CRN 14946 Religious Studies 101 World Religions of Asia, Fall 2026
Lectures: MCK 221; MWF 11:00-11:50; Discussion Sections Thursdays Instructor: Mark Unno
Office Hours - Zoom: Mon https://tinyurl.com/mr2z8yd6; Tues https://tinyurl.com/2v67atjx or by appointment (email).

Email: munno (at) uoregon.edu Home Page: pages.uoregon.edu/munno/ See University Course Policies
Introduction to selected strands of Asian Religions. This course examines key concepts and practices from such Asian religions as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism. This course is designed to provide in-depth samples rather than a broad survey, with a focus on sacred scriptures and scholarship as well as contemporary issues. The focus will be on philosophical understanding of religious ideas supported by a critical examination of historical context. We will study key ideas within the critical context of various cultural factors such as gender, class, and ritual practices. What is "Asian religions"? What is religion? What are the main ideas, practices, and stories?

Requirements
1. Attendance: This is an in-person class with discussion sections. Students can have three total unexcused absences including lecture and discussion without penalty. Each class missed thereafter will result in 1/2 grade penalty for the course grade.

2. Short exams: Two short exams based on readings, lectures, and course web site. First half of first exam is on writing papers.

3. Short papers: Three short papers on the readings. More specific instructions will be provided on the course web site.

4. Presentations: Students will make a presentation on the readings for one of the section meetings. The presenter(s) should NOT summarize the reading but should use the presentation to discuss why the selected ideas/passages in question are important for understanding the reading and proceed to explain as well as raise questions about these ideas/passages.

The primary purpose of these presentations is to *launch* the discussion, not to give summaries or to lead the discussion. Each presenter or team of presenters will prepare a handout with 2 questions and brief, corresponding quotations from the readings. More detailed instructions will be provided on the course web site.

5. Medium-length paper: Each student will hand in a medium length final paper of 4-6 pages double-spaced. Suggested topics will be provided. Students may choose to create their own topics with the consent of their discussion section leader. In the case of the latter, a one-paragraph description of the topic must be submitted by email to the instructor one week prior to the due date.

6. Late policy on written assignments: Three grace days total will be allotted excluding the medium-length paper for which no extensions will be given. For all other assignments, a cumulative total of three late days will be allowed without penalty. Thereafter, each late day will result in a two-point deduction from the course grade. Weekends are not counted against the grace days.

7. Email Protocol. Suggestion: Begin the term using one of the following when addressing the instructor: Dear, Hello, Hi + Prof. Unno, Mr. Unno. If you like, you might later change to: Hello Mark, Hi Mark, etc., when you have established a working relationship with the instructor. Do NOT use: "Hey...." either with the instructor or with the GEs.

Learning Outcomes
In this course, you will: 1) gain a sampling (not a survey) of primary texts, ideas, and scholarship on prominent strands and themes in Asian religions, 2) delve into the assigned readings, uncovering layers of potential meaning, 3) gain an understanding of the historical contexts and possible contemporary relevance of the readings and course materials, and 4) further develop in your ability to write papers as well as read texts closely and reason critically.

Grades (Grading Critera link)
- Short exam I 10%, Short exam II 10%., Short paper I 10%, Short paper II 10%, Short paper III 10%
- Medium-length paper 25%, Presentation 10%, Discussion 15%

Required Texts *(RT)* (Information listed here is given in footnote/endnote format.)
1. D. C. Lau, trans., *Tao Te Ching* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003). Online: https://www.centertao.org/essays/tao-te-ching/ (scroll down to D.C. Lau's Translation).
2. Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Press, 2020).
(Available online as a PDF - Do an online search for the above author + title.)
3. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace* (New York: Perseus Books, 2005). Knight Lib online: https://tinyurl.com/45888wah
4. *Course Pack Articles, Religious Studies 101 World Religions: Asian Traditions,* online through Canvas

Course Reader (CR) (filenames in parentheses)

1. Ralph T. H. Griffith, trans., *The Hymns of the Rgveda* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973) 206, 633-4; Shree Purohit Swami and W. B. Yeats, trans., *The Ten Principal Upanishads* (Calcutta: Rupa, 1992) 90-92. (1-Vedas.pdf)

2. Laurie Patton, trans, *The Bhagavad Gita* (NY: Penguin Books, 2014) vii-xxiv, 3-29, 61-75, 145-149 (2-BhagavadGita.pdf)

