Religion in Asia (REL 2315)  
Fall 2011

Time & Place:
LECTURE: Monday/Wednesday, Period 3 (9:35-10:25), Florida Gym 270
DISCUSSION SECTIONS: Friday, SEC 4043 – Period 3 (9:35-10:25), Matherly Hall 112
   SEC 4048 – Period 4 (10:40-11:30), Matherly Hall 112
   SEC 4209 – Period 6 (12:50-1:45), Keene-Flint Hall 119

Instructor: Mr. Jimi Wilson  
Office: 123 Anderson Hall  
Office Hours: Wednesdays (10:45-12:45), and by appointment.  
Email: jimi45@ufl.edu

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Jaya Reddy  
Office: 119 Anderson Hall  
Office Hours: TBD, and by appointment  
Email: jreddy@ufl.edu

Course Description
This introductory course surveys a broad range of religious practices and ideas of various traditions in Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto, with some additional discussion of Islam and Christianity in South Asia and East Asia. These religious traditions play significant roles 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). In this course, students are exposed to various religious perspectives which are often quite different from their own contemporary viewpoints. The only prerequisites for this class are an open mind and a commitment to engage in the academic study of religion. Such a broad survey does not require previous study or personal knowledge of a particular religion or of the languages, cultures, or histories of Asia. By taking a comparative rather than competitive approach to learning about a wide range of important religious worldviews in diverse historical and cultural contexts, this course provides a convenient starting point for those who want to further explore Asian religions.

Course Objectives
By the end of the semester, the student will be able to:

- identify traditions, beliefs and religious practices of the major religions of Asia on their own terms.
- demonstrate knowledge of globalization patterns of religion in and out of Asia.
Evaluation Requirements

1. **Mid-term Examination (25%)**: On Monday, 10 October, a fifty minute in-class test focusing on religious traditions of South Asia will consist of identifications and short answer responses.

2. **Final Examination (35%)**: On Friday, 16 December, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., a two hour final exam will include multiple choice questions, identifications and essays.

3. **Short Response Assessments (30%)**: Short questions based on reading assignments will be distributed 12 times during the semester. They will be distributed via Sakai (https://lssat.ufl.edu/), usually on Monday and usually due by 11:59 PM on Friday. They can be accessed via the Assessments tool. Responses will be checked for accuracy and effort in order to guide reading and gauge understanding. You need only satisfactorily complete 10 during the semester in order to receive full credit; students who satisfactorily complete 11 or 12 of the assessments will be assessed one extra credit point to their final grade per additional assessment completed.

4. **Class Participation and Attendance (10%)**: Class participation will be graded on the basis of attendance and active contributions to discussions during Friday section meetings. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class.

Attendance Policy
Three total unexcused absences are permitted, but for each additional unexcused absence, 2 points will be deducted, and 1 point will be deducted for every episode of tardiness. Leaving class early without the instructor’s permission and disrespectful behavior (talking during lectures, sleeping, answering cell-phones, text-messaging, reading the paper, and rudeness to the instructors or fellow students) will result in deductions for unexcused absences.

Grades
Individual grades will be in percentages only, until calculated as a letter grade for your course GPA at the end of the semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-92</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91-90</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-87</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-82</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-80</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79-78</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-72</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-70</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69-68</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-62</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-60</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: C- is a U, not an S. A grade of Incomplete without reduction of the eventual final grade will not be an option without the appropriate medical or legal documentation. Other
reasons for requesting an Incomplete may or may not be granted, and if granted, will result in reduction of the eventual grade by one full grade point—for instance A becomes B.

**Textbooks (Required)**


**Supplementary Readings**

A series of required supplementary readings will be available for download via the Sakai e-Learning site for this course. Please note that there is no separate course packet available for purchase, and no handouts of these readings will be provided in class—it is the responsibility of the student to download the appropriate files and remain current with the readings. *Readings available on Sakai will be marked with a '*' in the course schedule below.*

**Policy Statements**

**Academic Honesty** is taken very seriously in this course. Please take a moment to re-familiarize yourself with the official UF guidelines and policies for resolving matters of academic dishonesty: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php)

**Students with Disabilities** will be accommodated to the fullest extent possible; if you have any special needs, please register with the office of the Dean of Students. See: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)

**Make-up exams** will not be given in principle. They will be given, however, in cases of medical emergencies or scheduling conflicts caused by the University Registrar. In such cases appropriate documentation must be provided (doctor’s note, etc.).

