Voyage: Spring 2013
Discipline: Religious Studies
RELG 1559-101: Religions of the World
Lower Division
Faculty Name: Joseph Laycock

Pre-Requisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the beliefs and practices of the world’s major
religions. We will also explore how these religions respond to “big questions”
such as why we are here, how we ought to live our lives, and what happens when
we die. Students will learn the discipline of comparative religion so that they can
critically analyze the similarities as well as the differences between these
traditions. We will also wrestle with the problem of defining what religion is.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
1. Demonstrate familiarity with the core beliefs, practices, figures, and texts
   of the world’s traditions.
2. Demonstrate an ability to apply this knowledge “in the field” when
   encountering different cultures.
3. Demonstrate an ability to think critically about religion as a category and
   its role in different societies.
4. Demonstrate the ability to think critically about problems of pluralism and
   comparative religion.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Stephen Prothero
TITLE: God is Not One
PUBLISHER: HarperOne
ISBN #: 978006157282

AUTHOR: Laurie Patton (trans.)
TITLE: The Baghavad Gita
PUBLISHER: Penguin Classics
ISBN #: 9780140447903

All other readings will be made available electronically via the ship’s intranet.

LIBRARY RESERVE LIST
AUTHOR: How to be a perfect stranger: the essential religious etiquette handbook
TITLE: Stuart M. Matlins and Arthur J. Magida
METHODS OF EVALUATION
Four quizzes: January 23, February 11, March 2, April 3 20%
Midterm Exam, March 13: 20%
Field Assignment Journal: 20%
Definition of Religion Assignment: 20%
Final Exam: 20%

GRADING RUBRIC
A= Consistently outstanding achievement in the course
B= Work of good to very good quality, but not consistently outstanding
C= Acceptable level of competence and basic understanding of material
D= Minimally adequate; student may not be ready for further related coursework
F= unsatisfactory and unworthy of credit

CLASS EXPECTATIONS
I will take attendance every day. Attendance and class participation will be factors in the overall evaluation of your work. Students should attend class everyday having done the reading and prepared for a vigorous discussion of the material. Students are also expected to maintain a respectful learning environment. This means avoiding self-centered behaviors, especially playing with electronic gadgets.

HONOR CODE
Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE
Class 1, JANUARY 11: Introduction
Class 2, JANUARY 13: What is Religion?  
*Definition of Religion #1 due*

Readings:  
Prothero, 1-24  
Paul O. Myhre, “What is Religion?,” 3-13  
_Recommended:_ Herb Kane, _Pele: Goddess of Hawaii’s Volcanoes_, 5-14.

Port: Hilo

Class 3, JANUARY17 Intro to Buddhism  
Readings:  
Prothero, 169-202

Class 4, JANUARY19 Theravada Buddhism  
*Definition of Religion #2 due*  
Readings:  
Walpola Rahula, _What the Buddha Taught_, 1-28;  
John S. Strong, _The Experience of Buddhism_, 92-95, 107-110.

Class 5, JANUARY23 Mahayana Buddhism  
Quiz 1  
Readings:  
John S. Strong, _The Experience of Buddhism_, 134-40, 142-144, 179-182;  
Santideva, _A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life_, 47-60.

Class 6, JANUARY25 Zen Buddhism  
Readings:  
John S. Strong, _The Experience of Buddhism_, 256-259  
John M. Koller and Patricia Joyce Koller, _Asian Philosophies_, 208-231

Port: Yokohama and Kobe

Class 7, FEBRUARY 1 Confucianism  
Readings:  
Prothero, 101-130

Ports: Shanghai and Hong Kong

Class 8, FEBRUARY 9 Confucius  
Readings  

Class 9, FEBRUARY 11 Taoism  
Quiz 2  
Readings
Prothero, 279-316

**Port: Ho Chi Minh City**

Class 10, FEBRUARY 20   Taoist Texts
Readings:
   The Tao te Ching, Chapters 1-20
   Chuang-Tze (selections)

