



**School of Arts & Science**  
**Humanities**  
**RELIGION 102**  
**World Religions of the East**  
**Winter 2008**

Course Description

An introductory survey of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Chinese religions (Confucianism, Taoism), and Shintoism, this course explores the sources, beliefs (including representative texts), and practices of these religions. The traditions of each will be studied in their cultural and political contexts from both historical and contemporary perspectives.

**1. Instructor Information**

(a)	Instructor:	Suzanne Tremblay		
(b)	Office Hours:	Every day 4:00-5:00 PM		
(c)	Location:	P108B		
(d)	Phone:	370-3010		
(e)	Email:	tremblays@camosun.bc.ca		
(f)	Website:			

**2. Intended Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course you will be able to:

1. Explain the contexts/historical settings in which Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Chinese religions (Confucianism, Taoism), and Shintoism arose.
2. List major dates, events, and places central to each.
3. Describe the historical linkage/relationships among them.
4. Summarize their major beliefs, teachings, ideals, and practices.
5. Explain variations/splits/divisions in each tradition.
6. Analyze their similarities/differences.
7. Compare/contrast various elements in Eastern religions.
8. Evaluate their relationship to and impact on the world today.

**3. Required Materials**

David Noss, *A History of the World's Religions*  
Bhagavad Gita  
Confucius: Analects  
Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching

**4. Course Content and Schedule**

**Week 1** : January 8: Introduction to Course: Definitions of religion and Religious Studies, assignments

**Week 2**: January 15: Lecture: Introduction to Hinduism: Early Hinduism  
Source: Noss, ch. 3, I-III,

**Week 3**: January 22: Lecture: Later Hinduism (part I)  
Source: Noss, ch. 4 – I-VIII

**Week 4**: January 29: Lecture: Later Hinduism (part 2)  
Source: Noss, 4, I-VIII

Seminar  
**First Assignment Due** (and discussed)  
**Project Proposal Due**

**Week 5**: February 5: Lecture: Later Hinduism (part 2)  
Film: Shakti  
Seminar

- Week 6:** February 12: Lecture: Jainism  
Source: Noss, ch. 5, I-III  
Film: Gandhi (excerpts)  
Seminar
- Week 7:** **Test One** (February 19)
- Week 8:** February 26: Lecture: Buddhism (part 1)  
Source: Noss, ch. 6, I-II
- Article Review Due**
- Week 9:** March 4: Lecture: Buddhism (part 2)  
Source: Noss, ch. 7, I-VIII  
Film: Kundum (excerpts); Seven Years in Tibet (excerpts)  
Seminar:
- Week 10:** March 11: Lecture: Sikhism  
Source: Noss, ch. 8, I-III  
Seminar:
- Week 11:** March 18: Lecture: Chinese Religion part 1: Taoism  
Source: Noss, ch. 9, I-III  
Film
- Week 12:** March 25: Lecture: Chinese Religions part 2: Confucianism  
Source: Noss, ch. 10, I-VI  
Film  
Seminar  
**Project Due**
- Week 13:** April 1: Lecture: Shintoism  
Source: Noss, ch. 11, I-VII  
Film  
Seminar
- Week 14:** April 8: Review

Test Two will be during the exam period, on the Tuesday evening following the last class.

*Remember that we are all outsiders to faiths, traditions, and belief systems that are not our own. Hence, because we are covering seven 'religions,' no matter what our personal belief and value systems, we will all be outsiders at most points in the semester (or all of the time). You do not have to share the values/beliefs of any of the traditions covered but you must recognize that believers in each of these traditions view their texts as sacred. The point of this course/these readings is for all of us to get a sense of what is meaningful to large numbers of people.*

#### **5. Basis of Your Assessment (Weighting)**

Two tests	50%
Media Analysis	10%
Project	
Proposal	05%
Review	05%
Paper	20%
Participation	10%

- Test** will consist of three types of questions:
  - Terms to identify based on the list given at the end of Noss chapters as well as ones provided in class.
  - Short paragraph-size answers to questions on themes and issues.
  - Longer essays
- The **Media Analysis** will consist of a diary tracking the religious coverage of four media from January 8, 2008 to February 26, 2008: a newsmagazine, a newspaper, CBC radio, and television (one non-CBC station). You must submit 10 short reports: You will list the media, give the date of the news item, and

answer the following questions: What was the story (if any)? Which of the 7 Eastern faiths did it cover? Was there a detectable bias? If so, negative or positive? What evidence do you have for this conclusion?

3. The **Project** will comprise work on a topic from the list below or one that I have approved.

a. Proposal (5%) – due Week 4: January 29, 2008

You will submit a proposal that will

- introduce the topic (who, what, when, where, etc.). Reference/source material is critical
- explain the question that the paper will answer
- lay out the approach/style of presentation

There is no need to formulate a thesis at this point; theses should arise from research rather than the reverse.

Included will be a list of sources, a minimum of three books and two academic (journal) articles, specific to the topic. It is possible that you may not find a book completely focused on your topic. In that case, the book's coverage of your topic must be significant. Consult with me to assist in making that judgment. Primary sources are encouraged. *Attached to what you will hand in will be a photocopy of the first two pages of each source and a short summary explaining why that source is appropriate for the paper.*

b.. Review of one of the articles chosen (5%) – due Week 6: February 12, 2008

You will write a review of one of the two academic articles chosen for the essay. Each review will be 300 words and consist of three paragraphs:

- paragraph one will define the theme
- paragraph two will discuss style, sources, and method
- paragraph three will give your opinion on the basis of the information in paragraphs one and two.

