

REL 120 70/80

Religions of South East Asia– 3 credits
Spring 2009
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30 – 6:45 p.m.
Location: Curtis Hall 353

Dr. E. Allen Richardson
Office: Curtis Hall 237
Phone: ext. 3320
E-Mail: arichard@cedarcrest.edu
FAX 610-740-3779
Office Hours: M/R 9:00-11:00 a.m.
and by appointment

SYLLABUSOutcomes, Objectives and Methods of Evaluation

As a result of taking REL 120, students will experience the following outcomes: a critical awareness about the religious traditions in South and East Asia, an analytical understanding about the nature of religion and its cultural manifestations, increased global awareness of the role of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam in South and East Asia. These outcomes will be advanced through the following objectives and modes of evaluation: to understand the dynamics of Indian civilization, the role of icon worship and the diverse nature of Hindu philosophy (evaluated through the mid-term and final examinations); to explore the role of Buddhism as a reformist movement that elevated a cultural ideal of introspection and enlightenment rooted in classical expressions of yoga to the status of global tradition (evaluated through the mid-term and final examinations); to understand Islam through the eyes of adherents rather than the stereotypical impressions of the tradition prevalent in the West (evaluated through the mid-term and final examinations); to explore patterns of syncretism as part of the dynamic nature of religion endemic to civilization in South and East Asia (to be evaluated through the term paper); to use the History of Religions and the Anthropology and Sociology of Religion as ways of objectively studying human religious activity (evaluated through the term paper).

NOTE: Students are required to save a copy on disc of take home exams and papers for the duration of the course.

January

- 20 Course Introduction. Introduction to the History of Religions
The Myth of Asia
- 22 Images of India. Indus Valley Beginnings
Slides of the Indus Valley. The Vedas
- 27 Film: “Indus: The Unvoiced Civilization
Reading Assignment: Knipe – Chapters 1 and 2
- 29 The Vedas
Post Vedic Scripture.

February

- 3 The Hindu Worldview
Film: “The Rolling Saint”
Reading Assignment: Oxtoby – Chapter 1

February

- 5 Puja and Icon Worship
Film: "Puja"
Reading Assignment: Knipe – Chapters 3 and 4
- 10 Film: "Consecration of a Temple"
- 12 Hindu Temple visit (tentative)
- 17 Bhakti: Movement and Tradition
- 19 Indian Society: Jati and Caste
- 24 Film: "Dadi's Family."
Take Home Mid-Term Examination distributed
- 26 The historical Buddha
Early development of the sangha – Mahayana and Theravada
Reading Assignment: Oxtoby – Chapter 4

March

- 3 The Theravada School in Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam
Mid-Term Examinations Collected
Film: "The Long Search series, Footprints of the Buddha"
- 5 Sectarian Buddhism in China and Japan
- 10, 12 Spring Break no class
- 17 Film: Wisdom of faith series : "Hinduism and Buddhism"
- 19 Buddhism in China and Japan ctd.
- 24 Buddhism in Tibet
- 26 Jainism
Reading Assignment: Oxtoby – Chapter 3

April

- 2 Film: "Frontiers of Peace: Jainism in India"
- 7 Sikhism
Reading Assignment: Oxtoby - Chapter 2
- 9 Stereotypes of Muslims in the West
Reading Assignment – Smith (entire book)
- 14 The Five Pillars of Islam
- 16 Film: Long Search series " Islam: There is no God but God"
- 21 The global resurgence of Islam

April

- 23 The history of Islam in the United States
Term Papers Collected – First Deadline
- 28 Sufism
- 30 Film: " I am a Sufi, I am a Muslim"
Term Papers Collected - Second Deadline
Take Home Final Examination Distributed

May

- 5 **NO CLASS –FRIDAY SCHEDULE**
- 7 **Take Home Final Examination due in Curtis 239 by 4:00 p.m.**

Required Reading:

Available in the Cedar Crest Bookstore:

Knipe, David M. Hinduism: Experiments in the Sacred, (San Francisco: Harpers, 1991).

Oxtoby, Willard G. (Ed.) World Religions: Eastern Traditions (2nd edition). (Ontario, Canada: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Smith, Huston. Islam: A Concise Introduction. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001).

Available in Cedar Crest College Library Reserve:

Issacs, Harold R. Scratches on Our Minds: American Views of China and India. (White Plains, New York: M.E. Sharp, Inc. 1980), pp. 37-61, 243-302.

Steadman, John M. The Myth of Asia: A Refutation of Western Stereotypes of Asian Religion, Philosophy, Art and Politics. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), pp. 25-66, 283-310.

