RELIGIONS OF CHINA
THRS 317
SECTION 02

University of San Diego
Spring Semester, 2015
TTH 2:30pm-3:50pm
Room: Maher 222
www.sandiego.edu/~komjathy

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Office: Maher 282
Office Hours: TTH 8:30-10am; W 10am-12pm
(in Aroma’s); and by appointment
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學而不思則罔, 思而不學則殆。
“Learning without thinking is a waste of time;
Thinking without learning is dangerous.”
Lunyu 論語 (Analects), ch. 2

清靜為天下正。
Clarity and stillness are the rectification of the world.
Daode jing 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power), ch. 45

菩提本無樹, 明鏡亦無臺, 佛性常清淨, 何處有塵埃。
Bodhi originally has no tree;
The bright mirror also has no stand.
Buddha-nature is always clean and pure,
So where is there room for dust to settle?
Liu zu tanjing 六祖壇經 (Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch)

Course Description: This course examines Chinese religions in terms of their history, worldviews, practices, goals and ideals. Specific emphasis is placed on the indigenous Chinese religions of Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism) as well as on Sinified forms of Buddhism. The course begins with a survey of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism as historical traditions in China. This is followed by examination of the so-called Three Teachings in contemporary China and then in contemporary American society, including immigrant, ethnic and convert communities. Throughout the learning process, students will not only understand Chinese religions as an integral part of Chinese culture and society, but also consider the effects of modernization, globalization and transnationalism. In addition, this class will contextualize Chinese religions within the larger contours of Chinese history, society and culture and within relevant issues from comparative religious studies.

Course Objectives: To familiarize students with the depth and breadth of Chinese religious traditions, including their changing historical contexts, worldviews, techniques, goals, and ideals. To deepen students’ appreciation of these traditions through selected readings from relevant primary sources in translation. To increase student awareness of the globalization and transformation of “Chinese religions” by considering their place in contemporary China and in contemporary American society.

Learning Outcomes: Committed, engaged and motivated students will be able to explain and analyze the categories, symbols, and practices of Chinese religions, including critical methods for analyzing the content of religious texts (USD 1, 2, 9 & 10; THRS 1). Such students also will be able to explain and
apply at least two methodologies and research techniques that are standard in the fields of theology and religion, such as anthropological, comparative, hermeneutical, historical, literary, phenomenological, philosophical, psychological and sociological approaches (USD 1 & 4; THRS 2).

Prerequisite: This course assumes a working understanding of various world religions, including basic literacy with respect to Indian Buddhism. Specifically, enrolled students are expected to have completed the required prerequisite: either THRS 110: Exploring Religious Meaning, THRS 112: Introduction to World Religions, or THRS 203: Special Topics in Religious Studies. Students who have not fulfilled the prerequisite or who have not received prior instructor permission should drop the course.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning: The primary pedagogy utilized in this course is interactive lecturing and peer-directed conversations. Many class meetings will involve formal and semi-formal lectures by the instructor, but such sessions will be informed by student questions and insights. Some class periods will also be set aside for full-class and small-group discussions as well as for guest-lecturers. This class thus utilizes subject-centered and student-centered approaches to learning. Student engagement and participation are strongly encouraged. With respect to gaining the envisioned religious literacy, four primary dimensions are essential and will ensure comprehension and accomplishment: (1) Class meetings and student-directed discussion; (2) Office visits; (3) Personal reading and study outside of class; and (4) Peer meetings and study sessions. That is, true study and learning are not simply a matter of class attendance.

Course Requirements: Consistent class attendance, familiarity with assigned readings, intellectual engagement, and participation. Your grade will be based on the following assignments and corresponding points:

- Biography Sheet: -5% if not turned in by the second day of class
- Attendance and participation: 15 points (including informal writing assignments)
- Two quizzes: 10 points each (20 points)
- Mid-term: 20 points
- Paper: 20 points
- Final: 25 points

These assignments have been designed with the intention of providing balanced evaluation. They include assignments based on knowledge acquisition, critical reflection, nuanced interpretation, analytical writing, and so forth. We will review and discuss each assignment before it is due. See “Evaluation” section below and “Class Guidelines” handout.

Please note this course utilizes a work-based and merit-based model of education that emphasizes student self-responsibility. If you need help with anything, please ask questions during class or see me during office hours.

Required Readings: Please bring the relevant reading assignment to class, as we will at times read and discuss them.


