



## THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY — FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

### World Religions - Eastern

Religious Studies 203 L02 – Winter 2010 – Course Outline

MWF 15:00-15:50

Location: EDC 388

**Instructor:** Sam Borsman

**Office Hours:** F 13:00-14:00 or by appointment

**Department of Religious Studies Office:** SS 1301

**Email:** [stborsma@ucalgary.ca](mailto:stborsma@ucalgary.ca)

**Office:** SS 1319

**Telephone:** 403-220-5886

#### **Required Textbook:**

Willard G. Oxtoby, Editor. (2010) *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*. **Third Edition**. New York: Oxford

--Please note that the third edition is significantly different from previous editions, so you must use this edition.

**Course Website: Blackboard** (<https://blackboard.ucalgary.ca/webapps/login/>). Our course web site will contain required readings (additional to the textbook), announcements, and important information about assignments. If you don't know how to use or access Blackboard, please let me know.

**Course Description:** From Madonna's *Ray of Light* album to the interior décor of your local Lululemon™ yoga store, imagery from Eastern religious traditions seems to be everywhere in Western pop culture. More significantly, many of the items we see on the news—wars, acts of terrorism, inspiring stories of compassionate care for humans, animals, or the environment—have a religious component. An understanding of the history, teachings, and practices of the world's religious traditions is essential in order to make sense of our past and present. By introducing you to Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, this course will enable you to define, compare, and critically analyze in a non-evaluative way the teachings and practices of Asian religious traditions and their impact on the contemporary world. You will develop a vocabulary for talking about and understanding world views that may be different from your own. You will also learn to reflect on the interpretive lenses through which you and religious studies scholars look at religions. That is, you will be introduced to methodological issues in the study of religion. And, hey, you can always bore your friends with an in-depth explanation of the Buddha statue in Lululemon™.

**Learning Objectives:** In this course, you will develop a rich understanding of Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian history, teachings, and practices. This is an introductory course, so the focus in lectures and on exams will be on knowledge of the material (I promise, this won't be as boring as memorizing endless names and dates). However, class discussion and writing assignments will test your ability to analyze and synthesize material. By the end of this course, you should be able to talk and write knowledgably about Indian, Chinese, and Japanese religious traditions. You should also acquire the skills needed to reflect on how you, as a student of religion, understand and interpret religious traditions.

**Student Responsibilities:** We will meet the learning objectives together only if you promise the following:

1. **To attend class.** Exams in this course will be based on textbook readings, Blackboard readings and on all lectures. I discuss a lot of material in class that is not in the textbook. If you must miss a lecture, be sure to get lecture notes from a classmate.
2. **To be attentive and participate in class.** It's probably safe to assume that you don't want to hear my voice for three hours a week. For the sake of our collective sanity, come to class prepared to ask critical, informed questions.
3. **To read the assigned materials.** Lectures, exams, and the writing assignment draw from Blackboard and textbook readings, so please ensure that you keep up with all of our assigned readings.
4. **To complete all assignments in a timely fashion.** Your writing assignment must be handed in on the due date. **Extensions for reasons of emergency require at least one full day of advance approval from me.** Please give me 24 hours to respond to emails.

**Assignments and Evaluations:**

1. You will write one 650 word essay on a topic to be assigned by me (you will have a choice of several topics). This is a research paper and it must follow appropriate academic guidelines. I will hand out a list of resources, grading criteria, and an example essay during the course.

2. You will write two in-class, one hour midterm exams. These exams consist of 60 multiple choice questions, and a choice of one out of three short essay questions. **Exam questions will be based on lectures and all readings (Oxtoby textbook and Blackboard readings).** My lectures present material that is not in the assigned readings (and vice versa), so class attendance and keeping up with the readings really are essential.

4. Finally (sigh...) **you will write one two-hour registrar-scheduled final exam.** The final exam will consist of 100 multiple choice questions. You will need to have a firm grasp of the material presented throughout the semester in order to succeed on the final exam.

First midterm exam: **20%**

Second midterm exam: **30%**

650 word essay: **20%**

Registrar-scheduled final exam: **30%**

**Schedule of Exams and Essay:**

First exam (Hinduism)	February 12
Second exam (Buddhism)	March 19
650 word essay	April 5
Final exam (Conf., Daoism, course themes)	Registrar-scheduled

**Grading:**

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme (standardized within the Department of Religious Studies):

A+	100-96	A	95-90	A-	89-85
B+	84-80	B	79-75	B-	74-70
C+	69-65	C	64-60	C-	59-55
D+	54-53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

**Academic Honesty:** Imagine the following scenario: You steal my red Ferrari and paint it yellow. Is it now your Ferrari? Of course not. You add some rims and a bumper sticker that reads “I love Religious Studies.” It’s still not your Ferrari, is it? Similarly, if you take someone’s words or ideas and add a few words of your own, you have stolen intellectual property...unless you follow the proper academic guidelines of citation. Plagiarism and cheating are taken very seriously at the University of Calgary, so please familiarize yourself with the Statement of Intellectual Honesty in the University Calendar. If you need help on methods of academic citation, please talk to me well before assignments are due. (By the way, I own a beat up 1996 Plymouth Breeze. You are welcome to steal it).

**Academic Accommodation:** The University of Calgary provides accommodations for any student with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and you require accommodations, you must register with the Disability Resource Centre at 403-220-8237. The DRC website can be found at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/Others/DRC/>.

**Policy on Missed Exams:** If an emergency or illness prevents you from writing an exam on the scheduled date, you must tell me or the Department of Religious Studies as soon as possible. Without acceptable documentation (i.e. medical certificate, notice of a death—but NOT an airline ticket to Acapulco) or without PRIOR arrangement with me, missed exams will receive an ‘F’.

**Tentative Course Schedule:** This schedule is subject to change. When we see how the class progresses, we may need to spend more time on a given topic. So, it is important that you attend class in order to be aware of any schedule changes. A detailed list of readings will be handed out during the first week of class.

Date	Topic
Jan. 11, 13, 15	Intro to course and study of religion. Key themes in Indian religions.
Jan. 18, 20, 22	Hinduism: The Vedas and Upanishads. Varnashramadharma.
Jan. 25, 27, 29	Hinduism: The epics, puranas, and deities.
Feb. 1, 3, 5	Hinduism: Sects, philosophy, women, and modernity
Feb. 8, 10, 12	Indian Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. <b>Exam 1 on Feb. 12 (Hinduism)</b>
Feb. 22, 24, 26	Indian Buddhism continued. Theravada.
Mar. 1, 3, 5	Buddhism: The Mahayana and Vajrayana.
Mar. 8, 10, 12	East Asian Buddhism: China
Mar. 15, 17, 19	East Asian Buddhism: Japan <b>Exam 2 on Mar. 19 (Buddhism)</b>

Mar. 22, 24, 26	Confucius and Confucianism.
Mar. 29, 31	Confucianism: Confucius, Mencius, Neo-Confucianism
Apr. 5, 7, 9	Daoism: Laozi and Zhuangzi. <b>650 word essay due on Apr. 5</b>
Apr. 12, 14, 16	Daoist sects and practices: Alchemy, longevity, ritual. Syncretism in Chinese “popular religion.”

Notes