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 classical expressions and 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 originated in Asia, have large numbers of adherents, possess 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 these religious traditions.

**Written Assignments and Attendance:**
Written assignments comprise three interpretive essays on primary texts assigned in the course, two exams, and a final interpretive essay. The final essay is due at the scheduled time of the final exam, which is Wednesday, May 9, 2pm.

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

- First exam (midterm) 15%
- Second exam (end of term) 15%
- Three essays 45%
- Final essay 15%
- Attendance 10%

We allow up to three unexcused absences. Beyond that number, one point for each unexcused absence may be deducted from the ten points for attendance. Vigorous and informed participation in class discussions can help a grade, especially a marginal one, as can other factors, such as a student’s progress or demonstrated effort in the course.

**Computers, Tablets, Smartphones:**
Please do not use computers, tablets, smart phones, or the like in class. I know this request sounds downright Luddite, but these devices inhibit class discussion. I use presentation software in class and I will post presentations after class.

**Grading:**
This class uses the standard UT grading scale of 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, etc.
**Posted Materials:**
Assignments, handouts, and additional materials will be posted on Canvas. You can access the Canvas website for this course from [http://canvas.utexas.edu/](http://canvas.utexas.edu/)

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

**Academic Integrity:**
Be careful not to copy the work of peers or to use material without proper attribution. Whether you are quoting or paraphrasing, you need to indicate the source on which you draw. 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.

**Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas:**
This course counts towards the Certificate Program in Core Texts and Ideas, a six-course sequence in the great books, ideas, and controversies. The program is open to students in all majors and colleges. For more information, visit [http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts/](http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/coretexts/) or email the academic director, Professor Lorraine Pangle, at lorrainepangle@austin.utexas.edu.

**Religious Holy Days:**
According to UT policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least two weeks prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you miss an examination or an assignment in order to observe a religious holy day and you have given timely notification, we will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable period after the absence.

**Required Texts:**
Patrick Olivelle, tr., *The Buddhacarita: Life of the Buddha* (posted on Canvas)
Burton Watson, tr., *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. Columbia University Press. [B. Watson, *Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings* is the same book with a different system of transcription. It can replace *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*]

Hiroaki Sato, tr., *Basho's Narrow Road: Spring and Autumn Passages*. Stone Bridge Press.

With the exception of Olivelle, *The Buddhacarita*, all the above books will be available on reserve at the PCL. Note that there are electronic versions of *Zhuangzi* and *Basho’s Narrow Road* available through the library. Additional assigned readings, which have their titles in quotation marks, will be available on the Canvas site.

The following schedule of lectures is subject to modification 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HINDUISM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January</strong></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; the Traditional Hindu World</td>
<td>“Indra and the Ants”</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>The Story of Rāma</td>
<td><em>The Rāmāyaṇa</em>, “Rāmāyaṇa Who’s Who”</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>The Story of Rāma</td>
<td><em>The Ramayana</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The Story of Rāma</td>
<td><em>The Rāmāyaṇa</em></td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Images of Beauty: Kṛṣṇa</td>
<td>“Baby Kṛṣṇa,” “Kṛṣṇa and Kāliya,” “Stolen Clothes,” “Rāsalīlā”</td>
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February

2 Images of Power: Śiva and Devī

ISLAM IN SOUTH ASIA

5 The Unity and Diversity of Islam “Foundations”

7 Islam in South Asia Essay on The Ramayana

BUDDHISM


12 The Buddha’s Life “Mahākapi (Great Monkey) Jātaka,” Buddhacarita (The Life of the Buddha)

14 The Buddha’s Life Buddhacarita (The Life of the Buddha), “Buddhacarita Parinirvāṇa (Death of the Buddha)”

16 The Four Noble Truths “The Questions of King Milinda”

19 The Four Noble Truths “Path”

21 The Four Noble Truths

23 The Four Noble Truths “Meditation”


28 Mahāyāna: Buddhas Essay on The Life of the Buddha

March

2 Mahāyāna: Emptiness “Heart Sūtra”

5 Mahāyāna: Mind Only
7 Vajrayāna

9 **First Exam**

12-17 Spring Break

19 Study and Preparation

**CHINESE TRADITIONS**

21 Three Schools / Four Traditions Oxtoby 3ed. pp. 256–294, 4ed. 264–304

23 Chinese Popular Religion

26 Chinese Popular Religion

28 The Confucian Tradition “The Metal-Bound Coffer” “Filial Exemplars”

30 The Confucian Tradition “Mencius”

*April*

2 The Daoist Tradition Oxtoby 3ed. pp. 294–326, 4ed. pp. 304–338 *Zhuangzi*

4 The Daoist Tradition *Zhuangzi*

6 The Daoist Tradition *Laozi Daodejing* Book I, pp. 157-177

9 Religious Daoism

11 Buddhism in China “Mulian”

13 Buddhism in China

16 Buddhism in China **Essay on Zhuangzi**

**JAPANESE TRADITIONS**

18 Shintō Film: “Man, Gods, and Nature in Japan”

23 Shintō


27 Zen Basho’s Narrow Road

30 Zen Basho’s Narrow Road

May

2 Zen Basho’s Narrow Road

4 Second Exam

9 Final Essay