* Please note that this assignment does not contradict USD’s policy barring assignments amounting to 10% of a student’s grade during the add/drop period; that policy is intended for students adding courses late. For students enrolled in my classes who miss the first class meeting, there is a make-up assignment. In addition to the Biosheet, such students must complete a summary of the syllabus and Class Guidelines. In order to receive full credit, these assignments are due in hard-copy form at the beginning of the second class meeting. There is a parallel assignment for students who add the course late, with the Biosheet and summary due at the beginning of the second class after registration.
A three-ring binder and personal copies of PDF files from Blackboard/Olé (ole.sandiego.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp) as indicated on the syllabus. This is considered a course textbook. You also have permission to use E-readers (e.g., iPads, Kindles, Nooks, etc.; but not laptops) for class discussions focusing on Blackboard articles. E-readers may only be used when discussion focuses on the assigned texts.

**Recommended Supplemental Reading:**

*An Introduction to Confucianism.* By Xinzhong Yao.
*Buddhism: A Short Introduction.* By Klaus Klostermaier.
*Buddhism in China.* Kenneth Chen.
*Buddhism in Chinese History.* By Arthur Wright.
*Chinese Religious Traditions.* By Joseph Adler.
*Daoism: A Short Introduction.* By James Miller.
*Daoism and Chinese Culture.* By Livia Kohn.
*Our Religions.* Edited by Arvind Sharma.
*Chinese Religions.* By Lawrence Thompson.
*Chinese Religions.* Edited by Deborah Sommer.
*Chinese Religions.* By Julia Ching.
*Source Book in Chinese Philosophy.* By Wing-tsit Chan.
*Taoism: The Enduring Tradition.* By Russell Kirkland.
*The Daoist Tradition.* By Louis Komjathy.

**Helpful Reference Works:**

*An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies.* Edited by Orlando O. Espin and James B. Nickoloff. (BL 31.I68)
*Dictionary of Buddhism.* Edited by Damien Keown. (BQ 130.K46)
*Encyclopedia of Religion.* Edited by Mircea Eliade/Lindsay Jones. (BL 31.E46)
*Encyclopedia of Buddhism.* Edited by Robert Buswell.
*Encyclopedia of Taoism.* Edited by Fabrizio Pregadio.
*Historical Dictionary of Buddhism.* By Charles Prebish. (BQ 130.P74)
*Historical Dictionary of Taoism.* By Julian Pas. (BL 1923.P37)
*Routledge-Curzon Encyclopedia of Buddhism.* Edited by Damien Keown. (BQ 128.E53)
*Routledge-Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism.* Edited by Xinzhong Yao. (BL 1840.R68)

**Evaluation:** You are responsible for reviewing, understanding, and keeping all matters outlined in this syllabus and in any other handouts. I assign grades based on my years of experience in evaluating assignments, the quality of your presence in the class, the criteria for each assignment, the quality of your work, and the quality of your work in relationship to the work of other students in the class. Assignments are evaluated based on execution, not effort. I also consider evidence of improvement and progress made throughout the semester. If you wish to schedule an office visit to discuss grades, please read the corresponding policy document on my personal website.

**Attendance.** Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Students receive a total of two unexcused absences, or one week of classes, for the entire semester. This commences on the first day of official registration. For each additional absence, three points are deducted from one’s attendance and participation grade. After three such absences, students forfeit the entirety of their attendance and participation grade (15%). The only acceptable reasons for excused absences are officially-recognized religious holidays, university-exempt activities (e.g., sports), medically-documented illness (a doctor’s note is required), or family emergencies. Arriving to class late, leaving class early, leaving the classroom...
Paper Assignment: There is one formal writing assignment in this class, an 8-10 page paper due *in hard-copy form at the beginning of class* on Tuesday, April 28. Like class assignments in general, we will review and discuss relevant requirements as the due date approaches. You will receive a handout on suggested paper topics, though I recommend that you develop your own topic.

Late papers will receive a half grade deduction for each day after the due date. This means that if you started out with a “B”, you will receive a “C+” if the paper is one day late. There will be no rewrites. However, I will provide comments on 1-page writing samples, outlines, and/or working bibliographies. Please submit such materials *at least two weeks before the due date* so that you may benefit from my suggestions. I will not look at paper-related materials the weekend before the due date.

