



## REL 016: Chinese Religion

Term: 2020 Winter Session

Instructor: Staff

Language of Instruction: English

Classroom: TBA

Office Hours: TBA

Class Sessions Per Week: 6

Total Weeks: 4

Total Class Sessions: 25

Class Session Length (minutes): 145

Credit Hours: 4

### Course Description:

This course briefly introduces the main schools of Chinese religions in a chronological order, the topics of which include Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and other religious beliefs that came from the “western” world. Providing students with information about the cultural background, popular artworks including sculptures and architectures, philosophies, and development of certain regions, this course enables students to form their own structure of knowledge toward the development of Chinese religions.

### Learning Objectives

The objectives of the course will be achieved by means of finishing required readings, listening to lectures, participating in the in-class discussions, and finishing assigned homework.

By taking this course, the students are supposed to acquire 1) a solid understanding of the traditions of Chinese religion and current studies of Chinese religion, 2) the ability to identify the main beliefs and main characters of different religions, and 3) the ability to present their result of critical thinking in writing.

### Course Materials:

#### 1. **Required Texts:**



***Introducing Chinese Religions***

Mario Poceski, 2009

(The eBook version of it is titled *Chinese Religions: the eBook*)

**2. Recommended materials:**

***Chinese Religion: An Anthology of Sources,***

Deborah Sommer, 1st edition

**3. Other materials:**

Students will be provided with supplemented reading material selected by the instructor. During the lecture, in-class handouts and PowerPoint slides will also be provided by the instructor.

**Course Format and Requirements:**

This course has 25 class sessions in total. Each class session is 145 minutes in length. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussion. Please do not use electronic devices such as phones, iPads, computers, etc. during the lectures.

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory. More than three unexcused absences will result in an automatic reduction in your participation grade, for instance from A- to B+. Your active participation in the class is expected and constitutes part of your grade.

**Grading Scale:**

**A+: 98%-100%**

**A: 93%-97%**

**A-: 90%-92%**

**B+: 88%-89%**

**B: 83%-87%**

**B-: 80%-82%**

**C+: 78%-79%**

**C: 73%-77%**

**C-: 70%-72%**

**D+: 68%-69%**

**D: 63%-67%**



**D-: 60%-62%**

**F: Below 60%**

### Course Assignments:

#### **Quizzes: 10%**

There will be 5 quizzes during the entire course. Students will be informed the time and the content of the quizzes. The grades of the quizzes consist of 10% of students' final score, and each quiz consists of 2%.

#### **Short Essays: 45%**

There will be 3 essays assigned to the students, the topics of which will be chosen by the instructor later. Students are supposed to discuss about the topic based on the content of the textbook and supplement reading materials. Guidelines about the paper will be handed to the students. Students should present their ability of critical thinking and their familiarity with the content learned in class as well as their language accuracy. Once assigned, students will have two weeks to complete their paper.

The paper should be from 3 to 5 pages long. The appendix and references are not included in the page count. The paper should be double-spaced, using Times New Roman size 12 with 1-inch margins.

#### **Exams: 45%**

There will be one midterm exams and a final exam for this course.

The midterm and final exams are both closed-book in-class exams. The forms of the questions include multiple choices, right-or-wrong questions, definitions, and open-ended questions. Exams will cover most of the materials used in class, including textbooks, handouts and reading materials. Classes before the midterm exams and the final exam will be left for review and Q&A.

### Course Assessment:

Quizzes	10%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	15%
Paper 3	15%
Midterm Exam	20%



Final Exam	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Course Schedule:

Week	Topics	Assignments
Week One (Class 1-6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction to the course: main religious traditions</li><li>• Early Patterns of Chinese Religious Life (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 1)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Historical frameworks</li><li>- Oracle bones and divination</li><li>- Worship of cards and ancestors under the Shang</li><li>- Change your attitude towards divinity during the Zhou era</li><li>- Cultural heroes and sage-kings</li><li>- Chinese mythology</li><li>- Mandate of heaven</li></ul></li><li>• The Classical Confucian Tradition (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 2)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Various faces of Confucianism</li><li>- The five “Confucian” classics</li><li>- Confucius and his times</li><li>- Teachings of Confucius</li><li>- Government service, cultural virtuosity, and pursuit of sagehood</li><li>- Alternative ways of thought</li><li>- Mengzi’s and Xunzi’s views of human nature</li><li>- Emergence of Confucianism as official audiology</li></ul></li><li>• Early Texts and the Emergence of Religious Daoism (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 3)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shifting boundaries and permeable identities</li><li>- Zhuangzi’s imaginative vistas and carefree wanderings</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 1</li></ul>



