REL 3938 Asian American Religions  
University of Florida  
Department of Religion  
Fall 2015

Course Meeting Times: MAT 108 Tuesdays 2 & 3 (8:30-10:25am), MAT 108 Thursdays 3 (9:35-10:25am)

Instructor: Bhakti Mamtora  
Email: bhaktim@ufl.edu  
Office: Anderson 123  
Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 10:00am-11:30am & by appointment

Course Description
This course examines the development of Asian Religions in America from the nineteenth century to the present. Throughout the semester, we will consider the early encounters between Asian and American religious figures and analyze contemporary expressions of Asian Religions in America. This course will examine a number of religious traditions, including but not limited to Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Confucianism, to understand how these traditions became a part of the American religious landscape and gave rise to practices such as Zen Buddhism, yoga, and transcendental meditation in the United States. We will conclude the course by discussing representations of Asian religions in American culture by looking at one or more of the following: comic books, magazines, and news media.

As we learn about the Asian American Religions, we will ask ourselves the following questions: (1) What constitutes a religion? (2) How do prominent thinkers describe Asian religious traditions? (3) In what ways did Asian Religions emerge and develop in the United States?

There are no pre-requisites for this course.

Course Objectives
- Analyze primary and secondary sources critically
- Identify the characteristics of Asian Religions in America
- Broadly sketch the emergence and development of these religious traditions in the United States

Evaluation & Grading Policy
1. Attendance & Participation (15%): A participation grade will be determined on the basis of the student's attendance, preparedness and active participation in the discussions throughout the semester. Students are allowed three unexcused absences; however, every absence thereafter will be penalized unless appropriate documentation of medical or other emergency is provided. Students are expected to arrive on time. Excessive and consistent tardiness will be penalized.
2. Weekly Reflections (25%): Students should submit a brief (150-300 word) write up reflecting on the readings for the week. A detailed description of the requirements is available on Canvas.
3. Response Paper (20%): Students will submit a short response paper (1000 words) on a current events or news media item that focuses on Asian Religions in America. A detailed description of the assignment is available on Canvas. Due: October 1, 2015 at 5:00pm.
4. Final Paper (40%): Throughout the semester, students will have several smaller assignments, such as the weekly reflections and response paper, that will help prepare the students for their final paper. Students should visit the instructor during office hours early on in the semester to discuss a topic for their final paper.
   a. Thesis & Bibliography (5%) Due November 3rd
b. Essay Draft (10%) Due December 3rd

c. Final Paper (20%) Due December 16th

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>89-86</td>
<td>85-82</td>
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<td>78-75</td>
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<td>68-66</td>
<td>65-62</td>
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Class Policies

**Academic Honesty**

Students should familiarize themselves with the University’s standards of academic honesty and integrity. If students are caught or suspected of plagiarizing, cheating or violating the Honor Code in any assignment for this course, they will be reported to the Student Conduct Committee at the Dean of Students’ Office. For further information about academic honesty please visit the following website: [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/).

**Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodations or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students’ Office. The Dean of Students’ Office will provide the necessary documentation to the student, who is then required to give that documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. For further information, please visit the following website: [https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/).

**Absences**

In order to maximize on their learning experiences, students are expected to attend every single class. Students are allowed three unexcused absences. Thereafter, students will be penalized for any unexcused absence.

**Late or Make-Up Assignments**

Students can request an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances. If the instructor does not grant an extension, late assignments will be marked down 1/3 grade for each day late.

**Written Assignments**

All written assignments should be submitted electronically via Canvas. Please make sure that all written assignments are typed, double-spaced, and have standard fonts (Calibri or Times New Roman, 12 pt.) with 1” margins.

**Required Readings**


All additional readings for the semester will be available via Canvas. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

**Classroom Etiquette**

Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Students should not arrive late to class as it is disruptive to the instructor and their fellow classmates. Before entering the classroom, students should turn off their cell phones. Students who engage in disruptive behavior during class
(including, receiving or making calls, sending text messages, whispering, talking in class etc.) will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

Class Schedule

**Week 1**

*August 25 Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview*

*August 27 Introduction*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “General Introduction”

**Week 2**

*September 1 Asian Religions: At a Glance*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “Introduction to Asian Religions”

*September 3 Perceptions and Perspectives*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “Views from Abroad” (Chapter 1)

**Week 3**

*September 8 Perceptions and Perspectives*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “Views from Home” (Chapter 2)

*September 10 Defining Asian Religions*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “Journeys in the Study” (Chapter 5)

**Week 4**

*September 15 Immigrants in America*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “East to America: Immigrant Landings” (Introduction & Chapter 3)

*September 17 Missionaries Abroad*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “Postcards for the Pews: Missionaries & Their Critics” (Chapter 6)

**Week 5**

*September 23 World’s Parliament of Religions*
  - Tweed & Prothero, “The World’s Parliament of Religions” (Chapter 7)

*September 24 WPOR’s Legacy*

**Week 6**

**September 29 Looking East**

• Tweed & Prothero, “Turning East: Sympathizers and Converts” (Chapter 8)


**October 1 Wait a minute…**

• Tweed & Prothero, “Closed Ports and Open Camps” (Introduction and Chapter 9)

  **Response Paper Due at 5:00pm**

**Week 7**

**October 6 Legal Issues**

• Tweed & Prothero, “Mapping Legal Boundaries: Religion and State” (Chapter 20)


**October 8 Legal Issues**

• TBD

**Week 8**

**October 13 Hindu Gurus and Disciples**

• Tweed & Prothero, “Hindu Crossings: Gurus and Disciples” (Chapter 10)


**October 15 Buddhist Masters and Students**

• Tweed and Prothero, “Buddhist Crossings: “Masters and Students” (Chapter 11)

**Week 9**

**October 20 Post 1965**

• Tweed & Prothero, “Countercultural Appropriations” (Chapter 13)

**October 22 Post 1965**


**Week 10**

**October 27 Post 1965 Buddhist Traditions: Movements**

• Tweed and Prothero, “Buddhist Teachers, Converts and Movements” (Chapter 15)

October 29 Buddhist Traditions: Temples and Practices

- Tweed & Prothero, “Buddhist Immigrants” (Chapter 17)

Week 11

November 3 Americanization of Buddhism


Thesis and Bibliography Due

November 5 East Asian Traditions

- TBD

Week 12

November 10 Hindu Traditions: Movements

- Tweed & Prothero, “Asian Indian Gurus, Converts and Movements” (Chapter 14)

November 12 Hindu Traditions: Movements

- TBD

Week 13

November 17 Hindu Traditions: Sacred Space


November 19 Asian Indian Traditions

- Tweed and Prothero, “Asian Indian Immigrants: Hindu, Jain and Sikh” (Chapter 16)

Week 14

November 24 Hindu Traditions: Practices

- Yoga Debates:
  - “Take Back Yoga.” Hindu American Foundation.
    [http://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/takeyogaback](http://www.hafsite.org/media/pr/takeyogaback)
November 26 Thanksgiving Holiday, No Class

Week 15

December 1 Asian Religions in American Culture: Print


December 3 Asian Religions in American Culture: Image


Final Paper Draft Submission

Week 16

December 8 Final Paper Workshop

Final Papers are due on December 16, 2015 at 5:00pm