Course Description

This introductory course surveys a broad range of religious ideas and practices belonging to various Asian traditions. Our survey includes Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto. These religious traditions are important factors in the history, cultures, and literatures of India (and other countries of South Asia), Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia (China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan).

With such a broad focus, there is no way to exhaustively explore the doctrinal details, historical development and cultural contexts of each tradition. Our approach, then, will be to focus primarily (though not exclusively) on the two “meta-traditions” of Hinduism and Buddhism, exploring their emergence, development and spread, their inter-relationship, and their interactions with other religious traditions throughout the Asian world. Geographically, the foci of this course will be India, China and Japan. We will be reading primary texts as much as possible, while lectures and supplementary readings will provide context.

There are no prerequisites, and no prior knowledge about the study of religion or about the study of the various Asian cultures or languages is expected. There are however, a few simple expectations with regard to the subjects we will be exploring:

- **Respect**: try to understand, before you critique. In other words, “remove your shoes” before entering a sacred space: your own or someone else’s.

- **Resolve**: do the reading – it’s not much! Otherwise you are wasting your time, and probably spoiling your grade. And finally,

- **Openness**: Approached the right way, this course can function as a sort of pilgrimage (figuratively, that is: sorry, no field trips to Asia). Though ostensibly a course about “other” cultures, it is one that can prompt critical reflection on our own inherited practices, beliefs and mythologies (“religious” or otherwise) – about the world and our individual places within it. Be prepared to “stretch” yourself, if only a bit.

Evaluation and Grading Policy

1. **Midterm Examination** (25%): On **Tuesday, October 16**, a fifty-minute midterm exam will be held in class. It will consist of identifications and short answer responses. A review sheet will be posted online the week before the exam.

2. **Final Examination** (30%): **Tuesday, December 11th 3:00 – 5:00 pm**, a two-hour final exam will include identifications, short answers and longer essays. A review sheet will be available in the last week of classes, and the final day of class will consist of an exam review session.
3. **Quizzes** (20%): Brief, short-answer or multiple-choice quizzes may be given at any point in the semester, either in lecture or online via Sakai. The lecture quizzes will be usually be unannounced (i.e. “pop” quizzes), whereas the online quizzes will be announced in lecture or via email at least one day in advance. Expect anywhere from 5-8 such quizzes during the course of the semester. **The lowest quiz grade will be dropped**.

4. **Short Essay** (15%): Two 2-3-page essays will be due on topics to be announced. The papers will be due on **Friday, September 21 and Friday, November 9**.

5. **Class Participation and Attendance** (10%): A class participation grade will be determined on the basis of attendance and active contribution in class. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class, and **every absence will be penalized** except those with appropriate documentation of medical or other emergency. Informing the instructor or TA of an upcoming absence is a welcome courtesy, but this alone does not constitute an excused absence.

Alternate dates for exams (midterm and final) are generally not permitted, but may be in special cases at the discretion of the instructor. The student must request such an arrangement **at least 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled exam date**. Makeup exams will only be scheduled after the fact in cases of documented emergency.

### Grading Scale and Assignment Summary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Proportion</th>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam 25%</td>
<td>100-93=A</td>
<td>A 4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92-90=A-</td>
<td>A- 3.67</td>
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<td></td>
<td>89-86=B+</td>
<td>B+ 3.33</td>
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<td></td>
<td>85-82=B</td>
<td>B 3.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>81-79=B-</td>
<td>B- 2.67</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78-75=C+</td>
<td>C+ 2.33</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75-72=C</td>
<td>C 2.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>71-69=C-</td>
<td>C- 1.67</td>
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<td></td>
<td>68-66=D+</td>
<td>D+ 1.33</td>
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<td></td>
<td>65-62=D</td>
<td>D 1.00</td>
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<td>61-60=D-</td>
<td>D- 0.67</td>
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<td></td>
<td>59-0=E</td>
<td>E 0.00</td>
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**Academic Honesty**

Students must conform to UF’s academic honesty policy regarding plagiarism and other forms of cheating. This means that on all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and
fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php and http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html.

All students found to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will be prosecuted to the full extent of the university honor policy, including judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code. For serious violations, you will fail this course.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Please do not hesitate to ask for accommodation for a documented disability. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Please ask the instructor if you would like any assistance in this process.

OTHER POLICIES, RULES, AND RESOURCES
1. Handing in Assignments: Most assignments will be submitted via Sakai, or in case of any difficulties via email. In those cases where an assignment is due in class, it should be handed directly to your professor or TA. If you cannot attend class on the date due, or if papers are due on a date when there is no class, please turn papers in to Dr. Travis Smith’s mailbox in the Department of Religion office, in Anderson 107. DO NOT slip papers under an office door. Please also keep an electronic copy of all your papers.

