



Course Outline

2026-2027 Catalog

PHIL 18 - Eastern Religions

Catalog Description

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

Unit(s): 3.00

Lecture: 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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Course Description: This course is an introduction to religious traditions of the East, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, with an emphasis on philosophical perspectives expressed in historical and cultural development.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Recognize and distinguish between various world views of the major Eastern religions.
2. Analyze and evaluate complex elements of religious phenomena.
3. Compare, appraise and evaluate the interrelationships between particular cultures and religious expressions.
4. Analyze and explain how ideas and practice from various Eastern religions address important questions in life, and assess their applicability to the human condition.

Course Content

Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic	
	<u>Lecture</u>
<u>Topics</u>	<u>Lec Hrs</u>
Nature and Definition of Religion and Philosophy	6.00
Hinduism	12.00
A. Vedas, Castes, Ritual, Sacrifice	
B. Brahman, Karma, Rebirth	
C. Dharma, Yoga, Moksha	
Buddhism	12.00
A. The Life of the Buddha	
B. Four Noble truth, Noble Eightfold Path	
C. Enlightenment, Nirvana, Bodhisattva	
Chinese worldview	3.00
Confucianism	6.00
A. Harmony and moral cultivation	
B. Ren and Jun Zi	
C. Zhong and Shu	
Daoism	6.00
A. Lao Zi and Dao De Jing	
B. Zhuang Zi	
C. Wu Wei, Harmony with Nature	
Jainism	2.00
A. Ahimsa, Mahavira	
B. Asceticism	
Shinto	2.00
A. Kami, Nature	
B. Purity, Bushido Code	
Sikhism	2.00
A. Nanak, Adi Granth, Gurus	
Total Hours: 51.00	

Methods of Instruction

- A. Discussion
- B. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- C. Lecture
- D. Multimedia Presentations

E. Reading Assignments

Methods of Evaluation

- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Quizzes
- C. Portfolios
- D. Papers
- E. Oral Presentation
- F. Homework
- G. Class participation
- H. Students will write at least 1,500 words. This requirement will be met either by essay examinations, take-home tests, short papers, or book reports. (Note: all written work will be evaluated on both its form and content.)

Examples of Assignments

Reading Assignments

1. Read the account of the Buddha's enlightenment, and be prepared to discuss it in relation to the teaching of anatman ("no-self").
2. Read the excerpt of the Hindu "Laws of Manu" provided in the textbook, and explain the place of women in the overall scheme.

Writing Assignments

1. In a short essay of at least 300 words, explain whether both Arjuna and Rama followed their dharma. Arjuna killed his cousins to preserve the kingdom; Rama refused to return to the kingdom out of obedience to his father.
2. In a substantive essay of at least 500 words, explain Han Fei-Tzu's Legalist philosophy of government and whether it applies to governing a family as well as a State.

Out-of-Class Assignments

1. Survey Internet sources for significant Tibetan Buddhist images (including hand gestures of the Buddha) and explain their meaning.
2. Report on an experiment of closing your eyes and searching for a permanent "self." Do the results of the experiment provide evidence for the Buddhist concept of anatman?

Recommended Materials of Instruction

Molloy, M. (2021). Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge, and Change. *McGraw-Hill*, 8th. 9781260813760.

Fisher, M. P., Rinehart, R. (2017). Living Religions. *Pearson*, 10th. 9780135572139.

Bresnan, P. (2022). Awakening: An Introduction to the History of Eastern Thought. *Routledge*, 7th. 9781032122014.

Other Learning Materials

Readers for Eastern religions

OER: South and East Asian Philosophy Reader (<https://www.oercommons.org/courses/south-and-east-asian-philosophy-reader>)

Minimum Qualifications

Philosophy (Masters Required)

Religious Studies (Masters Required)

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Date: 04/17/2023