<p>Week Two (Class 7-12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early Texts and the Emergence of Religious Daoism (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 3)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Huang-Lao movement and other Han-era transitions</li><li>- The celestial masters and the advent of Daoism as an organized religion</li><li>- External alchemy and the quest for immortality</li><li>- Laozi's transfigurations</li></ul></li><li>• Daoist Traditions and Practices (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 4)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Shangqing Revelations</li><li>- The Lingbao scriptures</li><li>- Codification of Daoist ritual</li><li>- Canon formation and functions of texts</li><li>- Daoism as official religion</li><li>- Interreligious debates</li><li>- Monastic orders and institutions</li><li>- Female role models and adepts</li><li>- Internal alchemy and meditation</li></ul></li><li>• Spread and Flourishing of Buddhism in China (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 5)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Buddhism as Pan-Asia religion</li><li>- Initial entry of Buddhism into China</li><li>- Incisive critiques and cultural barriers</li><li>- Enthusiastic responses and broad acceptance</li><li>- Translation of scriptures and canon formation</li><li>- Popular scripture and other texts</li><li>- Philosophical systems and doctrinal taxonomies</li><li>- Emergence of Buddhism as a major religious tradition</li><li>- Golden age under the Tang dynasty</li><li>- Relationship with the state</li><li>- Buddhism in late imperial China</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 2</li><li>• Short Essay 1</li><li>• Quiz 3</li></ul>
<p>Week Three (Class 13-18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Schools and Practices of Chinese Buddhism (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 6)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Midterm</li><li>• Short Essay 2</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Monastic and lay paradigms</li><li>- Universal compassion and merit making</li><li>- Popular believes and cultic practices</li><li>- Schools and traditions of Chinese Buddhism</li><li>- The Tiantai School</li><li>- The Huayan School</li><li>- The Chan School</li><li>- The pure land tradition</li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review for Midterm Exam</li><li>• Popular Religion (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 7)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Contours and character of popular religion</li><li>- Syncretism</li><li>- Unity of the three teachings</li><li>- Ancestors and ghosts</li><li>- Worship of local gods</li><li>- Celestial bureaucracy</li><li>- Two popular deities: Guandi and Mazu</li><li>- Ritual sacrifice, divination, and other utilitarian practices</li><li>- Millenarian movements, heterodox sects and secret societies</li></ul></li><li>• Late Transformations of Confucianism (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 8)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Confucianism during the Medieval Period</li><li>- Neo-Confucian revival of the Song era</li><li>- Zhu Xi's grand synthesis</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quiz 4</li></ul>
Week Four (Class 19-25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Late Transformations of Confucianism (Reading: Introducing Chinese Religions, Ch 8)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Constructing genealogy of the way</li><li>- Revising the canon</li><li>- Path to sagehood</li><li>- Civil service examinations</li><li>- Dissenting voices and alternative perspectives</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Short Essay 3</li><li>• Quiz 5</li><li>• Final Exam</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Status of women in Confucian society</li> <li>• Christianity, Islam, and other “Western” Religions (Reading: <i>Introducing Chinese Religions</i>, Ch 9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entry of “western” religions into Tang China</li> <li>- Early Christian missionaries</li> <li>- Jesuit missions of the late Ming era</li> <li>- Catholic a debate over acculturation</li> <li>- Protestant missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century</li> <li>- Chinese Son of God</li> <li>- Early transmission of Islam</li> <li>- Adaptation and growth of Islam</li> <li>- Acculturation and conflicts in Chinese Islam</li> <li>- Islam as diverse minority religion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Religion in Modern China (Reading: <i>Introducing Chinese Religions</i>, Ch 10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Historical contexts</li> <li>- Facing the challenges of modernity</li> <li>- Revitalization of Confucianism in Republican China</li> <li>- Buddhist revival of the Republican era</li> <li>- Religious repression under early communist rule</li> <li>- The cult of Mao</li> <li>- Contemporary religious revivals</li> <li>- Intersections of religion and politics</li> <li>- Growth of Christianity</li> <li>- Buddhist resurgence</li> <li>- Review for the Final Exam</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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**Academic Integrity:**

Students are encouraged to study together, and to discuss lecture topics with one another, but all other work should be completed independently.

Students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty and integrity that are described in the Shanghai Normal University’s *Academic Conduct Code*. Any work suspected of violating the standards of the *Academic Conduct Code* will be reported to the Dean’s Office. Penalties for violating the *Academic Conduct Code* may include dismissal from the program. All



students have an individual responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the *Academic Conduct Code*.

**Special Needs or Assistance:**

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.