

**RELIGION 212 002  
RELIGIONS OF THE ORIENT  
SPRING 2008**

**Mondays: 4:30 – 7:10 p.m., Robinson Hall A, Room 248**

**Instructor:** Vicky Dreyer  
**Office:** Robinson B465

**E-Mail:** vdreyer@gmu.edu  
**Office Hours:** Before & after class  
or by appointment

**Course Description:**

In this class, we will explore some of the most important religions, philosophies and world views of India, China, Japan and North Korea. From India, we will study Hinduism & Buddhism; from China, Confucianism, Taoism, Zen & Maoism; and from Japan, Shinto. From North Korea, we will take a quick look at the political ideology of Juche (time permitting).

Aside from historical backgrounds, practices & beliefs, we will also examine the Eastern view of Ultimate Reality, be it Nirvana, the Will of Heaven, the Tao, Oneness or Emptiness -- or simply Enlightenment. Be prepared to learn how 40% of the world's population live their beliefs.

**Required Texts:**

**Primary Text:** *Religions of Asia* by Fenton, Hein, Reynolds, et. al

**Secondary Texts:** *The Bhagavad-Gita* by Barbara Stoler Miller  
*The Buddha* by Karen Armstrong  
*The Tao Te Ching* by Stephen Mitchell

**Grading Policy:** Final grade will be based on an accumulation of:

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|----|--|-----------|
| 1. | Class discussions, exercises, <i>koan</i> ,<br>attendance & participation: | 30 points |
| 2. | Midterm Exam:  | 30 points |
| 3. | Final Exam:  | 40 points |

**Evaluation:**

Students are expected to attend the lectures and participate in discussions as well as display an ability to absorb, understand & analyzes the course material.

**Course Goals:**

(1) To provide an intellectual framework in which the student can discuss, reflect upon, and understand a variety of world religions. (2) To examine the origin of these religions, and to situate them in comparative and cross-cultural terms. (3) To investigate what they share in common and where and how they differ from our own beliefs. (4) To know more about ourselves and each other and the belief system that guides us.

**Course Requirements:**

It is important to keep track of your Course Outline so you know where we are at all times. Keep up with the reading assignments and take good notes.

There will be no big paper in this class; rather we will have small specific take-home exercises and discussions in class following the various reading material. It is important that you actively participate in these class discussions; they are an important part of your grade. If you fail to attend a discussion, a four-page paper, based on the Study Guide, must be submitted to me as a substitute. A Study Guide for each book discussion and specific exercise instructions are enclosed in your Introduction Packet.

*Since we will be examining many religions different from our own, empathy, tolerance & compassion are important tools in our analysis. Every religious expression is accepted in this class without judgment.*

**Attendance and Participation:**

Your presence in class is important. Midterm & final exams are based 50% on my lectures and 50% of the required texts. Since religious concepts often lend themselves to discussions, asking questions and sharing your own experiences and observations with the class are important.

**Add and Drop Deadlines:**

Last Day to Add (Full Semester Course) is Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Last Day to Drop (Full Semester Course) is Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Elective Withdrawal Period (Full Semester Course) is Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> -- March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Disability:**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office at the beginning of the semester.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism of other peoples' ideas or words will result in an 'F' on an exam and a referral to the Dean of Students.

**COURSE OUTLINE for REL 212 -- 002  
for  
SPRING 2008**

<u>Week:</u>	<u>Date:</u>	<u>Description:</u>
1.	Mon 28 Jan	Introduction; Indian Worldviews. Read Chapters 1 & 2 from the primary text, " <u>Religions of Asia</u> " (ROA) for next lecture.
2.	4 Feb	Indian Worldviews. Begin Hinduism. Read ROA Chapter 3
3.	11 Feb	Hinduism. Read ROA Chapter 4
4.	18 Feb	Hinduism. Read ROA Chapter 5
5.	25 Feb	<u>Class Discussion</u> of " <u>The Bhagavad-Gita</u> ". Begin Buddhism. Read ROA Chapters 7 & 8 & see the movie, " <u>The Little Buddha</u> " for next lecture.
6.	3 Mar	Buddhism. Read ROA Chapter 9.
7.	10 Mar	SPRING BREAK
8.	17 Mar	Class Discussion of " <u>The Buddha</u> ." Finish up Buddhism.
9.		<u>Midterm Review</u> .
10.	24 Mar	MIDTERM
10.	31 Mar	Chinese Worldviews. Read ROA Chapters 10 & 12 for next week.
11.	7 Apr	Early Chinese History & Confucianism. Read ROA Chapter 11
12.	14 Apr	Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Chinese Dynastic History. Read ROA Chapter 13.
13.	21 Apr	Maoism. Shinto (Japan)
14.	28 Apr	Zen & Taoism (China)
15.	5 May	<u>Class Discussion</u> of " <u>Tao te Ching</u> ." <u>Final Exam Review</u>
16.	12 May	FINAL EXAM