

SYLLABUS—REL 1036: FAR EASTERN RELIGIONS

Catawba College

Spring 2013

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Course Summary, Goals, and Means of Assessment

There is no longer justification for ignorance of the world's major religious traditions. World-wide physical and electronic mobility have made next-door neighbors of Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Confucians, and the like. The West has conducted business for centuries with non-Judeo-Christian traditions, and the fact of religious pluralism in America is now the norm. Therefore, a better understanding of these major religious traditions is necessary if only to help us better understand the people around us. However, there might be even more compelling reasons for understanding these traditions. Religion, as the search for and response to that which is experienced as Sacred, is a search for ultimate meaning; it is about what is fundamentally important to humans. The major religious traditions represent the most influential patterns in humanity's quest for meaning. To ignore these versions of the quest would be to ignore much of what humanity, in its brief presence on this planet, has valued above all things; it would miss some of the most profound searching and influential ideas of human history. Thus, in better understanding these traditions we come to understand better what humanity is, and, therefore, who we might be.

There are several ways to approach the study of major religious traditions. We have chosen to group them geographically, recognizing that such a division is somewhat arbitrary and may lead to some misguided assertions about similarities unless we are careful. We choose in this semester to focus on the major religious traditions of the Far East.

Expected Learning Outcomes <i>Each Student Should Be Able to:</i>	Means of Assessing Those Outcomes
Know and describe in writing the salient history, theology, rituals, and moral structures of Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two, in-class examinations ("objective," short answer, and essay questions) • Pop and announced quizzes (primarily "objective" questions on basic definitions, persons, and events) • Mini-essays • Final Examination (cumulative)
Know and describe in writing the basic nature of sacred texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two in-class examinations ("objective," short answer, and essay questions) • Pop and announced quizzes (primarily "objective" questions on basic definitions, persons, and events) • Mini-essays • Final Examination (cumulative)
Demonstrate analytical reasoning in interpreting sacred texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Class Discussion • Two, in-class examinations ("objective," short answer, and essay questions)
Distinguish the meaning and significance of the alternative world views represented in the religious traditions studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Reaction Paper (see end of Syllabus) • Final Examination (cumulative)
Personally evaluate the theologies, rituals, and moral structures of two of the three religions studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Reaction Paper (see end of Syllabus)

Textbook (required)

- **DVD-ROM:** *Revealing Eastern Religions*, Cynthia Eller, Version 4.2. Thinking Strings, 2012.
 - **Pass key:** In order to activate your DVD-ROM and connect it with this course, you must use the following pass key: **zen13** I believe this is case-sensitive.
- The approximate cost of the DVD-ROM for *Revealing Eastern Religions* is \$60.00.
 - If you already own a copy of *Revealing Western (or World) Religions*, email Thinking Strings at support@thinkingstrings.com, and indicate that you wish to purchase *Revealing Eastern Religions*. They will tell you how to purchase a serial number for this text—the cost is about \$15.

Very Important: You need to purchase a jump drive so that you can back up your user data for this DVD-ROM. I cannot overemphasize how important this will be.

- If you own a laptop computer, you might decide to bring it to class to refer to Eller’s book. However, I will be displaying the most important pages on screen at the front of the classroom.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be checked promptly each day at the beginning of class. If you are late you must speak with me at the end of class or you will be counted absent. **Four absences are allowed during the semester. Each absence beyond the four permitted will result in a two-point reduction in the final grade for the course.** Any student missing more than one quarter of the sessions during the semester will automatically be given an F or an I for the course, depending on the circumstances. Tardiness should be a rare exception. Should late arrivals persist, they will be counted as absences.

Except for sanctioned college activities, and other circumstances over which you have absolutely no control (e.g., court dates, your hospitalization, etc.), if you are not in class, you will be counted as absent. If you miss class for sickness or for a sanctioned college activity, you are still responsible for the information covered in that class so you will be prepared for the next class.

Missed Tests can be made up ONLY if you present to me on the day of your return to class a justifiable and verifiable excuse. Missed quizzes cannot be made up, although the lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final quiz tally.

One Final Note: You are expected to do your “toileting” in between your class sessions at Catawba College. Please do not use class time for such activities because your departure and return to class are usually disruptive. This is also the case with examinations during which you will not be excused to use the bathroom except for emergencies.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY: *When you enter the classroom, please turn off all alerts on your cell phone. You may not use your cell phone for any reason during class—if you do, I will simply count you as absent for the day.* Should you use any electronic device during an examination or quiz, you will automatically flunk that graded assignment, and you may flunk the course. Laptop computers may be used during non-graded class activities. However, if you use your laptop for purposes other than those directly related to our course, you will not be allowed to bring your laptop to class again.