**Ports: Singapore and Penang**

Class 11, FEBRUARY 28   Introduction to Hinduism
Readings:
   Prothero, 131-168

Class 12, MARCH 2   Vedas and Upanishads
Quiz 3
Readings:
   Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Sourcebook of Indian Philosophy*, 3-24; 37-56

**Ports: Cochin**

Class 13, MARCH10   The Baghavad Gita
Readings:
   The Baghavad Gita (selections)

Class 14, MARCH13   Midterm

Class 15, MARCH15  Introduction to Islam
*Definition of Religion #3 due*
Readings:
   Prothero, 25-64

**Port: Port Louis**

Class 16, MARCH18   The Quran
Readings:
   Michael Sells, “Approaching the Qur’an,” 1-28;
   Selected Surahs with commentary.

Class 17, MARCH21   Modern Islam, Terrorism, and Islamophobia
Readings:
   Robin Wright, *Rock the Casbah*, 119-137.
   Fareed Zakaria, “The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us?”

**Port: Cape Town**
Class 18, MARCH 29
Yoruba Religion
Readings:
Prothero, 203-242

Class 19, MARCH 31
Introduction to Christianity
Readings:
Prothero, 65-100

Class 20, APRIL 3
The Gospels
Quiz 4
Readings:
The Gospel of Mark;

Port: Acra

Class 21, APRIL 9
Varieties of Christianity
Readings:
Catherine Albanese, America: Religion and Religions, 109-124.
Philip Jenkins, “Christianity Moves South,” 15-34.
Jack Chick, “The Sissy”

Class 22, APRIL 11
Introduction to Judaism
Readings:
Prothero, 243-278.

Class 23, APRIL 14
The Hebrew Bible
*Definition of Religion #4 due*
Readings:
Genesis 1-10, 12, 15-19, 21-22
Exodus 1-3, 12-13, 19-20

Port: Casablanca

APRIL 22
Final Exam
Definition of religion paper due.

ASSIGNMENTS AND FIELD WORK

Definition of Religion Assignment:
The dirty secret of religious studies is that there is no consistent definition of what “religion” actually is. This would a problem for professors to argue over
in their armchairs, except that the United States Constitution has very explicit clauses about “religion.” In class, we will wrestle with creating a practical definition of religion that accounts for the data from our readings and our observations in port.

Much like the natural sciences, students will revise their definition in light of new data, producing four separate definitions over the course of the semester. Your final essay will serve as a capstone, proving that you are able to think like a scholar of religion.

Field Assignment Journal
Students are required to make three site visits. Each visit must be made at a different port and must result in a 2-3 page field report. One of these site visits must be a faculty directed field lab—either in Singapore or Casablanca. Students may also participate in field labs in Yokohama or Hong Kong, however priority will be given to students in Religions of Asia.

For the other two site visits, you may visit one of the suggested sites below. Additional sites are fine, but should be approved in advance to receive credit. Before visiting religious sites on your own, it is highly recommended that you consult How to Be A Perfect Stranger by Stuart Matlins and Arthur Magida, on reserve in the ship’s library.

Field reports should present analysis of one or two concrete observations such as a religious object (a place of worship, or religious art) or a specific event (a ritual, social interactions, etc.) You will be evaluated on the following criteria: 1) Your command of the terminology of the religious traditions studied; 2) your ability to articulate the relationship between historical traditions/beliefs and the social or material phenomena observed, and 3) your capacity to apply appropriate ideas from readings and lectures to your own observations of religious practices and places of worship or reverence. You are also encouraged to find differences between a religious tradition as described in your textbook and a local manifestations of that tradition found in port.

APPROPRIATE FIELD PROGRAMS

HILO, HAWAI'I
1. Search for offerings to the goddess Pele near Rainbow Falls or the Naha Stone. These are often left wrapped in banana leaves.

YOKOHAMA
1. Visit Kamakura where a number of important Buddhist and Shinto shrine are located.
2. Visit the Shomyo Temple and the Kanazawa-Bunko Museum. Pay special attention to the gardens, which are designed after the mandalas of Pure Land Buddhism.