3. Joseph Campbell, "IV: The Way of Delight," *Oriental Mythology - The Masks of God* (NY: Penguin, 1991) 343-364. (3-GitaGovinda.pdf)

4. Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 9-26. (4-IntroBuddhism.pdf)

5. Jay Garfield, trans., *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 293-307. (5-Garfield-Nagarjuna.pdf)

6. Mark Unno, "Key Ideas: Nagarjuna" and "Key Ideas: Philosophical Schools." (6-Unno-Nagarjuna.pdf)

7. Robert A. F. Thurman, trans., "The Goddess," *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1987) 56-63. (7-Thurman-Vimalakirti.pdf)

8. Taitetsu Unno, "Philosophical Schools - San-lun, T'ien-t'ai, and Hua-yen," in *Buddhist Spirituality,* ed. by Takeuchi Yoshinori (New York: Crossroad, 1995) 343-365. (8-Unno-ChineseBud.pdf)

9. Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 1998) 1-9, 18-21, 71-75. (9-Fingarette-Confucius.pdf)

10. Burton Watson, trans., *Zhuangzi: Basic Writing* (New York: Columbia Univ Press, 1993) 1-7, 31-41, 44, 61-62, 114-117, 128-129. (10-Zhuangzi.pdf)

11. Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History-India and China* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1988) 85-94. (11-Dumoulin-Bodhi.pdf)

12. Mu Soeng Sunim, "Ch.4: Buddhism during the Unified Silla Period," *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen-Tradition & Teachers* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987) 28-48. (12-KoreaBuddhism1.pdf)

13. Hayao KAWAI, "Japanese Mythology: Balancing the Gods," in his *Dreams, Myths and Fairy Tales in Japan* (Daimon, 1995) 67-97. (13-Kawai-JapanMyth.pdf)

14. Mark Unno, "Key Terms - Philosophical Terms in the Zen Buddhist Thought of Dogen"; Norman Waddell and Masao Abe, trans., "Shobogenzo Genjokoan," by Dogen Kigen, *The Eastern Buddhist* 5:2 (10/1972) 129-140. (14-Dogen-Genjokoan.pdf)

15. Mark Unno, "The Original Buddhist Rebel," *Tricycle* (Winter 2017) 1-16. (15-Shinran-Rebel.pdf)

16. Mark Unno, "Key Terms - Pure Land Buddhism and the Philosophy of Honen and Shinran." (16-Unno-PureLand.pdf)

17. Taitetsu Unno, trans. *Tannisho: A Shin Buddhist Classic* (Honolulu, HI: Buddhist Study Center Press) 4-9, 14. (17-Unno-Tannisho.pdf)

18. The Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso), *A Policy of Kindness* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 1990) 33-59. (18-DalaiLama.pdf

19. Nishitani Keiji, "Ikebana," *Kyoto Journal* 4 (Fall 1987) 33-35. (19-Nishitani-Ikebana.pdf)

20. Paula Arai, "Soto Zen Nuns in Modern Japan: Keeping and Creating Tradition," *Bulletin of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* 14 (Summer 1990) 38-51. (20-Arai-ZenNuns.pdf)

21. Mu Soeng Sunim, "Zen Master Seung Sahn," *Thousand Peaks: Korean Zen-Tradition & Teachers* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987) 191-314. (21-KoreaBuddhism2.pdf)

REL 101 World Religions of Asia – Class Schedule
Read assigned texts by the class meeting date indicated.
(*CR*: Course Reader; *CR 1* = Course Reader Selection No. 1; *RT:* Required Text)

Week 1 - Introduction; Hinduism I: Vedic Religion & The *Bhagavad Gita*
09/28 Mon: Introduction: Syllabus; What is "Religion." The Geography of Asian Religions.
09/30 Wed: Vedic Religion & Brahmanism. Read: *Hymns of the Rgveda, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita (excerpt) CR 1.*
10/02 Fri: L. Patton, trans., *Bhagavad Gita, CR 2*.

