

The College of the Humanities: Religion Program
East Asian Religions (RELI 1716A)

Instructor: Christopher Jensen

Office: 2A54 Paterson Hall

Office Hours: W 11:00-12:00 (or by appointment)

Email:¹ christopher.jensen@carleton.ca

Class Schedule: TR 16:05 pm - 17:25 pm

Classroom: Steacie Building 103

Course Description:

In this course, we will explore the diverse and multifaceted world of East Asian religious traditions and, in the process, consider the ways that Western definitions of “religion” (and religious “-isms”) may lead us to make unwarranted assumption about the systems of belief and practice found in China, Japan and Korea. Our survey will focus on *religious narratives* (such as myths, hagiographies, (auto)biographies, and philosophical anecdotes), because such stories represent one of the key vectors for the transmission of beliefs, practices, assumptions, and cultural values. By exploring these religious narratives, you will develop the critical vocabulary and analytical skills necessary for future courses on Asian religions, as well as a broader understanding of East Asian religious cultures.

Course Catalogue description: A survey of the history, beliefs, and practices of East Asian religious traditions including Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto.

Learning Objectives

Throughout this course, you will:

- Engage with primary texts in translation;
- Practice critically reading religious narratives, as sources of information on religious history, ideology and practice;
- Recognize and discuss patterns in religious culture, while also noting key differences and avoiding essentialism;
- Think critically about your own learning process by helping to develop our class' grading rubrics;
- Develop interpretive skills;
- Practice working collaboratively.

Textbook

All readings will be posted on Ares. It is your responsibility to print out the assigned readings and bring them to class, as **every class session** will involve the discussion of these materials.

Anatomy of a Class Meeting

Prior to each class, you will write up a brief interpretive summary of the assigned reading, in which you will comment upon the religious concepts, practices and ideals that you see represented therein. You will also include several questions, either related to your own areas of interest or to terms/ideas/historical issues that you are uncertain about. Upon arriving in class, the instructor will begin by setting the stage for the day's reading, highlighting the context in which it was written and the identity of the author(s) (if known). Then, you and your group will collaboratively interpret the reading. After 20-30

¹ As per Carleton University policy, all communication between students and professors should be conducted via our Carleton email accounts.

minutes (depending on the length and complexity of the reading), we will regroup and discuss the reading as a class, highlighting and explaining key terms, concepts, figures, and practices. As we do so, you should to revise and comment upon your interpretive summary, as these notes will be required to complete both your reflection papers and the reflection question on the final exam.

Evaluation

Student performance in the course will be evaluated as follows:

- Bi-weekly Reflection Papers (5 x 10% = 50%)
 - In each of these brief (~300 word) reflection papers, you will chart out the evolution of your understanding of **two** of the readings from the previous two weeks. In particular, you will focus on your initial understanding of the narrative sources in question and then outline the ways that group discussion and lecture content allowed you to refine your comprehension and deepen your analysis. If you make careful notes on your interpretive summaries, this process should be very straightforward!
- Midterm Exam (20%) - February 15th
 - The midterm will assess your comprehension of course readings and concepts via definitions, true/false, multiple choice, and matching questions.
 - Note: midterms must be written during class time and can only be rescheduled due to extenuating circumstances.
- Final Exam (30%) - Date TBA
 - The first half of the final exam will follow the same format as the midterm. The second half will consist of a single reflection question, requiring you to engage critically with your own learning. In particular, you will be provided with a new religious narrative that you have not yet encountered in class, and you will be asked to interpret it in two ways: from the perspective of yourself at the beginning of the course (drawing on your first reflection paper and initial “interpretive summaries” as evidence) and yourself by the end. You will be encouraged to reflect upon the specific course content that you have mastered over the semester and also the specific analytical skills that you have developed. You will be provided with this reading in our final class session and are strongly encouraged to prepare your response ahead of time.