You will be required to use and cite at least five sources, with at least one coming from outside the required course reading. *This is the minimum requirement.* Here “sources” refer to books and articles written by experts in the associated field. For identifying accurate academic articles, the ATLA and JSTOR databases will probably be most relevant. Engagement with and citation of primary sources will serve you well. You may supplement these sources with electronic information, but make sure it is reliable. (Wikipedia, Religioustolerance.org, Religionfacts.com, and similar sites are *not* academically reliable.) ALL INTERNET/WEBSITE SOURCES MUST RECEIVE PRE-APPROVAL FROM ME. See also the “Information, Knowledge, Insight” section of the Class Guidelines. *Cite your sources. Do not engage in plagiarism.* In order to avoid potential issues related to the latter, I recommend that you check your paper through Turnitin.com.
With regard to formal features, papers must be type-written, double-spaced and printed in a clearly-legible style. Use a 12-point font and at least 1” margins. Make sure to include page numbers. Choose a standard system of citation (APA, Chicago Manual of Style, MLA, etc.) and remain consistent in using it. Papers should be stapled, with your name, the date, the class, and the assignment at the beginning of the paper. You may print the paper as a double-sided document. An exceptional paper will have a title that both engages and orients the reader. For guidance concerning citation methods see the “Citation Methods and Formatting Styles” document on my homepage.

Without prior instructor approval, no mention of “non-Chinese” traditions (e.g., Abrahamic religions) should be made in the paper. No religious tradition should be taken as normative, as the standard by which all other religions are judged. At times it may be appropriate to use the subjective voice (“I”), but in all cases avoid apologetic and confessional language.

Papers that do not meet the basic requirements will receive an “F” and require an automatic rewrite. The resulting paper grade will be an average of the two grades.

For additional guidance see the “Class Guidelines” handout. See also the “Paper Grading Rubric” and “Citation Methods” documents on my personal website. There you will also find examples of successful student papers.

Email and Office Phone: I usually check these throughout the week and only rarely on weekends. The exception to the latter is when assignments are due or when exams are scheduled. Please keep these details in mind when asking for a response to a question or notifying me of a sickness or emergency.

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Preliminary Orientations (Tuesday, January 27-Thursday, January 29)
   Topics Covered:
   1. Syllabus Review
   2. Class Guidelines
   3. Definitions of Religion
   4. Teaching and Learning (THRS & USD)
   Required Reading:
   1. Class Guidelines handout
   2. Definitions of Religion handout

***THURSDAY, JANUARY 29—BIO-SHEET DUE***
***THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 12:15-1:15PM—ALL FAITH SERVICE***

II. Overview of Pre-modern Chinese History, Culture, and Society (Tuesday, February 3-Thursday, February 5)
   Topics Covered:
   1. Chinese Language: Characters and Romanization Systems
   2. Geography, Culture and Demographics
   3. Pre-modern Politics & Government: Emperors, Ruling Families, & Dynasties
   4. Overview of Chinese Religions
   Required Reading:
   1. Blackboard Readings 02: Orientations: Maps and Historical Periods
   2. *Understanding Contemporary China*, 1-66
   3. *Introducing Chinese Religions*, 1-33
   Print: Blackboard Readings 02
III. Confucianism as Chinese Cultural & Historical Tradition (Tuesday, February 10-Thursday, February 12)

Topics Covered:
1. Kongzi (Confucius; ca. 551-479 BCE), Mengzi (Mencius; 343-289 BCE), Zhu Xi (1130-1200), and Wang Yangming (1472-1529)
2. From Scholar-official Lineage to State Orthodoxy and Syncretic Revival
3. Personal Morality, Familial Obligations and Social Harmony
4. The Five Classics, Five Virtues and Five Relationships

Required Reading:
1. *Introducing Chinese Religions*, 34-59, 188-212 (Tuesday)
2. Blackboard Readings 03: Selections from the *Book of History, Lunyu, Mengzi, Liji* and Wang Yangming (Thursday)

Print: All Blackboard Readings on Pre-modern Confucianism

IV. Daoism (Taoism) as Chinese Cultural & Historical Tradition (Tuesday, February 17-Thursday, February 19)

Topics Covered:
1. Daoism as Religious Tradition: From Inner Cultivation Lineages to Organized Religion
2. Laozi and the *Daode jing* (Scripture on the Dao and Virtue); Zhuangzi and the *Zhuangzi* (Book of Master Zhuang)
3. Cosmic Attunement and Living through the Dao
4. Meditation, Ritual, and Monasticism

