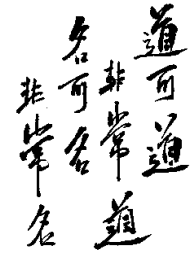


CHINESE RELIGIONS 中國宗教 | REL 3318, Fall 2020

Prof. Mario Poceski (Religion Department, University of Florida)



Class Time

Mon, Wed, and Fri, 10:40-11:30 pm. This is a synchronous online class, with live meetings via Zoom.

Office Hours

By appointment, via Zoom. Appointments need to be made 24 hours in advance.

Contact Information

email: mpoceski@ufl.edu; webpage: www.clas.ufl.edu/users/mpoceski/.

Course Description

The course is a comprehensive historical survey of the main religious traditions in China, including Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and popular religion. Through lectures, discussions, and reading of select primary and secondary sources, we explore the formulations and subsequent transformations of key beliefs, doctrines, practices, and institutions that characterized specific religious traditions. We also examine the patterns of interaction among different traditions, as well as the general character and tenor of religious life in both traditional and modern China.

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Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites, although some prior knowledge of Chinese history or of the main religions being studied is helpful. No knowledge of the Chinese language is required.

Course Format

This is primarily a lecture course, but students are encouraged (and expected) to engage in class discussion and critical analysis of the course materials.

Requirements

- Reading of the assigned materials.
- Class attendance and participation. Students are also encouraged to take notes on the lectures, which are the main basis for the exams.
- One quiz (10% of the final grade).
- Three exams (90%).

Required Texts

- Poceski, Mario. *Introducing Chinese Religions* (Routledge, 2009). Also available as an e-book, titled *Chinese Religions: the eBook* (JBE Online Books, ibeonlinebooks.org/eBooks/chineseReligions). Students can use either version of the book.
- Sommer, Deborah, ed. *Chinese Religion: An Anthology of Sources* (Oxford UP, 1995).



Course Schedule¹

W 1 8/31	Introduction (Poceski, Introduction) Earliest Forms of Religious Life in China
W 2 9/7	Earliest Forms of Religious Life in China (Poceski, ch. 1; Sommer 3–16, 21–30) no class on Mon (Labor Day)
W 3 9/14	Classical Confucian Tradition (Poceski, ch. 2; Sommer 31–48, 55–70) Quiz (Fri)
W 4 9/21	Early Texts and the Emergence of Religious Daoism (Poceski, ch. 3; Sommer 71–83)
W 5 9/28	Daoist Traditions and Practices (Poceski, ch. 4; Sommer 149–51, 199) no class on Fri (Homecoming)
W 6 10/5	Daoist Traditions and Practices (Mon) Review (Wed) & Exam 1 (Fri)
W 7 10/12	Spread and Flourishing of Buddhism in China (Poceski, ch. 5; Sommer 119–43)
W 8 10/19	Schools and Practices of Chinese Buddhism (Poceski, ch. 6; Sommer 155–68)
W 9 10/26	Popular Religion (Poceski, ch. 7; Sommer 239–46)
W 10 11/2	Review (Mon) & Exam 2 (Wed) Later Transformations of Confucianism (Fri)
W 11 11/9	Later Transformations of Confucianism (Poceski, ch. 8; Sommer 169–75, 187–96) no class on Wed (Veteran’s Day)
W 12 11/16	Islam and Christianity in China (Poceski, ch. 9)
W 13 11/23	Religious Life in Modern China no class on Wed and Fri (Thanksgiving)
W 14 11/30	Religious Life in Modern China (Poceski, ch. 10; Sommer 281–316)
W 15 12/7	Review (Mon) & Exam 3 (Wed)



Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes

- The course introduces key historical developments, themes, and concepts in the study of Chinese religions.
- Students are exposed to principal characteristics of Chinese civilization, including dominant values, norms, socioeconomic models, and artistic representations.

¹ Tentative and subject to change.

- The course facilitates students' enhanced understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture and society, which can serve as constructive conceptual framework for reflecting on their own social mores and cultural norms.
- There is some coverage of relevant theories and methods used in religious studies, as well as focus on key historical trajectories and relevant socioreligious contexts.
- By reading, reflecting upon, and discussing a range of materials, students receive training in critical thinking and effective analysis, as well as develop communication skills that enable them to intelligently discuss key issues from a multiplicity of perspectives.

Online e-Learning System & email Communication

- The syllabus and other course materials are posted online via UF's e-Learning system, using Canvas.
- They quiz and all exams are taken online, via Canvas, using online proctoring.
- Students should send all written communications to the instructor directly, using the email address given above.

