

**University of Calgary Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Religious Studies Winter 2010 Course outline  
RELS 379 L01: Eastern Religions in the West**

**Time:** Wednesdays 6:00 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

**Location:** Chinese Cultural Centre  
197 First Street S.W.  
(2<sup>nd</sup> floor classrooms)

**Instructor:** Christopher Morrison

**Contact:** cdmorris@ucalgary.ca

**Office Hours:** Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. (or by appointment)

**Office:** SS 1325

**Required Textbooks:**

Helena Blavatsky. *The Key to Theosophy*. Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 2002.

Edward W. Said. *Orientalism: 25th Anniversary Edition*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Colin Campbell. *The Easternization of the West*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.

**\*\*\*Other course readings will be posted on Blackboard (to save cost); it is up to you to print out the relevant articles and to bring them to class\*\*\***

**Course Overview:**

This course will investigate historical and contemporary issues regarding Western appropriations of Eastern religious traditions and philosophies, and manifestations within Western culture. Our approach will emphasize four general frames of reference to situate our topic: 1) History 2) Critical Theory 3) Art and Literature 4) Comparative Philosophy. At the outset, we will study the crucial history of the "discovery" of Eastern religions (through 19th Century interpretations) and its definitive relationship to the formation of religious studies as a secular university discipline. We will then investigate the theoretical issues that arise when dealing with problems of cultural appropriations or what Said famously calls "Orientalism" as well as subsequent theories that develop out of, and allow us to re-think, Said's work. With the theoretical foundations of the course established, we will consider specific examples of philosophical and literary appropriations with an explicit emphasis on Buddhist, Daoist, and Hindu figurations in the West.

**Core Competencies**

This course will enable us to: 1) develop skills necessary for close textual readings and analysis of relevant materials 2) develop sensitivities and awareness of cross-cultural issues and begin to think through the philosophical and ethical questions concerning cultural appropriations 3) display adequate understanding of the intellectual histories of the West that help shape the reception of Eastern religious-philosophies 4) develop improved writing skills to better articulate the data/questions/issues extracted from course readings and discussions.

**Assignments:**

- Reading Response #1 (3-5 pages)--15% due Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Reading Response #2 (3-5 pages)--15% due March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Reading Response #3 (3-5 pages)--15% due March 31<sup>st</sup>
- Final Essay (8-12 pages) --40% due April 21<sup>st</sup> in the Department drop box, SS 1301
- Class Participation/Attendance --15%

**\*\*\*Late Assignments are deducted 5% per day (including weekends).\*\*\***

*\*There will be no Registrar scheduled final exam for this course.*

**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:

A+	100 - 96	A	95.9 - 90	A-	89.9 - 85
B+	84.9 - 80	B	79.9 - 75	B-	74.9 - 70
C+	69.9 - 65	C	64.9 - 60	C-	59.9 - 55
D+	54.9 - 53	D	52.9-50	F	Under 50

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

**Academic Honesty**

*Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.*

**Academic Accommodation**

If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor **two weeks** before the scheduled date.

**Gnosis**

Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: [gnosis@ucalgary.ca](mailto:gnosis@ucalgary.ca) or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

### Lecture/Reading Schedule

- Jan. 13: Introduction the course; Lecture One: Romanticism, New Age, and the East
- Jan. 20: The Ancient Wisdom of the East in 19th Century West: Introduction to Theosophy.  
Readings: *The Key to Theosophy* pp. 1-176
- Jan. 27: Blavatsky and Theosophy (cont'd). Readings: *The Key to Theosophy* pp. 177-307
- Feb. 3: Eroticizing the Other: Said's *Orientalism*. Readings: *Orientalism* pp.1-28; 113-197  
[**Reading Response #1 due**]
- Feb. 10: *Orientalism* (cont'd). Readings: *Orientalism* pp.201-254; 329-352
- Feb. 17: Reading Week (no class)
- Feb. 24: Buddhism(s) in the West. Readings: Masuzawa, "Buddhism, A World Religion" 121-146; Lopez, "The Book" 46-85; Nishitani, excerpts from *Religion and Nothingness* (posted on Blackboard); Q&A with practicing Buddhist monks
- March 3: The Western Dao. Readings: Clarke, excerpts from *The Tao of the West* (posted on Blackboard) [**Reading Response #2 due**]
- March 10: International Society for Krishna Consciousness: Hare Krishna Movement and devotional service. Readings: *Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is* Chapter Five: Karma-yoga--Action in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness pp. 173-197 (posted on Blackboard)
- March 17: Film: TBA; (critical film analysis to follow)
- March 24: East Heals West: Yoga, Chakras and Hinduism, Reiki and Buddhism, Tai Chi/QiGong and the Daoist Tai Chi Society of Canada--yoking traditions. Readings: TBA [posted on Blackboard]
- March 31: Campbell's *Easternization of the West*. Readings: pp.1-142 [**Reading Response #3 due**]
- April 7: *Easternization of the West* (cont'd). Readings pp. 143-249
- April 14: *Easternization of the West* (cont'd). Readings pp. 250-363; course wrap-up
- \*\*\*Final Essay due by 4 p.m. in the Religious Studies Drop-Box (13th Floor of Social Science) on April 21st\*\*\***