Required Reading:
1. *Introducing Chinese Religions*, 60-111 (Tuesday)
2. Blackboard Readings 04: Selections from *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi* (Thursday)

Print: All Blackboard Readings on Pre-modern Daoism

***TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17—FIRST IN-CLASS QUIZ***

V. Introduction and Sinification of Indian Buddhism (Tuesday, February 24-Thursday, February 26)

Topics Covered:
1. From “Barbarian Religion” to Chinese Religious Tradition
2. New Models of Salvation
3. Chinese Adaptations (“Sinicization”) and Schools of Chinese Buddhism
4. The Buddhist Conquest of China, the Chinese Conquest of Buddhism

Required Reading:
1. *Introducing Chinese Religions*, 112-62 (Tuesday)
2. Blackboard Readings 05: Selections from *Lotus Sutra, Flower Garland Sutra, Platform Sutra*, and *Larger Pure Land Sutra* (Thursday)
3. Review Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

Print: All Blackboard Readings on Pre-modern Chinese Buddhism

***THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26—MIDTERM REVIEW***

VI. Contemporary China I: Politics, Economics and Society (Tuesday, March 3-Thursday, March 5)

Topics Covered:
1. The End of Dynastic Rule, May Fourth Movement, and Communist Takeover
2. Japanese and European Colonialism and Missionization
3. Economic Reform and Global Economics
4. Family, Kinship, and Marriage
Required Reading:

Recommended Supplemental Reading:

SUPPLEMENTAL FILM NIGHT: *The Last Emperor* (Wednesday, March 4, 5:00pm)

***TUESDAY, MARCH 3—MIDTERM EXAMINATION***

VII. Contemporary China II: Demographics, Diasporas, International Relations, and Religious Affairs
(Tuesday, March 10-Thursday, March 12)

Topics Covered:
1. Overseas Chinese and the Chinese Cultural Sphere
2. Ethnic Minorities and the Challenge of “Autonomous Regions”
3. The Communist Bureaucracy and the Bureaus of Religious Affairs and Tourism
4. Religion in Modern China: Dangers and Contributions

Required Reading:
1. *Introducing Chinese Religions*, 213-72 (Tuesday)
2. Blackboard Readings 07: Contemporary China (Thursday)

Recommended Supplemental Reading:
1. *Understanding Contemporary China*, 357-95

Print: PRC Policy Documents from Blackboard Readings 07

VIII. Confucianism in Modern China (Tuesday, March 17-Thursday, March 19)

Topics Covered:
1. New Confucianism (*Xin rujia* 新儒家): First and Second Generations
2. Exile, Revivalism and the Search for Cultural Roots
3. Modern Chinese Neo-Conservatism, Nativism and Traditionalism
4. Towards a Syncretic Humanism

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 08: Modern Chinese Confucianism

Print: “A Manifesto for a Reappraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture” (New Confucian Manifesto)

IX. Daoism in Modern China (Tuesday, March 24-Thursday, March 26)

Topics Covered:
1. Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) and Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity)
2. The Chinese Daoist Association
3. Monastic Communities, Sacred Sites, and Ordination
4. The Opportunities and Challenges of Globalization

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 09: Modern Chinese Daoism
2. Website of Chinese Daoist Association (www.taoist.org.cn)

Print: “General Introduction to Daoism in China” & “Daoist Faith Statement”

***MONDAY, MARCH 30-MONDAY, APRIL 6: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK***

X. Buddhism in Modern China (Tuesday, April 7)

Topics Covered:
1. Jingtu 淨土 (Pure Land) and Chan 禪 (Dhyana)
2. Chinese Buddhist Monasticism, Lay Participation and Charitable Societies
3. Making Merit in Taiwan: Tzu Chi Foundation, Fo Guang Shan, Dharma Drum Mountain, and True Buddhist School
4. International Immigrant, Ethnic Chinese and Convert Buddhist Teachers and Communities

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 10: Modern Chinese Buddhism
2. Websites of Dharma Drum Mountain (www.dharmadrum.org), Fo Guang Shan (www.fgs.org.tw), and Tzu Chi Foundation (www.tzuchi.org)

Print: “Fundamental Concepts of Humanistic Buddhism”

