Asian Religions in America is a fascinating topic that we will approach from several angles. Asian Religions in America are usually studied in one of two ways: either through the lens of *Asian American Studies*, which focuses on ethnicity, thereby ignoring or minimizing Euro-American interest in Asian religions; or else under the rubric of “Asian Religions in America” which excludes the practice by Asian-Americans of such religions which are not traditionally identified as Asian—especially Christianity. In this class we will attempt to integrate the two approaches.

This class is loosely organized along three axes. The first axis is **historic**: the lectures follow a very loose chronology, from the early nineteenth century up to today. The second is **ethnic**: most lectures are divided by nationality. The final axis is **thematic**: each lecture also presents a concept germane to the study of Asian American Religion. This class encourages critical thinking and discussion, and allows for students to pursue their individual interests.

There are 4 required texts you need to buy:


And 1 recommended text:


There are also several readings on Electronic Reserve online at ereserve.cofc.edu under my name (Siegler, Elijah).

Please bring the relevant book or printout to class.
**Course Requirements:**
*Serve as a discussion leader for one class, by introducing all of the readings for that day, asking the class questions, and facilitating discussion: 5%*
* Write four 4-5 pp. papers (two will be presented in class): 10% each x 4 = 40%*
* Rewrite and expand one of the four short papers, making it a 9-10 pp. research paper: 20%*
* Take a multiple-choice midterm quiz given in class on 2/26: 5%*
* Take a comprehensive final exam on 5/1: 20%*
*Be ready to discuss the reading intelligently, both in class and online: 10%*

**NOTE:** Failure to hand in any one component of the course will result in a failing grade for the class. The fourth unexcused absence will result in being dropped from the class.

We will review and discuss each assignment before it is due. There may also be various opportunities to gain bonus marks by attending relevant lectures and writing short papers about them.

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.

**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**

**Thurs 1/10:** Overview  
*read:* ARADH 1-10 (handout)

**Tues 1/15:** Introduction to Asian Religions  
*read:* ARADH 13-22; BA 12-32

**Thurs 1/17:** Defining Asia, America, and Religion  
*read:* BA 3-11; 32-47; ER #1 “Land Without Ghosts”

**Tues 1/22:** Introduction to Asian-American immigration  
*read:* AAR 1-35, 38-50

**Thurs 1/24:** Asian Religions in America until 1924  
*read:* ARADH 25-27, 32-38, 61-64, 70-78, 82-91, 98-100  
*rec:* EYWK 8-39, 89-104

**Tues 1/29:** The World’s Parliament of Religions  
*read:* ARADH 127-140; ER #2 “Seager”  
*rec:* ARADH 371-376
Thurs 1/31: The Japanese
   read: ARADH 324-328; BA 51-69
   rec: EYNK 131-135

Tues 2/5: Religion in the Internment Camps Special guest lecturer: Dr. Jennie McStotts
   read: ARADH 159-177
   rec: 104-131

Thurs 2/7: Zen
   read: ARADH 191-193, 196-200, 218-221, 261-264, 353-357; BA 90-112

Tues 2/12: Soka Gakkai
   read: ARADH 281-285; BA, 70-89 ("Buddhisms" Paper Due)

Thurs 2/14: The Indian Gurus
   read: ARADH 178-185, 241-248, 257-260; ER #3 “Raja Yoga and the Guru”

Tues 2/19: The Hindus
   read: ARADH 289-303; AAR 112-137
   rec: EYNK 246-260, 269-273

Thurs 2/21: Popular Culture
   read: ER #4 “Oriental Monk;” ARADH 223-235, 342-345

Tues 2/26: The Vietnamese
   read: ARADH 268-270, 315-319, 388-391; BA 173-181, 201-206
   rec: EYNK 293-294, 304-310. 314, 318-319

Thurs 2/28: The Theravadins
   read: ARADH 322-324, 328-330; BA 136-157; AAR 313-337
   rec: EYNK 347-349 (Midterm quiz)

MARCH BREAK

Tues 3/11: The Hmong
   read: SCY chapters 1-6
   rec: SCY chapter 7; EYNK 320-328

Thurs 3/13: Religion and Healing
   read: SCY chapters 8, 9, 11, 12; ER #5 “Multiple Meanings”
   rec: SCY chapter 10

