

College of Charleston
Department of Religious Studies
FALL 2007

RELS 248: RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF CHINA AND JAPAN
MWF 9AM & 10AM; ECTR 219

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Office Hours: M, T, W, F 2-3 or by appointment

This course provides an overview of the history, worldviews, and practices of Chinese and Japanese religions. We begin with the earliest period of Chinese history, the Shang dynasty (ca. 1550-ca. 1030 B.C.E.), and end with the present day. Although we will consider discrete traditions such as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Shinto, and various new religious movements, we pay special attention to thematic issues (religion and the state; religion and popular culture; religious change) and contemporary issues in East Asian religions, including their internationalization.

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”)
Eva Wong, *Seven Taoist Masters*, 1990 (“Wong”)

There are also several readings on Electronic Reserve online at ereserve.cofc.edu under my name (Siegler, Elijah). You will need the password:

Please bring the relevant book or printout to class, as we will read and discuss the texts therein.

Course Requirements

- * Serve as a discussion leader for one class, by giving a 5-minute oral presentation and asking the class questions, on one of the primary texts: **5%**
- * Submit a 6-pp. term paper (The first draft, which will be discussed in class, is due on Nov. 9. The final draft is due on Nov. 19.): **25%**
- * Be prepared for 4 “surprise” quizzes (to be announced the class before), of which the lowest score will be dropped: **15%**
- * Write any 4 out of 10 2-pp. weekly response papers: **20%**
- * Take a midterm exam given in class on October 12: **15%**
- * Take a final exam during Exam Week: **20%**
- * Attend class regularly and on-time, ready to discuss the reading: **5%**

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

Wed 8/22: Course goals and expectations

Fri 8/24: How do we study religion?

Read: www.studyreligion.org; Kessler, Chapter 1

Mon 8/27: The study of East Asian religion

Read: ER #1 (A PowerPoint presentation)

Wed 8/29: Divination and Sacrifice in Ancient China

Read: ER #2 ("The Shang and Western Zhou"); ER #3 ("Prescientific Theory")

Fri 8/31: Confucius

Read: Kessler 6.1, 6.2. 6.2.1, 6.2.2

Mon 9/3: The Confucian Tradition

Read: Kessler 6.8, 6.2.3

Wed 9/5: The hundred schools

Read: ER #4 ("Mo Tzu"); ER#5 ("The *Han Feizi*")

Fri 9/7: Laozi

Read: Kessler 7.2, 7.2.1, 7.3.1

Mon 9/10: Zhuangzi

Read: Kessler 7.2.2

Wed 9/12: Introduction to the Daoist Tradition

Read: Kessler 7.1; ER #6 ("A Short History of Daoism")

Fri 9/ 14: The Daoist Path

Read Kessler 7.3.2, 7.4, 7.4.1, 7.4.3

Mon 9/17: The Daoist Body

Read: ER #7 ("Body")

Wed 9/19: Introduction to Buddhism

Read: Kessler 5.2, 5.3, 5.3.2 5.3.3, 5.3.4

Fri 9/21: Buddhism comes to China

Read: ER #8 (“Introduction of Buddhism to China”) Kessler 5.4, 5.4.2, 5.4.5, 5.5.3, 6.4.1

Mon 9/24: Neo-Confucianism

Read: Kessler 6.5, 6.5.1, 6.5.2, 6.5.3

Wed 9/26: *Seven Taoist Masters* 1

Read: ER#9 (“Alchemy”); Wong xiii-xxiii, 1-40

Fri 9/28: *Seven Taoist Masters* 1I

Read: Kessler 7.5.1; Wong 41-100

Mon 10/1: *Seven Taoist Masters* 1II

Read: Kessler 7.5.2; Wong 101-176

Wed 10/3: Introduction to Japanese History and Mythology

Read: Shinto 2.2, 3.1

Fri 10/5: What is Shinto?

Read: Shinto 1 4.1, 8

Mon 10/8: Shinto in Popular Culture

Read: ER#10 (“Perspectives in Miyazaki”)

Watch: *Spirited Away*

Wed 10/10: Catch-Up and Discussion

Fri 10/12: **Midterm Exam**

Monday 10/15: FALL BREAK

Wed 10/17: Zen in Japan

Read: ER #11 (“Zen”); Kessler 5.5.4

Friday 10/19: Life in a Zen Monastery

Watch: *Principles and Practices of Zen*

Mon 10/22: Japanese religious nationalism

Read: Shinto 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2

Wed 10/24: Sectarianism in China

Read: ER #12 (“New Religions”); Kessler 7.7

Fri 10/26: Religion and Politics in 20th century China

Read: ER #13 (TBA)

Mon 10/29: Maoism as religion

Read: ER #14 (“The Cult of Mao”)

Wed 10/31: Qigong Fever

Read: Kessler 7.5.3; ER# 15 (“Body Cultivation”)

Fri 11/2: Falun Gong

Read: ER# 16 (“From Healing to Protest”); 16A (“Falun Gong Glossary”)

Mon 11/ 5: Buddhism and the market economy in modern China

Read: ER# 17 (“Buddhism and Economic Reform”)

Wed 11/7: New “Shinto based” religions

Read: Shinto 5.2; ER #18 (“Spirits, Satellites”) ER # 19 (“New Religions Part II)

Friday 11/9: Paper Workshop

Rough Draft of Paper Due

Mon 11/12: Soka Gakkai

Read: Kessler 5.5; ER #20 (“Creating Value”)

Wed 11/14: Aum Shinrikyo and after

Read: ER #21 (“Dramatic Confrontations”)

Fri 11/16: Global Confucianism

Read ER # 22 (TBA)

Mon 11/19: Study Day

PAPER DUE IN PROF’S MAILBOX AT 14 GLEBE ST.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Mon 11/26: Chinese Religions in America

Read: ER #22 (“Gold Mountain”)

Wed 11/28: Popular American Daoism

Read: ER #23 (“Chinese traditions”)

Fri 11/30: Japanese Buddhism in the West

Read: Kessler 5.7; ER #24 (“Japanese Buddhists in America”); ER #25 (excerpts from *Asian Religions in America*)

Mon 12/3: conclusions and exam review

Final exam: RELS 248-002 (MWF 10:AM) final exam is Wed Dec 5 8-11 (start at 9)

Final exam: RELS 248-001 (MWF 9:AM) final exam is Mon Dec 10 8-11 (start at 9)

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/>

953-5635