Grading

- The final grade is based on each student's individual performance and his/her fulfillment of the course requirements, as stipulated in the syllabus.
- The same course rules and expectations apply equally to all students—no student is entitled to special consideration or unique treatment. Other extraneous or irrelevant factors, including student's personal desires or expectations about grades, are not considered. Students should also not expect retroactive changes or other forms of grade modification.
- Students should take all assignments and other course requirements very seriously. There are no opportunities to do additional work for extra credit or better grade.
- No incomplete grades are given, except in very exceptional circumstances, in which case the students should contact the instructor no later than a week before the last day of classes.
- Final grades are computed according to the standard grading scheme in Canvas.

Attendance and Participation

- **Attendance** is expected of all students, starting with the first day of classes. Students who have problems with class attendance or punctuality should think twice before enrolling in the course. (For more on the university's attendance policies, see the Undergraduate Catalog).
- Students are advised to take extensive **notes** in class, and to use them prudently in their preparation for the exams. The exams are primarily based on the lectures, along with the readings.
- Student with exceptional **participation** performance may be awarded up to 3 **bonus** points (3% of the final grade). This bonus is entirely based on the instructor's discretion, and the final assessment takes into account both the quantity and quality of student's participation in classroom discussions, as well as other elements of coursework.

Quiz

- The quiz covers the lectures and readings for that and the previous week, so students should come to class prepared to be examined on them. Remember, the readings are not optional and they should be done in advance.
- [Students who are late cannot take the quiz and have to wait outside until it has ended. Be considerate of your fellow students and the professor.] Not applicable for online course.
- In most circumstances, there is no make-up on the quiz. See also under exams below.

Exams

- The exams (and the quiz) are to be taken online, via Canvas, during regular class hours. They are proctored.
- The exams are primarily based on the materials presented in the lectures, plus the readings. They are not cumulative (i.e. Exam 2 will cover the materials covered after Exam 1, etc.).
- They will primarily consist of multiple-choice and short Q&A; there might also be a single short essay (a few paragraphs, and not more than one per exam).
- No make-up exams are given, except in documented instances of illness or other emergency, in which case the student must contact the instructor directly before the exam, if feasible, or as soon as possible.
- If any student has a valid reason to request rescheduling of an exam—such as observance of a religious holiday—he/she must contact the instructor in person and make suitable arrangements one week before the examination. Failure to act in accord with these instructions leads to a failing grade.

Classroom Conduct

- All students are required to come to class on time, as late arrivals (and early departures) are disruptive and disrespectful.
- Students are expected to be courteous and respectful, and abstain from disruptive behavior in the classroom that adversely affects others and is contrary to the pursuit of knowledge. Examples of such behavior include talking with someone, displaying active disinterest in the class (e.g. sleeping or inappropriate computer use), or putting down others. Phones should be turned off during class. Offending students will be asked to leave.

Office Hours and Communication

- Students are encouraged to schedule office hours, especially if they have questions or need help with the course materials.
- The instructor is glad to assist students with their pursuit of knowledge and facilitate their success with the course. Office hours are a valuable resource, and students should feel welcome to make good use of it.

- The instructor is also willing to discuss relevant academic topics that, due to time constraints, are not covered in class in much detail.
- Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor directly, preferably during office hours. Pleading ignorance or lack of common sense are not valid excuses for failures to fulfill requirements or abide by course policies.

Plagiarism and Cheating

- Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties.
- For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure (posted online by the Dean of Students Office).

Disability

- A student who has a documented disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor in person at the beginning of the course so that appropriate arrangements may be made.
- The student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor, as early as possible. All arrangements for changes pertaining to the quizzes and the exams must be made at least one week in advance.

Other Notices

- Registration in the course implies that each student enters a contractual agreement with the instructor, whereas he/she is accountable for fulfilling all course requirements and adhering to the course policies.
- Students are responsible for knowing and following all schedules and instructions contained in this syllabus, as well as any other instructions given in class (remember, attendance is not optional).



“There is nowhere where the wisdom of the Buddha does not reach. Why? There is not a single sentient being that is not fully possessed of the wisdom of the Buddha. It is only due to their false thinking, fallacies, and attachments that beings fail to realize this. If they could only abandon their false thoughts, then the all-encompassing wisdom, the spontaneous wisdom, and the unobstructed wisdom will clearly manifest themselves.”

—Huayan Scripture 華嚴經