Tues 3/18: Cultural Misunderstandings
   read: SCY chapters 13, 14, 17, 18, 19
   rec: SCY chapters 15, 16
Thurs 3/20: The Koreans
  read: ER #6: “To Be Buddhist;” BA 168-173; AAR 182-184
  rec: EYNK 160-184, 196-197 (Healing Paper Due)

Tues 3/25: Asian-American Evangelicals on Campus
  read: AAR 141-159; ER #7 “Following Jesus Part I”

Thurs 3/27: Multi-Ethnic Asian-American Christianity
  read: AAR 287-312; ER #8 “Following Jesus Part II”

Tues 4/1: The Filipinos
  read: AAR 338-358
  rec: EYNK 200-230

Thurs 4/3: The Tibetans
  read: ER #9 “Lopez;” ARADH 264-268, 319-322, 349-351; BA 113-135

Tues 4/8: The Chinese
  read: ER #10 “Cultivating Acceptance;” ARADH 331-334; BA 159-164
  rec: EYNK 48-54

Thurs 4/10: The Taoists
  read: ER #11 “Siegler;” ARA 335-341, 353-360

Tues 4/15: Dialogue and Hybridization
  read: BA 216-231; ARADH 362-365, 369-371

Thurs 4/17: Gender Issues
  read: AAR 205-222; BA 185-200; ARADH 274-277 (Final Paper Due)

Tues 4/22: Conclusions
  read: ER #12 “Lahiri;” (Exam review passed out)

5/1: Final Exam, noon-three

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.

Help for writing papers
There are good resources from your very own Department of Religious Studies at the College of Charleston, on how to write a religious studies paper:
http://www.cofc.edu/~rels/research_resources.htm

The Center for Student Learning has writing labs and can arrange individual tutoring for these particular assignments: http://www.cofc.edu/~csl/ or 953-5635
Possible Book Review Topics (with date for making oral presentation)

Secondary Sources

Thomas Tweed, The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent  (1/24)


Richard Seager, The World's Parliament of Religions the East/West encounter, Chicago, 1893 (1/29)

Khyati Y. Joshi, New roots in America's sacred ground : religion, race, and ethnicity in Indian America (2/19)


Prema A. Kurien, A place at the multicultural table : the development of an American Hinduism (2/19)

Wendy Cadge, Heartwood: the first generation of Theravada Buddhism in America (2/28)

Sharon Suh, Being Buddhist in a Christian world: gender and community in a Korean American temple (3/20)


Peter C. Phan, Christianity With An Asian Face: Asian American Theology In The Making (3/27)

Donald Lopez, Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West (4/3)


Primary Sources

Jack Kerouac, Dharma Bums (2/7)

Vikram Chandra Red Earth and Pouring Rain (A Magical Realist Novel About Hindus in America) (2/19)
Mary Paik Lee, *Quiet Odyssey A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (A classic autobiography by one of the first Koreans to immigrate) (3/20)

Peter Bacho, *Cebu* (A Filipino-American Catholic priest in Seattle goes to the Philippines for the first time to bury his mother and questions his faith, and cultural identity) (4/1)

Maxine Hong Kingston *Woman Warrior* (Popular Taoist mythology infuses San Francisco novel) (4/8)

Amy Tan, *Joy Luck Club* and *Kitchen God’s Wife* (4/8)

Benjamin Hoff, *The Tao of Pooh* and *The Te of Piglet* (4/10)

**Possible Site Visit Topics (with date for making oral presentation)**

Soto Zen Center, West Ashley SC (2/7)

Soka Gakkai Center, Columbia SC (2/12)

Meher Baba Center, Myrtle Beach SC (2/14)

Wat North Carolina, Bolivia NC (2/28)

James Island Baptist Church, James Island SC (4/17)

Tibetan Society, Charleston SC (4/3)

Hindu and Buddhist Temples in Atlanta

American Taoists and Buddhists in Asheville

Charlotte? Raleigh?

For more ideas: [www.unc.edu/ncbuddhism](http://www.unc.edu/ncbuddhism) [pluralism.org](http://pluralism.org)

Please make sure your three oral presentations (discussion leader, book report, site visit) fall on different days!