Methods of Evaluation:

Methods of evaluation include mid-term and final examinations, a research paper, and class participation. Examinations and the research paper both measure analytical ability, skills in understanding the conceptual framework of each of the Asian religions in the course, and the creative ability to explore variant religious traditions without imposing either value judgments or assumptions about life in the West.

Term Paper:

The term paper is a critical examination of any aspect of the religious traditions covered in the course. Papers are to be 8-12 pages in length, must be typed, and follow an appropriate style manual.

Papers are to be typed (double-spaced) and if involving research must include an adequate bibliography of at least five sources employing one of the standard style systems (APA, Chicago, or MLA). Papers turned in on April 17 and will receive full comments. Papers may also be submitted on April 24 but will receive a grade without comments. Due to the large number of students enrolled in the course drafts of papers cannot be received.

Course requirements also include a final examination (25%), and class participation (10%).

The Honor Code policy can be found in the Customs Book. Any violation will be dealt with according to college procedure.

Draft of Papers:

Drafts of term papers may be submitted at any time during the course. Students will be assigned a “pencil” grade for each draft. Successive drafts will either retain the same grade or receive a higher grade. Students may submit as many drafts as they wish during the course of the semester.

Grading Policy:

Grades for the course are tabulated according to the following procedures:

Class attendance and participation	5%
Mid-Term Examination	30%
Term Paper	30%
Term Paper Abstract	5%
Final Examination	30%

The Academic Study of Religion

The academic study of religion is grounded in the assumption that the human experience of the sacred can be studied as an intellectual and societal phenomenon without bias. Accordingly, with the exception of theology, the major disciplines for the study of religion depend on the same objectivity that would be assumed in the humanities and social sciences.

In keeping with this perspective the study of religion at Cedar Crest College depends on the ability of students to think critically and objectively about both the nature of religion and religious practices. Value judgments about any religion, or perspectives from a faith position are outside of this approach and properly belong in bible colleges and seminaries where a religious perspective is assumed.

Any student having difficulty with this approach should contact the instructor at the earliest possible point in the course.

PLAGIARISM AND THE HONOR CODE

Plagiarism is “the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work,” (The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, New York: Random House, 1975, p. 1014). The Cedar Crest College Faculty Handbook (Book Four, Article B, Section 3, p. 14) further defines it:

Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed within quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified by the instructor. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In consideration of these ideas, all Religious Studies courses will treat plagiarism in the following ways. The submission of an entire paper that is not the student’s own work, whether borrowed or purchased, will result in a “F” for the course. The submission of part of a paper or examination that is not the student’s work, will result in an “F” for that assignment. This holds true even in those cases where an outside source is acknowledged but the inclusion of the material is presented as the student’s own work without quotation marks. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the office of the Provost.

While plagiarism is a serious violation of academic life, it is understandable that unintentional violations (including misquotes and occasional omission of references) do occur. While such omissions must be corrected before a grade can be recorded, they do not result in any further action.

INTERNET SOURCES

Internet sources on all academic papers must be used with discretion since they represent a surface level of research and are often not subjected to peer review prior to publication. Research papers must include at least ten sources and no more than four internet citations with the exception of on line journals and academic papers available on educational (.edu) sites. Encyclopedias (including Wikipedia) cannot be cited as resources in research papers.

GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPERS

An "A" paper must have:

- Excellence in the creative and critical presentation of an argument relevant to the assignment.
- A clearly identified thesis or central idea.
- A structure that connects the ideas in the paper with the thesis.
- A complete bibliography or "works cited" page(s) in appropriate format.
- Clearly articulated relevance and significance of the subject matter.
- The paper must be grammatically correct and relatively free from errors in grammar, syntax or spelling. It must also contain appropriate references in the text and follow an accepted style system.

A "B" paper must have:

- A clearly identified thesis or central idea.
- A structure that relates to the thesis but may lack some connections.
- A bibliography or "works cited" page(s) that is relatively free from error.
- Appropriate connections with the assignment.
- The paper must be relatively free from errors in grammar, syntax or spelling. It must also contain appropriate references in the text and follow an accepted style system.

A "C" paper is identified by:

- A poorly constructed central idea.
- Poor structure.
- Incomplete bibliography, "works cited" and references in the text.
- Appropriate connections with the assignment.
- Errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.

A "D" paper is identified by:

- No central idea.
- Little or no structure.
- Incomplete or missing bibliography, "works cited" and references in the text.
- Abundant errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.
- Unclear or confused relationship to the assignment.

A failing paper is identified by:

- No central idea or structure.
- Failure to include bibliography "works cited" or references in the text.
- Abundant errors in grammar, syntax or spelling.
- Lack of relationship to the assignment.