***TUESDAY, APRIL 7—SECOND IN-CLASS QUIZ***

***THURSDAY, APRIL 9—TUESDAY, APRIL 14: NO CLASS—BROWN LECTURES***

XI. The Politics of Modern (Chinese) Tibetan Buddhism (Thursday, April 16)
Topics Covered:
1. Tibetan Buddhism and the Question of Tibet
2. Sino-Tibetan Relations
3. Tulkus (Incarnate Lama Lineages) and Monastic Orders
4. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government-in-Exile

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 11: Tibetan Buddhism

Recommended Supplemental Film:
1. Kundun

Print: “Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism”

XII. “Chinese Religions” in America (Tuesday, April 21)
Topics Covered:
1. Asian Immigration to America and American Immigration Laws
2. Chinese-American History and Religiosity
3. Immigrant Teachers, Ethnic Communities and Euro-American Conversion
4. Western Reception and Americanization

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 12: Chinese America

Print: “Chronology of Asian Religions in America”

XIII. Tu Wei-ming’s 杜維明 (b. 1940) New Confucian Humanism (Thursday, April 23-Tuesday, April 28)
Topics Covered:
1. Tu Wei-ming as Bridge: Chinese Birth, Western Education
2. The Harvard-Yenching Institute, Academic Administration and Historical Nostalgia
3. Boston Confucianism: Tu Wei-ming (Northern School) and Robert Cummings Neville (b. 1939; Southern School)
4. The Challenges of Modernity: Democracy, Environmentalism, Feminism, Social Ethics, and World Philosophy

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 13: Boston Confucianism
2. Website of Tu Wei-ming (www.tuweming.com)

Print: Relevant Sections from Blackboard Readings by Tu Wei-ming

***THURSDAY, APRIL 23—TU WRITE-UP DUE***

***TUESDAY, APRIL 28—RESEARCH PAPER DUE***
XIV. Sheng Yen’s 聖嚴 (1930-2009) Chan Practice and Enlightenment (Tuesday, April 28-Thursday, April 30)

Topics Covered:
1. Chan Lineage: From Hsu Yun 虛雲 (1840-1959) and Dongchu 東初 (1908-1977) to Sheng Yen
3. Silent Illumination, Dharma Transmission and the Path to Enlightenment
4. Dharma Drum Mountain (DDM; founded 1993), DDM Buddhist Association, and DDM Retreat Center

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 14: American Chan
2. Website of Dharma Drum Mountain (www.dharmadrum.org)

Print: Relevant Sections from Blackboard Readings by Sheng Yen

SUPPLEMENTAL FIELD TRIP: Visit to Hsi Fang Temple (University Heights; Sunday, May 3)

***TUESDAY, APRIL 28—SHENG YEN WRITE-UP DUE***

XV. Brock Silvers’ (b. ca. 1960) Daoist Restorationism (Tuesday, May 5)

Topics Covered:
3. The Challenges of Ethnicity, Conversion, and New Cultural Contexts
4. Cassandra’s Unheeded Prophecies: Identity Politics and “Tradition”

Required Reading:
1. Blackboard Readings 15: American Daoism

Print: Relevant Sections from The Taoist Manual by Brock Silvers (Blackboard)

***TUESDAY, MAY 5—SILVERS WRITE-UP DUE***

XVI. Concluding Discussion and Course Review (Thursday, May 7)

Topics Covered:
1. Chinese Culture, Religion, and Society
2. Chinese American Religions, American Chinese Religions
3. The Human Condition
4. Seeing through Chinese Religions

Required Reading:
1. Review Course Readings
2. Personal Notes

***THURSDAY, MAY 7—QUESTION LIST DUE***
***THURSDAY, MAY 7—LAST DAY OF CLASS***

FINALS WEEK: THURSDAY, MAY 14-WEDNESDAY, MAY 20
***THURSDAY, MAY 14, 11:00AM-1:00PM—FINAL EXAMINATION***
COURSE SCHEDULE CHANGES
Any amendment to the course schedule will be announced in class. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to contact class members or me until you receive such information concerning changes.

SPECIAL NEEDS
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in the event of a building evacuation, please speak with me.

CORE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENT
This course fulfills 1 of the 3 USD Core Curriculum requirements in Theology and Religious Studies. If you have any specific questions regarding university requirements or THRS requirements, please speak with Mitch Malachowski, Interim Chair, Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
The university’s policy on academic honesty will be strictly enforced in this course. Plagiarism, cheating, and stealing or defacement of library materials will result in automatic failure of the course.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES
February 4: Drop without a “W”
February 4: Add/drop with full refund
March 25: Pass/fail filing
April 8: Withdraw from class