This course surveys the central beliefs and patterns of life of living religious traditions of Asia. It will focus particularly on the basic texts or narratives of these traditions, on their essential histories, and on the concepts of humanity, the world, and the divine that are distinctive of each. In addition, the course will explore not only what people believe religiously but also what they do religiously. Part of the course, therefore, will consider the ways of life, forms of social action, and rituals practiced by different communities. Not all Asian traditions can be included in a one-semester survey. The traditions chosen have large numbers of adherents, have particular historical significance, and represent different cultural areas.

By the end of the course, students will have a understanding of the basic histories and orientations of the major religious traditions originating in Asia.

Written Assignments and Attendance:

Written assignments comprise three interpretive essays on the primary texts assigned in the course, a report on a lecture or program outside of class, a midterm, and a final. The final exam is scheduled on Saturday, December 15, 9am-12pm. Please do not make travel arrangements to leave Austin before that date since we are not able to change the time of the final.

The final grade for written work will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three essays</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regrettably, excessive unexcused absences (beyond 4) or persistent failure to prepare the assignments on time or both can result in a reduction of up to one full grade. On the other hand, vigorous and informed participation in class discussions can help a grade, especially a marginal one. Other factors, such as a student’s progress or effort in the course, may also affect final grades for the class.

Grading:
This class uses plus/minus grading on a scale of 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 87-89 B+, 83-86 B, 80-82 B-, 77-79 C+, 73-76 C, 70-72 C-, etc.

**Posted Materials:**

Assignments, handouts, and some additional materials will be posted on Blackboard. You can access the Blackboard site for this course from [http://courses.utexas.edu/](http://courses.utexas.edu/).

**Special Needs:**

At the beginning of the semester, students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify the instructors by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Students should contact the SSD Office at 471-6259 or 471-4641 TTY, [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/).

**Academic Honesty:**

Be careful not to copy the work of peers or to use material without proper attribution. Nothing can be more disastrous for your grade or for your college record than to be found to have violated the University rules on academic honesty. Students who violate these rules are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course or dismissal from the University or both. If you have any questions about properly utilizing sources, check with the TA or instructor.

**Global Cultures Flag:**

This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. All the assignments in this course will concern the practices, beliefs, and histories of Asian cultural groups, both past and present.

**Required Texts:**

John L. Esposito et al., *Religions of Asia Today*
R. K. Narayan, tr., *The Ramayana*
Patrick Olivelle, tr., *The Buddhacarita: Life of the Buddha* (on Blackboard)
Burton Watson, tr., *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*
Hiroaki Sato, tr., *Basho’s Narrow Road: Spring and Autumn Passage*

Additional readings will also be available on the Blackboard site.

Please note: the following schedule is subject to change according to the unfolding dictates of karma and the shifting course of the Dao.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HINDUISM

August

29 Introduction & the Hindu World

31 The Hindu & Buddhist World Esposito, pp. 75-161 (2nd ed. 75-164)

September

5 Meditation and the Way of Insight

7 The Story of Rāma The Ramayana

10 The Story of Rāma The Ramayana

12 The Story of Rāma The Ramayana


17 Images of Power: Śiva and Devī “Brahmā,” “Śiva/Sages,” “Durgā”

19 Images of Power: Śiva and Devī

ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA

21 The Unity and Diversity of Islam Esposito, pp. 335-357 (2nd ed. 349-380)

24 Islam in South Asia

BUDDHISM

26 Introduction to Buddhism Esposito, pp. 163-191 (2nd ed. 169-198)

28 The Buddha’s Life Jātaka stories, Buddhacarita (The Life of the Buddha)

October

1 The Buddha’s Life

3 The Four Noble Truths Selection from E. Conze, Buddhist Scriptures: “The Questions of King Milinda”
5 Buddhism Conference
8 The Four Noble Truths Selection from J. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*: “The Path”
10 The Four Noble Truths Selection from J. Strong, *The Experience of Buddhism*: “Meditation”
12 The Four Noble Truths
15 Mahāyāna: Bodhisattvas Essay on *The Life of the Buddha*
17 Mahāyāna: Buddhas
19 Mahāyāna: Emptiness & Mind Only “The Heart Sūtra”
22 Vajrayāna
24 Midterm Exam

**CHINESE TRADITIONS**

26 Themes in Chinese Religion Esposito, pp. 245-291 (2nd ed. 257-326)
29 The Confucian Tradition “Mencius” “Filial Exemplars”
31 The Confucian Tradition

*November*

2 The Daoist Tradition *Zhuangzi*
5 The Daoist Tradition *Zhuangzi*
7 Religious Daoism
9 Religious Daoism
12 Buddhism in China Essay on *Zhuangzi*
14 Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JAPANESE TRADITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Shintō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film: “Man, Gods, and Nature in Japan”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Shintō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esposito, pp. 292-329 (2nd ed. 326-344)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Shintō Transformations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>History &amp; Religion in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>History &amp; Religion in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Zen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basho’s Narrow Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Zen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basho’s Narrow Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>New Religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>