The article will be attached.

c. Completed Essay (20%) – due Week 12: March 25, 2008

Assignment and Marking Conditions and Standards:

1. Each essay will be no longer than 2000 words (*indicate the number of words on your cover page*).
2. The final product will consist of a thesis, supported by evidence, analysis of alternative interpretations, and a conclusion summarizing why the chosen interpretation fits the evidence best.
3. It must contain a minimum of 20 footnotes documenting specific information, themes, ideas, quotes, or paraphrases. The paper will include a title page and proper footnote and bibliographical style (for details on History style, see the Humanities web page). You will double space, not use headings, and not leave extra space between paragraphs. Margins must be justified. Attached to the back will be a copy of the original proposal, along with the article review.
4. Two copies of the essay must be handed in, one to be kept on file for five years.
5. Grammar, spelling, and syntax are critical to a good paper. Marks will be lost for deficiencies in these areas.
6. The final grade will be determined on the basis of quality of work and presentation (see 5), use of sources, a clear and strong thesis, consistent argument, proper transitions, and originality of approach.

**All work is due in class on the due date, before the class meets. Attendance for that class is mandatory. Failure to follow these rules forfeits the mark.**

**4. Participation** in classroom activities is an important part of the course. Seminar sessions will be devoted to discussion of assigned readings other than Noss. Seminar attendance is required. If you must miss one, your absence must be arranged/discussed with me ahead of time.

**List of Possible Topics**

The following are suggested topics. You can choose a different topic but you must get my approval for it. For many topics, the *Encyclopedia of Religion* is a good reference work and starting point to define the topic.

**Hinduism:**

- The Sacred Cow: sacred symbol or economic tool?
- Explain and discuss the sacredness of the Ganges River
- What are the physiological and or psychological foundations of the Tantric Body?
- Explain and discuss the economic, political, religious significance of Rammohan Roy's Hindu Reformism:

- Explain and discuss the economic, political, religious significance of Ramakrishna's Revivalism
- Explain and discuss Vivekananda and ecumenical Hinduism
- Gandhi and Indian Nationalism: compare and contrast the religious and political elements of his career
- Untouchables as Gandhi's Harijans (Children of God): explain and discuss the political and religious consequences of this approach to India's untouchables.
- Hinduism and Christianity: Is Christ another incarnation of Krishna? Explain your position.
- The idea of Pollution in Indian society: explain and discuss the political, economical, sociological and religious elements of pollution and purification.
- Explain and discuss the Hindu view of the animal world
- Role of Astrology for the Hindu: Myth or religious faith? Explain your position.
- Ganesh: the god with the elephant head. Explain and discuss how such a figure can hold such powers for a religious people.
- Explain and discuss the concept of Duty in the Bhagavad Gita
- Durga – Kali : The blood thirsty goddess: explain and discuss the role of a deity such as Durga in a religion
- Is the abolition of Sati by the British Colonial powers a sign of progress or one of colonialism? Or both? Discuss.
- Hare Krishna: how true to Hinduism is their practice?
- Transcendental Meditation

#### **Jainism:**

- Explain and discuss the origin, influence and effectiveness of ahimsa (non-violence) in personal life, or in society.
- Contrast western consumerism with Jain Ascetism.
- Compare and contrast views on suicide from Jainism and another Eastern religion of your choice.

#### **Buddhism:**

- With the help of historical examples, discuss the notion engaged Buddhism in Asia
- The Saffron Aborted Revolution in Myanmar: Is it the role or duty of a monk to challenge a military dictatorship?
- Explain and discuss Importance of Meditation in Buddhism
- Explain and discuss The Fourteen Dalai Lama's Universal Responsibility Principle
- Compare and contrast Hindu and Buddhist views of the Self
- Mysticism of Satori (flash of enlightenment in Zen Buddhism)
- The West has fallen in love with Zen. There is the Zen of Running, The Zen of Management, etc. Is it really Zen? Explain your response.
- Compare and contrast the view of organ donation from the point of view of Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Analyze and discuss the Zen of Archery by Eugen Herrigel.

#### **Sikhism**

- Explain the Changing perceptions of the Feminine in Sikhism
- The Sikh Diaspora and its influence on the religion itself.
- The military brotherhood of Sikhism and its clash with non-violence movement in India.
- Compare and contrast the view of war of two of the above religions, for e.g.: Buddhism and Sikhism
- Explain and discuss the importance of martyrdom in the development of Sikhism.

#### **Confucianism**

- Is Feng Sui a moral practice, mysticism, myth, good business or plain common sense? Explain your response.
- Explain and discuss Mencius and neo-confucianism
- Explain and discuss The Mandate of Heaven
- Explain and discuss The Ancestor Cult
- Explain and discuss Confucius and workplace ethic.

#### **Daoism**

- The symbol of Yin and Yang: commercialisation of spirituality?
- The use of paradoxical riddles: why do Daoists use them?
- Is it really Zen? The popular use of the word Zen for everything from running to business?

- Analyze and discuss the Tao of Pooh by Benjamin Hoff.

### Shintoism

- Is Shintoism strictly a Japanese religion?
- Shintoism and the Shoguns: Discuss the notion of Shinto as state religion
- Is the plurality of kami equivalent to individualizing of beliefs?

Note the dimension of time. Be sure to be clear about which time in history, which place, and about whom you are writing. Context is crucial in writing accurate papers.

### Other

#### 1. Grading System

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	A+		9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+		6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+		3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D		1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

#### Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) or information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
<b>I</b>	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
<b>IP</b>	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
<b>CW</b>	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy E-1.5 at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca) for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

#### 2. Recommended Materials or Services to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

##### LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College calendar, at Student Services or the College web site at [camosun.ca](http://camosun.ca).

##### STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

There is a Student Conduct Policy **which includes plagiarism**. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, at Student Services and on the College web site in the Policy Section.