2. Late or Make-Up Assignments: You may receive an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances and with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. Completion of All Assignments: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course.

4. Common Courtesy: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls or text messages during class will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day. The instructors may ask students engaging in disruptive behavior, including but not limited to whispering or snoring, to leave the class. If that occurs, the student will be marked absent for the day.

5. Computer Use in Class: You may take notes on a laptop, tablet, phone, or similar device ONLY WITH PRIOR PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR. Such permission is usually granted only in cases of documented disabilities.

7. Counseling Resources: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:
   a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
   b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
   c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

8. **Software Use:** All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

**Required Texts**
The following required texts are available from the University of Florida Bookstore in Reitz Union on Museum Road, and from other local booksellers.


**Other Texts**
The following useful anthologies comprise several of our course readings, which will be available on Sakai. You may purchase these if you wish for your future reference, but all of the required readings for this course will be available electronically.


**Schedule of Readings**
Reading assignments are to be completed before coming to class. Please note that this schedule of readings is subject to minor modifications. All changes in the syllabus will be announced in class and posted on the Sakai site.

A series of required supplementary readings will be available under the “Resources” tab of the Sakai site for this course. Please note that there is no separate course packet available for purchase – it is your responsibility to download the appropriate files, and remain current with the reading. *The readings available on Sakai will be marked with a ‘*’ in the schedule of readings below.*

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course; Understanding “Religion” and “Asia”**
R 8/23 Introduction to the course: No reading

**Week 2: Religion in India, Vedic Religion**
T 8/28 WR 30-39
**Week 3: Brahmins, Renouncers, Yogis**

**T 9/4**  WR 39-43, 52-58


**R 9/6**  The *Yogasutra* of Patanjali, 1.1-4, with commentary:


See also another translation at: [http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/yogasutr.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/yogasutr.htm)

**Week 4: The Great Epics**

**T 9/11**  WR 43-47

Read first half of Narayan, *Ramayana*.

**R 9/13**  *Ramayana*, finish

In-class film: *Sita Sings the Blues*

**Essay topic announced**

**Week 5: The Gītā and Hindu Theism**

**T 9/18**  WR 47-55

Miller, *The Bhagavad Gītā*, chapters 1-6

**R 9/20**  Miller, chapters 10-12, 18

**Short Essay due Friday 9/21, 5pm**

**Week 6: Tantra and Bhakti**

**T 9/25**  WR 55-69; WR 73-79

*V Dharwadker, “Kabir”

**R 9/27**  *D. Brooks, “Selections from the Kularnava Tantra”*

**Week 7: The Sikh Tradition**

**T 10/2**  WR 108-126

*J. Hawley, “Nanak”

**R 10/4**  WR 127-140
Week 8: Global Hinduism
T 10/9 WR 69-88
* S. Vivekananda, “Addresses at the World Parliament of Religions”
R 10/11 WR 88-99

Week 9: Midterm; Introduction to Jainism
T 10/16 IN-CLASS MIDTERM
R 10/18 In-class film: Ahimsa
WR 146-157
*SIT 80-83
*Cort, “The Rite of Veneration of Jina Images”

Week 10: Jainism; Life of the Buddha
T 10/23 WR 157-172
*SIT 84-89
R 10/25 WR 178-190
*SIT 100-104

Week 11: The Buddha's Life and Teachings
T 10/30 WR 190-201
*SIT 105-113
R 11/1 WR 202-211, 220-224, 231-235
*SIT 160-163
Essay topic announced

Week 12: Emptiness; Buddhism in China
T 11/6 WR 224-231, 239-240
*R. Thurman, “The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti,” chapters 5-6

Short Essay due Friday 11/9, 5pm
Week 13: Confucianism, Daoism
T 11/13    WR 211-217, 243-244, 256-258
R 11/15    WR 258-269; 289-294
            SE 151-157

Week 14: Daoism
T 11/20    WR 294-304
            SE 181-186, 189-198
R 11/22    No class: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15: Shinto and Japanese Buddhism
T 11/27    WR 330-341, 350-354
            SE 210-215
R 11/29    WR 217-220
            WR 341-350
            SE 118-123

Week 16: Buddhism in Japan
T 12/4     *Tsunoda, R., W.T. de Bary and D. Keene, eds. Sources of Japanese Tradition: Volume I
            *Sources of Japanese Tradition, pp. 133-156.

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 11th 3:00 – 5:00 pm