



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Introduction to Religions of the World: Asian Religions - 24350

Last update 01-05-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Comparative Religion

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Eviatar Shulman

Coordinator Email: eviatar.shulman@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tues 12-1, upon request by email

Teaching Staff:

Prof Eviatar Shulman

Course/Module description:

This is an introduction to the great religions of Asia, mainly of India and China, from a thematic and systematic perspective with certain historical emphases.

Course/Module aims:

This course delves into the central ideas and practices that constitute Asian religion, as an example of a primary religious system. These ideas and practices are treated historically, but the main focus of the course is thematic and systematic - the attempt to understand the Asian religions as cultural systems. This raises deep questions about the nature of divinity/ies and the role of human understanding and emotion in the its shaping.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- 1. To understand the phenomenon of religion and its role in human society.*
- 2. To compare the monotheistic and polytheistic world-views and question whether these categories are justified.*
- 3. To better understand God and the human imagination of it.*

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures with powerpoints

Course/Module Content:

- 1. Introduction to religion in Asia.*
- 2. Hinduism 1: Vedic Religion,*
- 2. Hinduism 2, Jainism 1: Renunciation.*
- 3. Buddhism 1: Ideology.*
- 4. Buddhism 2: Buddhism as a religion.*
- 5. Hinduism 3: The idea of Dharma.*
- 6. Hinduism 4 (two classes): Puranic religion.*
- 7. Hinduism 5: Bhakti.*
- 8. Buddhism 3: Mahayana.*
- 9. Confucionsism 1.*
- 10. Daoism 1.*

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11. Chinese popular religion.
12. Shinto

Required Reading:

For all classes there is required reading in primary sources.

For all classes there is recommended reading from secondary literature.

Additional Reading Material:

- Durkheim, E., (1915). *The Elementary form of Religious Life*.
- Geertz, C., (1993). "Religion as a Cultural System." In Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Fontana, pp. 87-125.
- Flood, G., (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge University Press, Ch. 2.
- Dundas, P., (2002 [1992]). *The Jains*, 2nd Edition. London and New York: Routledge, chs. 1,2.
- Harvey, P., (2013 [1990]). *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 1.
- Pollock, S., (1984). "The Divine King in the Indian Epic" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104.3: 505- 528.
- Ramanujan, A. K.. "Three Hundred Rāmāyaṇas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation." In Richman (1994 [1991]), pp. 22-49.
- Flood, G., (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge University Press, Ch. 3.
- Harvey, P., (2013 [1990]). *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2.
- Eck, D. L., (1998). *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, ch. 1.
- Pinkney, A. M., (2013). "Prasāda, the Gracious Gift, in Contemporary and Classical South Asia." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 3, pp. 734-756.
- Yocum, G. E., (1973). "Shrines, Shamanism, and Love Poetry: Elements in the Emergence of Popular Bhakti." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41.1: 3-17.
- McDaniel, J., (1989). *The Madness of Saints: Ecstatic Religion in Bengal*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, ch. 2.
- Harvey, P., (2013 [1990]). *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices*, 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 6.
- פינס, י., שלח, ג., שיחור, י. (עורכים), (2011). "כל אשר מתחת לשמיים": תולדות הקיסרות הסינית. כרך א: צמיחתה של הקיסרות הסינית. רעננה: האוניברסיטה הפתוחה, פרק 9.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 70 %

Active Participation / Team Assignment 10 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 20 %

Additional information: