

**University of Calgary**  
**Faculty of Arts**  
**Department of Religious Studies**  
**RELS 203 L60: Introduction to Eastern Religions**  
**Summer 2010**

**Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

**Location:** ST 132

**Instructor:** Christopher Morrison

**Contact:** [cdmorris@ucalgary.ca](mailto:cdmorris@ucalgary.ca), 403-220-5612

**Office Hours:** Thursdays after class (2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

**Office:** SS 1330

**Required Text**

Oxtoby, Willard, Ed. *World Religions: Eastern Traditions Third Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

**Course Description**

This course is an introductory survey of East and Southeast Asian religious traditions. The core material will focus on Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. Additionally, we will briefly look at other traditions such as Shinto, Sikhism, and Jainism. Eastern religions have pervaded western culture in "bits and pieces" and this course serves to "fill in the gaps" that popular cultural expressions of eastern religious traditions in the west often omit. Students will be introduced to various methodologies involved in the academic study of religion and be exposed to some of the inherent problems encountered when attempting to define precisely what "religion" is.

**Core Competencies**

Students will be able to accurately describe various concepts, terms, and relationships between Eastern traditions. The goal of the course is to give students a general overview of some of the mainstream Eastern traditions as preparatory groundwork for further in-depth study of these traditions in upper-level undergraduate courses offered in the Department of Religious Studies. Students will be able to identify key features that distinguish traditions and begin to cultivate sensitivities toward the "insider/outsider" problem when investigating a religious tradition that one may not have previous knowledge about. Students will be evaluated on a comprehensive overview of the various traditions studied and the ability to re-call important terminologies characteristic of religions from East and Southeast Asia.

**Assignments**

Test #1, July 20 <sup>th</sup>	20%
Test #2, July 29 <sup>th</sup>	20%
Group Presentation	20%
Participation/Attendance	10%
Final Exam	30%

**Group Presentations**

This course will require one major group presentation where your group will present a selected topic/religious tradition to the class. Group members and topics will be chosen at the beginning of the course. You can then schedule time to prepare with your group, delegate responsibilities, and organize a presentation that should last one hour of class time. Information presented in these group presentations will likely appear on the final exam, so it is in your best interest to put forth your best efforts for the group presentations, and to be attentive to other group presentations.

**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 403-220-8237. 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 Schedule

Week One, July 6 & 8:

- i) What Is Religious Studies? Introduction to Eastern Traditions. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 4-25
- ii) Hindu Formations: Indus Valley Civilization, Vedas, Upaniṣads. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 30-52

Week Two, July 13 & 15:

- i) Hinduism: *Varnāśramadharmā*; Bhakti devotion, Hindu practices. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 52-72
- ii) Hinduism: practices (cont'd), Hinduism today. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 72-99

Week Three, July 20 & 22:

- i) **TEST #1**; Introduction to Buddhism: The Life of Siddhartha Gautama. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 178-202
- ii) The Three Vehicles of Buddhism: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 202-231

Week Four, July 27 & 29:

- i) Buddhism and Culture. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 231-250
- ii) **TEST #2**; Chinese Religions: Confucianism. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 256-294

Week Five, August 3 & 5:

- i) Chinese Religions: Daoism. Readings: Oxtoby pp. 294-313
- ii) Group Presentations

Week Six, August 10 & 12:

- i) Group Presentations (cont'd)
- ii) Group Presentations (cont'd)

Week Seven, August 17:

- i) Group Presentations; Final Exam Review; course wrap-up

**\*\*\*Final Exam time and date to be determined by the Registrar's Office\*\*\***