**Dr. Adam Wells**

**Wiley 004**

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**Office hours: 2-4 M,F**

**1-3 T,Th**

**Religion 212: Asian Religions**

This course offers an in-depth survey of Asian religions, focusing on the interpretation of primary texts in their historical, theological and philosophical contexts. The first unit of the course will cover the religions of Southeast Asia. Beginning with the Brahmanical tradition, we will trace the development of Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism. The second unit of the course will examine the religions of East Asia: Daoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Zen and Chan Buddhism.

**COURSE GOALS:**

1. Students will become acquainted with the historical context, (a-)theology and major texts of Asian religions.
2. Students will develop an appreciation for the diversity of Asian religions.
3. Students will sharpen their close reading, writing and analytical skills.
4. Students will be able to relate Asian religious traditions to their own tradition (whether that tradition be religious, secular, or otherwise).

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1. Embree, Ainslee T., ed. *Sources of Indian Tradition*. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988
2. De Bary, William Theodore, ed. *Sources of East Asian Tradition*. Vol 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
3. Eck, Diana. *Darsan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 3rd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. Midterm (20% each). **Due 10/22**
2. One 3,000 word research papers (30% each). **Due 11/22**
3. Oral presentation based on your research paper (15%). **11/26**
4. Weekly assignments (10%)
5. Final exam (25)%

**SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Unit I. India**

*Week 1* (8/29)

Introduction

Week 2 (9/2-9/6)

 1) **Moodle:** Edward Said, *Orientalism* (selections); Francis Clooney, *Comparative Theology* (selections)

 2) **Moodle:** ThomasBerry, *Religions of India*, Chs. 1 and 2

Week 3 (9/9-9/13)

The Vedic Period

1. **Embree**, Introduction+Ch. 1
2. **Embree**, Ch. 2

Week 4 (9/16-9/20)

Jainism

1. **Embree,** pp. 43 - 75
2. **Embree**, Ch. 4

*Weeks 5-6* (9/23-10/4)

Buddhism

1. **Moodle**: Life of the Buddha (Video); Berry, *Religions of India*, pp. 119- 140.
2. **Embree,** pp. 93 – 113.
3. **Embree,** pp. 114- 152
4. **Embree,** Ch. 6

*Weeks 6-7* (10/7-10/18)

The Hindu Ways of Life

1. **Embree**, pp. 203-249.
2. **Embree**, Chs. 10-11.
3. **Eck**, *Darsan*

**10/22 MIDTERM DUE**

**Unit II. China and Japan**

*Week 9-10* (10/28-11/8)

Early Chinese religion and Confucianism

1. **Moodle**: Bresnan, *Awakening*, Ch. 13
2. **De Bary**, Chs. 2-3.
3. **De Bary,** Ch. 6

*Week 10* (11/11-11/15)

Laozi and later Daoism

1. **Moodle:** Bresnan, *Awakening,* Ch. 14
2. **De Bary,** Chs. 5 and 14

*Week 11* (11/18-11/22)

Buddhism in China

1. **De Bary**, Chs. 15-16
2. **De Bary**, Ch. 17

**RESEARCH PAPERS DUE 11/22**

*Week 12* (11/26)

1. **Presentations**

*Week 13-14* (12/2-12/10)

Shinto and Buddhism in Japan

1. **Moodle**: Bresnan, Ch. 15; and **De Bary** Ch. 42
2. **De Bary**, pp. 672-676, 684-689, 698-702, and Ch. 48.
3. **Moodle: Bresnan,** Ch. 19;and **De Bary**, Ch. 52.

**FINAL EXAM TBA**

**GENERAL GRADING RUBRIC:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Lower Numerical Cutoff** | **Description** |
| A | 94 | Exceptional work that shows creativity and careful analysis of material. A-level work is sophisticated, well-written, and free from errors in grammar and spelling. |
| A- | 90 | Shows exceptional mastery of concepts, and goes well beyond requirements. |
| B+ | 87 | Work in the B-range is above average. B level work may be excellent work with several small errors or flaws. It is solid work, and shows significant command of concepts. |
| B | 84 |  |
| B- | 80 |  |
| C+ | 77 | Work in the C-range is average and satisfactory. It fulfills the criteria of the assignment, but does not display the same level of analysis, comprehension, and/or creativity as B and A-level work |
| C | 74 |  |
| C- | 70 |  |
| D | 60 | Work in the D-range is substandard. It may have major flaws, or show little mastery of major or minor concepts.  |
| F | 0 | Work in the F-range shows no mastery of relevant material. F-level work fails to complete requirements or is otherwise unacceptable. |

\*\*Letter grades are equivalent to a numerical score 1 point above the lower numerical cutoff. For example, an A paper is equivalent to a numerical score of 95

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**:

During your college years, by responsible class attendance you can establish a reputation for reliability that will help your professors to write good reference letters for jobs or programs of graduate study. I value faithful attendance highly, as an indication of your commitment to the course goals.

You are allowed TWO excused absences. You may request that an absence be excused for an appropriate reason such as sickness, a medical appointment, athletic competition, dangerous driving conditions, etc. An excused absence is based on an email request from you (**not** on a note from a nurse, a list from a coach, or your telling me why you missed class). **Before or right after any** **absence, please email me, giving the date and the reason that you missed class, if you want me** **to consider excusing the absence.** **If you do not email me before or soon after your absence, I will assume that it is unexcused**. Unexcused absences will reduce your course average by 2 points for each such absence.

**Note: I do not give make-up quizzes or exams. If you miss an in-class assignment or exam, you will receive a zero.**

**PARTICIPATION POLICY:**

Informed participation is expected. You should be physically and mentally present and engaged in every class! Your learning process will be helped immensely by participating actively in the course, so don’t be afraid to ask questions, or engage your peers (and me) in discussion. Be bold!

Non-participation (e.g., sleeping, eating your lunch, staring off in the distance for extended periods of time, disruptive behavior and so forth) will negatively impact your course grade.

**COMPUTER AND CELL PHONE POLICY:**

A successful class requires the active participation of everyone involved. Cell phones are distracting and disruptive; they are detrimental to both individual learners and the class as a whole. Consequently, the use of cell phones in class is strictly forbidden. Turn them off before class begins—off, not vibrate! I will give you one warning per semester, after which I will deduct one point from your final grade for every violation of this policy. If I see your cell phone during an exam or quiz, you will automatically receive a ZERO on that exam or quiz.

The use of laptops in class is prohibited unless you receive an accommodation from the Powell Resource Center.

**How to Get the Most Out of This Course**

As with any course, what you invest will determine your return, not simply in the grade you earn but in the knowledge and perspectives you take with you. Things to do, more or less in order of importance, are:

1. **Keep up with the assignments**. There is a good deal of reading in this course, and more than in the ordinary 200-level course. Stay current with the reading assignments. If you fall behind you will have a hard time catching up.

2. **Prepare conscientiously for class discussions**. Read closely the texts assigned, ponder the questions provided, make notes, and be ready to participate in discussion in a thoughtful and well-informed manner.

3. **Take advantage of the office hours of the instructor**. My office hours are for your benefit. They provide opportunities for you not only to ask questions and obtain clarifications, but also to get to know me and to let me get to know you.

4. **Familiarize yourself with the specialized vocabulary of the academic study of religion**. There are many technical terms and fifty-cent words: learn what they mean and how to pronounce and spell them. To this end, you should freely and frequently consult the glossary provided at the back of the textbook.

5. **Make use of resources beyond those required for reading or purchase**. There are many, many commentaries, dictionaries, concordances, etc. Don’t be afraid to consult outside sources! (Our reference librarians will be glad to help you with this!)