

1-2014

RLST 238.01: Japanese Religions

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Japanese Religions

RELS 238

TR 9:40-11:00

LA 342

Dr. Brad Clough

Office Hours: TR 3:45-6:00 PM

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Course Description:

This course will examine the history of Japanese religions as a continuous stream that has synthesized elements from Shinto, Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian systems, together with prominent folk traditions like shamanism, asceticism, and divination. The course will cover major religious developments in Japanese history, such as the early clan mythologies of the Jomon and Yayoi peoples, the Shinto-Buddhist syncretism and union of Buddhism and the emperor's law in the Asuka and Nara periods, the establishment of sectarian Buddhism in the Heian period and under the Kamakura and Ashikaga shogunates, the influence of Neo-Confucianism and Christianity in the Tokugawa era, the establishment of Shinto as the state religion and persecution of Buddhism by the Meiji regime, and the triumph of non-elite "new religions" following World War II. In addition to the subject of relations between religion and state that so pervades the study of Japanese religions, we will also investigate several other ongoing themes, such as aesthetic expressions of religious thought and notions of embodiment in religious practice.

Required Books (available at the campus bookstore):

Basho (Sam Hamill, tr.). *Narrow Road to the Interior*

deBary et al. *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Vol. 1*

Earhart, H. Byron. *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity*

Haskel, Peter. *Bankei Zen: Translations from the Record of Bankei*

Hori, Ichiro. *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*

Nelson, John. *A Year in the Life of a Shinto Shrine*

Pilgrim, Richard. *Buddhism and the Arts of Japan*

Requirements:

1) **Class attendance, preparation, and participation.** This aspect of the course cannot be emphasized enough. Because this is a discussion-oriented course, each class is a true joint-learning venture, the success of which depends on every member not only having completed the assigned reading for the day, but also having digested and reflected on it, and being prepared for discussion. To facilitate this, for each class each student will prepare a typed list of at least three questions or topics for discussion, which will be handed in, after being used in class. Finally, it should go without saying that you cannot be considered a participant in class if you do not actually attend class! The choice to attend class is of course yours, but missing more than two classes without an excuse will seriously affect your final grade. Any excused absence requires written authorization for Health Services, a doctor, an advisor, a counselor, or administrator. Class participation will count for 20% of your final grade.

2) **Two exams.** Mid-Term and Final (each exam is 25% of the final grade)

3) **Research Paper.** This will be a research paper of 10-12 pages in length on a topic of your choice. I will also be distributing a list of suggested topics. Please note that that a proposal and bibliography are due on 3/18, and that a final version of the paper is due on 4/28 (30% of the final grade).

Class Schedule and Assignments:

Tues. 1/28 Introduction to the Course

I. **Early Japanese Religion**

Thurs. 1/30 Pre-Historic Society and Folk Religion I: Shamanism
Earhart: chapters 1-3

deBary: pp. 3-13

Hori: Chapter 5

Tues. 2/4

Early Shinto Mythology

Earhart: chapter 4

deBary: pp.13-31

II. The Introduction of Buddhism and Chinese Religions

Thurs. 2/6

The Background to Buddhism's Arrival in Japan

Handout: chapters 2-4 from Damien Keown's *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*

Tues. 2/11

Background to Buddhism's Arrival (cont.)

Handout: Keown, chapters 5-8

Thurs. 2/13

Prince Shotoku and the Rise of Buddhism

Earhart: pp. 41-45

deBary: pp.40-55

Tues. 2/18

The Nara Period: State Buddhism, Academic Buddhism, and the Shinto-Buddhist Synthesis

Earhart: pp. 45-51

deBary: pp. 100-121

Pilgrim: pp. 1-25

Thurs. 2/20

Folk Religion II: Main Features & Their Relation to Social Structure

Earhart: chapter 7

Hori: chapters 1 & 2

Tues. 2/25

The Influence of Chinese Religion

Earhart: Chapters 6 & 8

debary: pp. 63-99.

III. Religion in the Heian Period

Thurs. 2/27 Saicho and Tendai Buddhism
Earhart: pp. 81-86, 91-94
deBary: pp. 123-152

Tues. 3/4 Kukai and Shingon Buddhism
Earhart: pp. 86-90, 94-96
deBary: pp. 153-196
Pilgrim: pp. 26-38

Thurs. 3/6 Folk Religion III: Mountain Asceticism
Hori: chapter 4

IV. Religion Under the Shoguns: The Kamakura and Ashikaga Periods

Tues. 3/11 Medieval Shinto
Earhart: chapter 11
deBary: pp. 336-363

Thurs. 3/13 Shrine Shinto: Ritual Worship & Festivals
Nelson: pp.3-59

Tues. 3/18 Shrine Shinto (cont.)
Nelson: pp. 63-166
****Research Paper Proposal & Bibliography Due****

Thurs. 3/20 Shrine Shinto (cont.)
Nelson: pp.167-225

Tues. 3/25 ****Mid-Term Exam****

Thurs. 3/27 Nichiren & Faith in the *Lotus Sutra*
Earhart: pp. 205-210, 104-106
deBary: pp. 292-305

Tues. 4/8 Pure Land Buddhism
Earhart: pp. 101-104
Hori: 83-139
deBary: 211-230

Thurs. 4/10 Zen Buddhism: Introduction and Zen & the Arts
Earhart: pp. 106-113
deBary: pp. 306-335
Pilgrim: 39-66

V. Religion in the Tokugawa and Meiji Periods

Tues. 4/15 The Rise of Christianity, Neo-Confucianism, and Shinto, and the
Decline of Buddhism
Earhart: pp. 144-176
Selections of writings from Confucian revivalists

Thurs 4/17 Zen Renaissance I Zen and the Art of Poetry
Pilgrim: pp. 66-70
Basho: *Narrow Road to the Interior*

Tues. 4/22 Zen Renaissance II: Bankei's "Unborn Zen"
Haskel: pp. 3-87

Thurs. 4/24 Zen Renaissance II (cont.)
Haskel: pp. 87-164

****Mon. 4/28 Research Papers Due****

VI. The Modern Period

Tues. 4/29 The Rise of the “New Religions”

Earhart: chapter 17

Thurs.5/1 Religion in Contemporary Japan

Earhart: chapters 18 and 19

Tues. 5/6 Final Exam Review

Thurs. 5/8 Final Exam Review

****Final Exam Date and Time TBA****