

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

Class Time: A—12:50-14:05
Room: U

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.

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 Bhagavad 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
PUBLISHER: Skylight Paths Publishing,
ISBN #: 9781594732942
DATE/EDITION: 2010

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Class participation	5%
Four quizzes:	25%
Midterm Exam, March 13:	20%
Field Assignment Journal:	25%
Final Exam:	25%

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]."

FIELD WORK & FIELD JOURNAL

In this course, we have the opportunity to see other religions in action. Often the way that real people in real places really practice their religion is very different the way religious traditions are described in religious studies books, which are usually written by Westerners and speak in universals rather than specifics. Students are required to visit three or more religious sites and keep a field journal of what you see.

Each journal entry should be 2-3 pages in length. State where you went, the date of your visit, what port it was, and what religious tradition the site is associated with. You should make field notes either during or immediately after your visit. When you adapt your notes to a journal, try to describe everything that you saw and did. What were people doing? How were they dressed? Were there women? Children? Did you talk to anyone? You are also encouraged to be reflective of your experience. How did it make you feel? Were you

excited? Nervous? Shocked? Finally, how did your experience of this tradition compare to the description in your textbook? What was similar and what was different? At the end of the course, journal entries will be evaluated based on 1) Apparent effort in doing field work, 2) effective writing, 3) your ability to apply appropriate terms and concepts from readings and lectures to your own observations of religious practices and places of worship or reverence.

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. Many religious sites will expect you to remove your shoes before entering. As a rule of thumb, do not wear shorts or any clothing that might be considered "sexy" or provocative when visiting a sacred site.

One of these sites must be the required Field Assignment in Casablanca (see below). For the other two, choose from a list of suggested sites in each port, which can be found at the end of this syllabus. Sites not listed in the syllabus must be approved in advance to receive credit.

FIELD LAB: CASABLANCA, APRIL 18 and 21.

In Casablanca we will take a tour of the Hassan II Mosque, the Cathedrale Sacre Coer, and the Museum of Moroccan Judaism. Due to the size of his class, the class will be divided into two sections that will take this tour on different days.

This will be an opportunity to study the architecture and worship space of three faiths as well as the history of how they have interacted across history. Students are required to submit a 2-3 page field journal entry on this trip, demonstrating their knowledge of these three traditions.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Class 1, JANUARY 11: Introduction

Class 2, JANUARY 13: What is Religion?

Readings:

Prothero, 1-24

Recommended: Herb Kane, *Pele: Goddess of Hawaii's Volcanoes*, 5-14.

Port: Hilo

Class 3, JANUARY 17 Intro to Buddhism

Readings:

Prothero, 169-202

Class 4, JANUARY19 Theravada Buddhism

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
Philip Kapleau, *Three Pillars of Zen*, 26-49, 208-229

Port: Yokohama and Kobe

Class 7, FEBRUARY 1 Confucianism

Readings:

Prothero, 101-130

Ports: Shanghai and Hong Kong

Class 8, FEBRUARY 9 Confucius

Readings

The Analects, Books 1-9.

Class 9, FEBRUARY 11 Taoism

Quiz 2

Readings

Prothero, 279-316

Port: Ho Chi Minh City

Class 10, FEBRUARY 19 Taoist Texts

Readings:

The Tao te Ching, Chapters 1-20
Chuang-Tze (selections)

Port: Singapore

Class 11, FEBRUARY 23 Introduction to Hinduism

Readings:

Prothero, 131-168

Port: Rangoon

Class 12, MARCH 3 Vedas and Upanishads

Quiz 3

Readings:

Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A Sourcebook of Indian Philosophy*, 3-24; 37-56

Ports: Cochin

Class 13, MARCH 5 The Baghavad Gita

Readings:

The Baghavad Gita (selections)

Class 14, MARCH 13 Midterm

Class 15, MARCH 16 Introduction to Islam

Readings:

Prothero, 25-64

Port: Port Louis

Class 16, MARCH 19 The Qur'an

Readings:

Michael Sells, "Approaching the Qur'an," 1-28;
Selected Surahs with commentary.

Class 17, MARCH 22 Modern Islam, Terrorism, and Islamophobia

Readings:

Robin Wright, *Rock the Casbah*, 119-137.
Fareed Zakaria, ["The Politics of Rage: Why Do They Hate Us?"](#)

Class 18, MARCH 24 Yoruba Religion

Readings:

Prothero, 203-242

Port: Cape Town

Class 19, APRIL 1 Introduction to Christianity

Readings:

Prothero, 65-100

Class 20, APRIL 4 Pentecostalism and Globalization

Quiz 4

Readings:

****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 the 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 Veeramakaliamman 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. Pay 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.

RANGOON (Yangon)

1. Shwedagon Pagoda. This is the biggest tourist attraction in the city. It's big, it's covered in gold, and Rudyard Kipling wrote about it. Locals claim the pagoda has stood for 2600 years although historians dispute this. When you visit try to look beyond the shiny exterior. This pagoda has four relics believed to have belonged to ancient Buddhas who lived before Siddhartha Gautama. The temple also has "planetary posts" where visitors can make offerings depending on their horoscope. Finally, the temple has become a site for political protest. There is a lot going on here. Be a good anthropologist and see what you can pick up.
2. Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue. This is the only synagogue in all of Myanmar. The synagogue was built at the end of the nineteenth century when British colonialism brought Jews from Baghdad and Cochi to Myanmar. Today there are only a handful of Jews living in Myanmar, but the synagogue represents an interesting moment in the history of global Judaism.
3. Kyai Hti Yo Pagoda (Golden Rock). This site is about 160km outside of Rangoon. It is an enormous, precariously balanced rock covered in gold. It is said that anyone who

sees it will immediately convert to Buddhism. In December/January this the site of important Buddhist rituals. You can either hike 11km from the base camp or take a car to within a mile of the summit.

4. Kaba Aye Pagoda. This site is 11km north of Yangon. It features a large cave which is replica of the cave in India where the first Buddhist council was convened. This should be very different from the larger and busier pagodas of the city.

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. There 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 Jacques-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 Mandela. 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-Coer. 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.