Week 2 - Indian Religion: Hinduism II: The *Gita Govinda;* Buddhism I: Introduction to Buddhism
10/05 Mon: Dance of Krishna & Gopis. Read (Gita Govinda): Campbell, *Oriental Mythology, CR 3*. (Focus pages: 343-349).
10/07 Wed: Early Indian Buddhism I - Shakyamuni Buddha. Read: Peter Harvey, *Introduction to Buddhism*, *CR 4.*
10/09 Fri: Early Indian Buddhism II - Nikaya Buddhism - Key concepts;. Read: P. Harvey, *Intro to Buddhism*, *CR 4.*

Week 3 – Early Indian Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism
10/12 Mon: Mahayana Buddhism: Nagarjuna and the Two-fold Truth. Read: Jay Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way;* "Key Ideas: Nagarjuna and the Thought of Emptiness," *CR 5, 6.* (Garfield Focus pages: 294, 296, 302-3).
10/14 Wed: Bodhisattva ideal. Read: *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti, CR 7* (Focus pages: 58-63).
10/16 Fri: Chinese Buddhism: "The Philosophical Schools." Read: "Key Ideas: Taitetsu Unno, 'Philosophical Schools'," T. Unno, "Chinese Philosophical Schools," *CR 8* (Focus pages: 349, 353, 355-6). **Short paper I due**

Week 4 - Ancient China I: Confucianism; Daoism
10/19 Mon: The World of the Sage Kings. Read: Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred,* 1-9, *CR 9*.
10/21 Wed: Confucius: Ritual Activity & Orchestral Vision. Read: Fingarette, *Confucius,* 18-21, 71-75, *CR 9*.
10/23 Fri: Laozi (Lao Tzu) - The Way: Read: *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching,* 7-52, 53-96 (Book One) *RT*. **Short exam A**
(Focus pages, *Tao Te Ching:* Chapters 1-4, 8, 19, 20, 28, 42, 43, 49, 55, 56, 66, 76, 80)

Week 5 - Ancient China II: Daoism (Taoism): Laozi (Lao Tzu) and Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu)
10/26 Mon: Laozi (Lao Tzu) - The Way: Read: *Lao Tzu: Tao Te Ching,* 97-143 (Book Two) *RT*
10/28 Wed: Zhuangzi - Read: *Zhuangzi*, 1-7, 31-41, 44 *CR 10.*
10/30 Fri: Zhuangzi: Read: *Zhuangzi,* 61-62, 114-117, 128-129 *CR 10.*

Week 6 - Medieval China: Early Chan/Zen; Medieval Korea: Unified Silla Period; Early Japan
11/02 Mon: Bodhidharma and Zen Buddhism. Read: Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism*, *CR 11.* **Short paper II due**
11/04 Wed: Korean Buddhists: Chajang, Uisang, and Wonhyo. Read: *Thousand Peaks,* pp. 28-38, *CR 12.*
11/06 Fri: The way of the *kami* - gods and goddesses. Read: Kawai, "Japanese Mythology," *CR 13.* (Focus pages: 69-77)

Week 7 - Medieval Japan I: Dogen and Zen Buddhism
11/09 Mon: Veteran's Day (No class)
11/11 Wed: Dogen and Zen Buddhism.
Read: M. Unno, "Philosophical Terms in the Zen Buddhist Thought of Dogen," "Shobogenzo Genjokoan,"*CR 14.*
11/13 Fri: Dogen and Zen Buddhism (cont) Read: Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind RT*
(Focus pages: 9-22, 25-26, 31-37, 43-48, 62-62, 92-95, 119-121) **Short paper III due**

Week 8 - Medieval Japan II: Shinran and Shin Buddhism; Modern Tibet: XIVth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso
11/16 Mon: Shinran and Shin Buddhism.
Read: Mark Unno, "The Original Buddhist Rebel – Shinran," *CR 15;* Unno, "Key Terms - Pure Land Buddhism," *CR 16.*
11/18 Wed: Shinran and Shin Buddhism.
Read: Taitetsu Unno*, Tannisho: A Shin Buddhist Classic, CR 17*.
11/20 Fri: Video: *Ram Dass: Fierce Grace* **Short exam B**

Week 9 - Modern Buddhism: Tibet & Vietnam - The Dalai Lama & Thich Nhat Hanh
11/23 Mon: The XIVth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso
Read: Dalai Lama, *A Policy of Kindness, CR 18,* 33-59.
11/25 Wed: Thich Nhat Hanh. Read: *Being Peace,* 1-90 *RT*. Knight Lib online: https://tinyurl.com/45888wah
11/26 Fri: (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 10 - Modern Manifestations: Japanese and Korean
11/30 Mon: Soto Zen Nuns. Read: Nishitani, "Ikebana," Paula Arai, "Soto Zen Nuns," *CR 19, 20.*
12/02 Wed: Zen Master Seung Sahn. Read: *Thousand Peaks,* 191-314, *CR 21.*
12/04 Fri: Final Lecture. **Final papers due**