Tentative Schedule of Readings

- Week 1: Introduction and Orientation / Introduction to Chinese Religions
 - Jan. 9th – No assigned readings
 - Jan 11th – “Culture Bearers” (from Birrell's *Chinese Mythology*)
- Week 2: Anecdotes in Warring States Philosophy
 - Jan. 16th – *Analects* + *Hanfeizi* (selections)
 - Jan. 18th – *Zhuangzi* (selections)
- Week 3: Confucianism
 - Jan. 23rd – *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (selections)
 - Jan. 25th – *The 24 Filial Exemplars* (selections)
- Week 4: Buddhism
 - Jan. 30th – *Biographies of Nuns* (selections)
 - Feb. 1st – “Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin” (Campany)
- Week 5: Daoism
 - Feb. 6th – *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth* (selections)
 - Feb. 8th – Tales of the Quanzhen (Great Perfection) Masters (Eskildsen)

- Week 6: Syncretism
 - Feb. 13th – *Journey to the West* (selections)
 - Feb. 15th – ** Midterm Test **
- **Week 7: Midterm Break**
- Week 8: Introduction to Japanese Religions – Local Religion and Interactions with Buddhism
 - Feb. 27th – *Kōjiki* (selections)
 - Mar. 1st – *Hokke Genki* (*Lotus Sutra* miracle tales)
- Week 9: Buddhist / Shinto Interaction in the Heian and the “Decline of the Dharma”
 - Mar. 6th – *Tales of Times Now Past (Konjaku Monogatari)* (selections)
 - Mar. 8th – *The Ten Foot Square Hut (Hōjōki)*
- Week 10: Storytelling in the Edo Period
 - Mar. 13th – *Ugetsu Monogatari* (selections)
 - Mar. 15th – “The Appeal of 'Kaidan,' Tales of the Strange” (Reader article)
- Week 11: Religion and Storytelling in the Contemporary Japan
 - Mar. 20th – Personal stories of religious practice (selections from Reader and Tanabe's *Practically Religious*)
 - Mar. 22nd – Nationalistic Stories: Yasukuni Shrine (“A Child's Guide to Yasukuni Shrine” from *Religions of Japan in Practice*)
- Week 12: Korean Religions
 - Mar. 27th – “A Miraculous Tale of Buddhist Practice during the Unified Silla” (from *Religions of Korea in Practice*)
 - Mar. 29th – “Conversion Narratives in Korean Evangelicalism” (from *Religions of Korea in Practice*)
- Week 13: Religious Themes in East Asian Popular Culture
 - Apr. 3rd – Selections from *Journey to the West* (film)
 - Apr. 5th – “Hoichi the Earless” (from *Kwaidan* [film])
- Week 14: Class Summary and Review
 - Apr. 10th – No assigned readings

(Collaboratively Designed) Course Policies

Note: We will discuss these policies in our first class meeting. I will then post a revised version of the syllabus to cuLearn.

- As your instructor, I will respond to emails within _____.
 - Given that our class is predicated on discussion and the free exchange of ideas, we must endeavour to create a respectful, critical classroom. We will encourage this sort of discussion by: _____.
 - Our policy on using computers / smart devices in class is: _____.
 - Our course's policy on late assignments is _____.
 - Given that a portion of the grade for this class is based on group work, attendance and participation are clearly vital. Our attendance policy is _____.
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University Regulations for All Humanities Courses

Copies of Written Work Submitted

Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

Academic Integrity at Carleton

Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found on <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/#AIatCU>.

Academic Accommodation Policy

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to the instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at

613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Grading System at Carleton University

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System Chart](#)

Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Statement on Class Conduct

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and

preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

Deferred Term Work

In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

Deferred Exams

Students who do not write/attend a final examination because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control may apply to write a deferred examination.

1. be made in writing to the Registrar's Office **no later than three working days after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination;** and
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and in cases of illness by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

The granting of a deferral also requires that the student has performed satisfactorily in the course according to the evaluation scheme established in the Course Outline, excluding the final examination for which deferral privileges are requested. Reasons for denial of a deferral may include, among other conditions, a failure to (i) achieve a minimum score in the course before the final examination; (ii) attend a minimum number of classes; (iii) successfully complete a specific task (e.g. term paper, critical report, group project, computer or other assignment); (iv) complete laboratory work; (v) successfully complete one or more midterms; or (vi) meet other reasonable conditions of successful performance.

More information can be found [in the calendar](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to: [Registrar's Office](#)

Withdrawal From Courses

Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA.

NEW FALL 2017: WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term. Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Dates can be found here: <http://calendar.carleton.ca/academicyear/>

Department Contact Information

College of the Humanities 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

Greek and Roman Studies 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

Registrar's Office 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

Student Resources on Campus

[CUKnowHow Website](#)