**KOBE**
1. Ikuta Jinja. This is believed to be one of the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan.

2. Nagata Jinja. This shrine is home to the kami Kotoshironush-no-Okami, who helps businesses to flourish.

3. The Hyogo Daibutsu (great Buddha). Located at the Nofuku temple, this is one of the largest Buddha’s in Japan.

**SHANGHAI**
**The Chinese New Year will fall on February 10. See if you can spot any preparations underway.**

1. City God Temple. This temple was originally built to honor the local god, Jinshan. In the 1950s it was appropriated as a Taoist temple.

2. Wen Miao, the greatest Confucian temple in Shanghai.

3. She Shan (Holy Mother of China) Cathedral. In 1863 Jesuit missionaries purchased an abandoned Buddhist monastery to create this Cathedral. It is now one of the largest Christian churches in East Asia.

4. Songjuan Mosque. Founded in the 14th century, this is the oldest mosque in Shanghai.

5. Jade Buddha Temple. A traditional Chinese Buddhist temple that draws on both Zen and Pure Land traditions.

**HONG KONG**

1. Wong Tai Sin Temple. This famous Taoist temple is known for its fortune telling. See if you can observe someone practicing fortune telling. This is done by burning incense and shaking a bamboo cylinder to receive a “fortune stick” that is interpreted by fortune-teller.

2. Man Mo Temple. This temple is sacred to both Buddhists and Taoists. Look for the statues of Guan Yu, the legendary general, and Wen-Chang, god of culture and literature.
3. Po Lin Monastery. This monastery contains many Buddhist relics and is also the location of the Tian Tan “Big Buddha” statue.

**HO CHI MINH CITY**

**February 10 is also the Vietnamese New Year, Tet. People will likely be returning to Ho Chi Minh City from visiting their families in the countryside. See if you can observe any lingering decorations or speak to Vietnamese about their holiday.**

1. Giac Vien Pagoda. This is one of the oldest Buddhist temples in the city. It is dedicated to Kwan-Yin, the bodhisattva of compassion.

2. Visit the town of Tay Ninh, approximately 90km northwest of Ho Chi Minh City and see Cao Dai temple. This is the “Holy See” of Cao Dai, a Vietnamese religion that combines Buddhism with Chinese and Western religions. The Cao Dai religion also reveres Thomas Jefferson as a saint! Tay Ninh is also near the Cu Chi tunnels, a popular tourist site.

3. Notre Dame Cathedral. Built in 1877, this is a French-style Cathedral made with bricks imported from Marseilles.

4. Nga Sau Church. This church is dedicated to the French saint Joan of Arc. Pay close attention to how Asian reverence for female divinities such as Kwan-Yin has rubbed off on this Catholic church.

5. Cholon Mosque. This is one of four major mosques in Ho Chi Minh City. It was built primarily for Indian immigrants.

**SINGAPORE**

1. Sri Veeramakakalamman Temple. This temple was built by Bengali laborers to honor the goddess Kali. Note the elaborate South Indian style of architecture.

2. Central Sikh Temple. Play close attention to the Sikh holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, and how it is treated by worshippers.

3. Sultan Mosque. This is one of the largest and most impressive religious structures in Singapore. The main prayer hall alone holds 5,000 people.

4. Thekcheng Choling. One of the only chances to see Tibetan Buddhist temple on this voyage. Thekcheng Choling offers free consulting in traditional Chinese medicine. See if you can observe a consultation.
5. Armenian Church. One of the only chances to see an Orthodox Church on this voyage. This is the oldest Christian Church in Singapore, built for a sizable community of Armenian immigrants.

PENANG

1. Kwan-Yin Temple. This is the oldest temple in Penang. It is dedicated to Kway-Yin as well as Ma Chor Poh, the patron saint of seafarers.

2. Floating Mosque. This mosque was built in 2004 after a tsunami destroyed the previous mosque. This is an enormous worship-space built on stilts over the sea.

