THEO 299: INTRODUCTION TO RELIGIONS OF ASIA

Course Syllabus

Spring Term 2019

Instructor: Dung N. Duong, Ph.D (Boston University, 2001)

Professor of Religion and Philosophy, USSH (HCM city)

Class meetings: MONDAYS, 14:00 -17:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a survey course that will introduce students to the major tenants of the major religions in Asia, focusing on non-Abrahamic religions, and the religious practices of the peoples of China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and India. The religions examined will include the various forms of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Shamanism, and Hinduism as practiced in different countries.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1-Improve students’ knowledge of Asian religions

2-Sharpen students’ thinking about religious issues, both from personal and sociological perspectives

3-Enable students to analyze, compare, and contrast religious practices of the same religion in different countries

4-Give students an understanding of complex relationships between religion, culture, social practices, and politics in Asian contexts

EXPECTATIONS:

1-All students are expected to write a one-page reflection on the pre-given reading materials and send it to the instructor one day ahead of the class meeting.

2-Class attendance plays a major role in students’ overall performance evaluation (10% of the final scores).

3-Class discussion (10%).

4-There will be two comprehensive exams (one mid-term, 30% and one final, 30%).

5-Students are expected to write a research paper on topics related to the course (20%).
CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the course. What is religion? Why should we study religion?


Readings:

Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought*, chapter VIII, “Neo-Confucian Religiosity and the Human Relatedness.”


Week 3: Chinese Buddhism

Readings:


Week 4: Chinese Taoism

Isabelle Robinet, *Taoism: Growth of a Religion*.

Week 5: Japanese Religions: Shinto

Readings:


Week 6: Japanese Religions: Zen Buddhism

Readings:


Week 7: Japanese Religions: Tokugawa Confucianism

Readings:

**Week 8: Japanese Religions: New Religions**

*Remember! We have a one-hour midterm exam in this week.*


**Week 9: Japanese Religions: New Religions**


**Week 10: Korean Religions (Confucianism, Shamanism, Buddhism, and Christianity)**


**Week 11: Vietnamese Traditional Religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism.**

Cuong Tu Nguyen, *Zen in Medieval Vietnam*, Chapters 1 and 2.


**Week 12: Vietnamese New Religions: Cao Dai, Hoa Hao Buddhism, the Cult of Mother Goddess**


**Week 13: Buddhism in South East Asia (Theravada Buddhism)**


**Week 14: Hinduism: RELIGION IN INDIA**


**Week 15: SUMMING UP: RELIGION IN ASIA**

*Remember! We have a one-hour final term exam this week!*