**Religious Observances**

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to the observation of a religious holiday not already accommodated by the university must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, no later than **Friday, 16 SEP 2011**.

**Student Athletes**

Student athletes must provide written documentation from their sport’s administrator regarding dates of any classes they will miss due to participation in athletic events. A written record of all dates that will be missed must be submitted to the instructor no later than **Friday, 16 SEP 2011**.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the Course, Harappa & Vedic Civilizations

M – 22 AUG – Introduction, discussion of syllabus – No reading


F – 26 AUG – Discussion - Submit a paragraph about your interests in Asian religions: Why are you taking this course? Even if you are taking this course merely because it fits your schedule—a completely acceptable reply—what do you hope to learn from it?

Week 2: Brahmin & Renouncer Traditions

M – 29 AUG – Upaniṣads: Oxtoby, pp. 39-43; *Olivelle, pp. xxiii-xxxv (intro to Upaniṣads), 266-277 (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad); *Fieser & Powers, pp. 18-22.


F – 2 SEP – Discussion

Week 3: Hindu Rituals & Practices

M – 5 SEP – LABOR DAY (NO CLASSES)

W – 7 SEP – GUEST LECTURE: Jaya Reddy on roles of Āyurveda medicine, astrology, and ‘material religion’ in Hinduism.

F – 9 SEP – Discussion

Week 4: The Epic Traditions: Mahābhārata & Rāmāyana


W – 14 SEP – Film: Sita Sings the Blues

F – 16 SEP – Discussion

Week 5: The Way of Devotion: The Bhagavad Gītā

M – 19 SEP – Bhagavad Gītā: Miller, The Bhagavad Gītā, entire text but especially chapters 1-6, 10-12.
**W – 21 SEP** – Sidebar: Spread of Islam in South Asia & European Colonialism.

**F – 23 SEP** – Discussion

**Week 6: Oceans of Devotion: Puranas/Bhakti Poet-Saints**


**W – 28 SEP** – Hawley & Juergensmeyer, pp. 91-142 (Surdas, Mirabai); *Ramanujan, pp. 93-124 (Mahadeviyakka). GUEST LECTURE: Jaya Reddy on Mahadeviyakka

**F – 30 SEP** – Discussion

**Week 7: Sikhism**

**M – 3 OCT** – Hawley & Juergensmeyer, pp. 63-90 (Nanak).


**F – 7 OCT** – Discussion.

**Week 8: Review and Preview**

**M – 10 OCT** – Midterm Review.

**W – 12 OCT** – IN-CLASS MIDTERM.

**F – 14 OCT** – Discussion – Film: *Ahimsa*.

**Week 9: Jainism**

**M – 17 OCT** – Oxtoby, pp. 146-172.


**F – 21 OCT** – Discussion.

**Week 10: The Buddha’s Teachings, Indian Buddhism & Theravada**


F – 28 OCT – Discussion.

**Week 11: Mahayana, Vajrayana, and Buddhism’s Move into East Asia**


**W – 2 NOV** – Vajrayāna, the Third Vehicle: Oxtoby, pp. 220-224, 231-231; *Lopez, pp. 200-211.

**F – 4 NOV** – HOMECOMING (NO CLASSES).

**Week 12: Schools of Chinese Buddhism & Buddhism in the West**

**M – 7 NOV** – Oxtoby, pp. 236-238, 243-244. *Excerpts from Journey to the West (Sūn Wūkōng).


**F – 11 NOV** – VETERANS DAY (NO CLASSES).

**Week 13: Confucianism and Daoism**


**F – 18 NOV** – Discussion.

**Week 14: Shinto and Japanese Buddhism**


**F – 25 NOV** – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (NO CLASSES).

**Week 15: New Religious Movements and 'Western' Religions in Asia**

**M – 28 NOV** – Christianity in India, China, and Japan; Islam in China: *Clothey, pp. 171-175; Poceski, pp. 213-225; Ellwood, pp. 151-158.

F – 2 DEC – Discussion.

Week 16: Conclusion and Review

M – 5 DEC – Conclusion.


FINAL EXAM: FRIDAY, 16 DEC, 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.