3. St. George’s Church. This Anglican Church was built by convicts in 1816. It is considered a national treasure by the Malaysian government.

4. Kek Lok Si Temple. Known as “The Temple of the Supreme Bliss,” this is the largest Buddhist temple in Malaysia. The temple is eclectic, combining elements of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism as well as Chinese Thai, and Burmese architecture. See if you can identify the different elements.

5. Snake Temple. This is Buddhist temple is home to numerous pit vipers. Allegedly, the snakes have been “de-venomed” and holy incense has made them docile. But don’t pick them up. The temple is dedicated to Chor Soo Kong, a Buddhist monk and healer who showed compassion for jungle snakes. Locals believe the snakes have arrived on their own to pay their respects to Chor Soo Kong.

COCHIN

1. Paradesi Synagogue. This synagogue was originally built in the 16th century by the so-called Malabar Jews or Cochin Jews. While visiting the synagogue, explore the neighboring area known as “Jew town” where several other synagogues are currently in use.

2. St. Francis Church. This Church was built by the Portuguese in 1503. This church is the original burial site of Vasco de Gama.

3. Cheraman Juma Masjid. This is claimed to be the oldest mosque in India. There are many miraculous stories associated with mosques and locals of many faiths visit here. Young children are often brought here for a special ceremony signaling that they are ready to begin learning to read. These is also a mysterious lamp here said to be a thousand years old which Hindus bring offerings of oil. This is an interesting chance to observe a very open Muslim center.
4. Emakulam Shiva Temple. This temple is dedicated to Shiva and according to legend, was built by the hero Arjuna. Surrounding the main temple are shrines Rama, Hanuman, and other deities. Try to observe the priests offering their daily puja offering. This temple also has an active schedule of “temple arts” including classical dance, theater, and musical concerts.

5. Chottanikkara Temple. This is a temple to Devi, the great goddess. The goddess is worshipped in three different forms at different times of the day. The temple maintains a daily schedule of pooja offerings, which begin at 4 am and end at 8:45pm. People suffering from mental illnesses are also brought to this temple for healing.

PORT LOUIS

1. St. Croix Church and Pere Laval’s Shrine. Father Pere Jacque-Desire Laval was sent to Mauritius as a missionary and is deeply beloved by the people. Every year pilgrims flock to this site on the anniversary of his death. Many believe the shrine has healing powers.

2. The Jummah Mosque. This mosque has been expanded several times, primarily by artisans from India. It also contains a madrassah

3. Seek out several Chinese pagodas and Tamil Hindu temples in Port Louis.

CAPE TOWN

1. Tour Bo-Kaap, Cape Town’s Muslim neighborhood. Many Muslims are descended from slaves brought here by the Dutch from North Africa, Malaysia, and India. While you are there, visit the Bo-Kaap museum.

2. South African Jewish Museum. This museum was opened in 2000 by Nelson Mandella. It links to the oldest synagogue in South Africa.

3. St. George’s Cathedral. This Anglican Cathedral is over a century old. The archbishop Desmond Tutu regularly held services here before his retirement.

TEMA (ACCRA)

1. Take an overnight trip to the Larabanga Mosque in Larabanga. This is a Sudanese style mosque and is uniquely African.
2. The Hindu Monastery of Africa. This temple was created by Sindhi refugees who fled to Ghana after the partition of India in 1947.

3. Mormon Temple. This temple was dedicated in 2004 as an African base for Mormon missionaries.

**CASABLANCA**

1. The Hassan II Mosque. This site claims to be the second-largest mosque in world. It was commissioned by King Hassan II at a cost of $800 million. Guided tours are given to non-Muslim visitors several times a day.

2. The Cathedrale Sacre-Coeur. This is a Neo-Gothic cathedral built while Morocco was still under French rule.

3. The Jewish Museum. This is the only Jewish museum in the Muslim world. It houses numerous scrolls and artifacts from the region’s long Jewish history.