 3.1)

Tues 1/20: What is Hinduism?
Read: Kessler pp. 39-58 (4.1, 4.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2)

Thurs 1/22: Hindu concepts of duty and action
Read: Kessler pp. 58-62, 67-76 (4.3, 4.3.1, 4.3.3, 4.3.4)

Tues 1/27: Hindu gods and goddesses
Special Guest Lecturer: Dr. Mary Beth Heston
Read: Kessler pp. 76-79, 92-96 (4.4, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.7)

Thurs 1/29: Gandhi's Way
Special Guest Lecturer: Dr. Jeffrey Diamond
Read: Kessler pp. 84-86 (4.5, 4.5.1); **ER # 1 "Gandhi"**

Tues 2/3: What is Buddhism?
Read: **ER # 2 "Basic Buddhism"** Kessler pp. 113-115, 118-123 (5.2, 5.3.2, 5.3.3, 5.3.4)
Recommended: Kessler pp. 99-113 (5.1)

Thurs 2/5: Mahayana Philosophy
Special Guest Lecturer: Dr. Christian Coseru
Read: **ER # 3 "Philosophy"**
Recommended: Kessler pp. 128-131 (5.4.3)

Tues 2/10: Buddhism in China and Japan: The Bodhisattva Ideal
Read: Kessler pp. 126-128, 131-136 (5.4.2, 5.4.4, 5.4.5)

Thurs 2/12: Zen
Read: Kessler pp. 141-143, 154-156 (5.5.4, 5.7) **ER # 4 "Sesshin"**

Tues 2/17: What is Confucianism?
Read: Kessler pp. 163-184 (Intro, 6.1, 6.2, 6.2.1, 6.2.2)

Thurs 2/19: Confucian Virtues and Human Nature
Read: Kessler pp. 184-189, 212-217 (6.2.3, 6.8)

Tues 2/24: Confucianism in practice
Read: Kessler pp. 196-205 (6.4, 6.4.1, 6.5, 6.5.1, 6.5.2)

Thurs 2/26: **Midterm Examination**

SPRING BREAK

Tues 3/10: The Dalai Lama and Question of Tibet

Read: Kessler pp. 145-146, 149-154 (5.6, 5.6.3)

Thurs 3/12: Taoist Thought and the Hundred Schools

Read: Lao-Tzu vii-xv; Kessler pp. 239-242 (7.2.2)

Tues 3/17: Lao-Tzu and the Problem of Translation

Read: Lao-Tzu whole book; Kessler pp. 244-247 (7.3, 7.3.1)

Thurs 3/19: Immortality and Alchemy

Read: **ER #5 “Introduction”**; Kessler pp. 227- 235, 247-251, 257 (7.1, 7.3.2, 7.4.3)

Tues 3/24: Chinese Monastic Life

Read: Kessler p. 257-262 (7.5, 7.5.1, 7.5.2); **ER #6 “7 Taoist Masters”**

Thurs 3/26: Chinese popular and sectarian movements

Read: **ER #7 “New Religions”**; Kessler pp. 272-274 (7.7); **ER #8 “Spirit Medium”**

Tues 3/31: From Maoism to Fa Lun Gong: Religion in Modern China

Read: Kessler pp. 262-265 (7.5.3); **ER #9 “Cult of Mao”**; **ER #10 “Fa Lun Dafa”**

Thurs 4/2: What is Shinto?

Read: Shinto pp. 3-9, 12-17, 21-23, 51-56 (1, 2.2, 3.1, 4.1, 8)

Tues 4/7: New religions in Japan

Read: Kessler pp. 143-145 (5.5.5); Shinto p. 30-33 (5.2); **ER # 11 “New Religions II”**

Thurs 4/9: Religious Nationalism in Japan and India

Read: Shinto pp. 35-48 (6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2); Kessler pp. 86-88 (4.5.2)

“Comparative” Essay Due in Class

Tues 4/14: Women in Asian Religions

Read: Kessler pp. 136-138, 156-159, 192-196 (5.51, 5.8, 6.3.2); Shinto pp. 57-60 (9)

Recommended: Kessler pp. 217-225, 265-272 (6.9, 7.6)

Thurs 4/16: Asian Religions in America

ER #12 “Asian Religions in America”

Tues 4/21: Class Choice!

Read: **ER #13**

Thurs 4/23 Catch-up, Conclusions and Exam Review

Thurs 4/30 9-11AM final exam

Note: Students with documented disabilities who have been approved to receive accommodation through SNAP should feel free to discuss this during office hours. For more information, contact Disability Services at 953-1431.

The Center for Student Learning has writing labs and can arrange individual tutoring for these particular assignments at <http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/> or 953-5635.

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OPTIONAL FILM ANALYSIS PAPER

When? Tuesdays, Introductory Lecture 7:00-7:15 PM, Screening starts at 7:15 PM

Where? Maybank 100

What? Write a 2-3 pp. film analysis that discusses what you learned about the relevant tradition from the film you saw, while answering the specific questions below. An “A” paper will use short direct quotes from relevant readings, and describe particular themes and motifs of the film but not summarize the plot.

Why? This paper is worth 5%-- the grade will be used to replace your lowest or missing quiz grade, or to bump up your midterm exam grade. (It will be automatically applied to wherever will most help your final grade.)

You have 3 choices of films:

1/20 Film: *Samsara* (Nalin, 2001) 138 mins

How is this film a variation on the life of the Buddha? What is the significance of its title?

3/10: Film: *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki, 2001) 124 mins

How does this film embody a Shinto perspective? What does it tell us about kami? How does it use Shinto to comment on modern ecological issues?

3/24: Film: *Ugetsu Monogatari* (Mizoguchi, 1953) 94 mins, in Japanese

What does this film teach us about Buddhist ideas of impermanence, and the suffering caused by desire?

Of course you are welcome to attend any or all of these films, without writing a paper