Summary of Grade Distribution

Pop Quizzes:	15%
(2) Tests:	35%
(1) Reaction Paper:	10%
(10) Mini-essays:	15%
Class Preparation*	5%
Class Participation	5%
Final Exam:	15%

*“Class Preparation” refers to your having completed the “Try It!” sections for the relevant reading assignments in *Revealing Eastern Religions*. Your grade for this element will be based on the percentage of “Try It!” sections you have completed *as reported through the online system*.

Grading Scale:

100-93:	A	Clearly superior college-level performance
92-90:	A-	
89-87:	B+	
86-83:	B	Good college-level performance
82-80:	B-	
79-77:	C+	
76-73:	C	Acceptable college-level performance
72-70:	C-	
69-67:	D+	
66-63:	D	Minimally-acceptable college-level performance
62-60:	D-	
≤ 59:	F	Failure to achieve college-level performance

TOPICS AND PREPARATIONS

Note: Because I encourage class discussion, the schedule given below is approximate. It is therefore the responsibility of each student to keep up with the class's progress. Your absence from class does not excuse you from this responsibility.

SPECIAL NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, your preparations/assignments for each class are the parts of Eller with the same titles as the class subject; for example, for Jan. 11 & 14, you must read the sections entitled “What is Religion?” “Types of Religions” “Studying Religions.” I expect that you will read and look at and listen to everything on each page in the Eller assignments; that you will complete the “Try It” sections, and that you will use the “Review” questions for every assignment. I STRONGLY encourage you to take notes on your reading so you may retain the information contained therein. Your text even has an application designed for such note taking.

PART I: INTRODUCTION AND BEGINNINGS

1/9 A. Introduction to Course and Syllabus

1/11,14 B. What is Religion? Types of Religions. Studying Religions

PART II: HINDUISM (the paths toward moksha)

1/16 **FILM:** *Hinduism: 330 Million Gods*

1/18,23 A. Defining & Finding Hinduism; The Birth of Hinduism
Also, go to <http://www.hinduwebsite.com/vedicsection/vedaindex.asp>, and study the “History and Tradition of the Vedas,” “Hymns from the Rig Veda,” and “The Vedic Gods” (in the latter, pay attention only to Indra, Varuna, Agni, Soma, Vishnu, and Rudra).
What patterns do you see in the descriptions of these god/desses? What are they like?

NOTE: January 21: No Class. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

1/25,28 B. Hinduism After the Vedas; Hinduism in India; and **FILM:** “Hinduism” in *A Separate Peace* (if time permits).

1/30;2/1 C. The Philosophy of Hinduism; Yoga

2/4 D. “An Adventure into Hindu Philosophy” READ only pp. 8-13 in *The Major Schools of Hindu Thought*

2/6 E. The Hindu Pantheon; Hinduism in the West

2/8,11 F. Puja and Pilgrimage; (**no assignment for the following:** morality; comparison and contrast); Growing up Hindu; Becoming Hindu

2/13 **EXAM #1: Hinduism and Course Introduction**

PART III: BUDDHISM

2/15,18 A. The Life of the Buddha; Film, *A Separate Peace*

2/20,22 B. The Philosophy of Buddhism

2/25,27 C. The First 400 Years; Theravada Buddhism; Mahayana Buddhism; Vajrayana Buddhism

3/1,11 D. Mahayana Buddhism in China; Mahayana Buddhism in Japan

NOTE: March 4-8: No Class: Spring Break (whoo hoo!)

3/13 E. Buddhism in the West; Growing Up Buddhist; Becoming Buddhist; Film, “Buddhism” in *A Separate Peace* (time permitting)

3/15 **EXAM #2: Buddhism**

PART IV: DAOISM

- 3/18,20 A. Ancient Chinese Religion; The Beginnings of Daoism;
- 3/22 B. Philosophy of the Dao; also read excerpts from *The Tao of Pooh* (in a reserve folder in the Library)
- 3/27 C. Daoism as a Religion; Film, “Daoism” in *A Separate Peace* (time permitting)

NOTE: March 29 – April 1: No Class. Easter Break

- 4/3 D. The Daoist Pantheon; Daoism in the 2nd Millenium CE; Daoist Meditation and Medicine
- 4/5 E. Daoist Ritual Practices; Daoism in the Modern Era; Growing Up Daoist; Becoming Daoist

PART V: CONFUCIANISM

- 4/8 A. The Life of Confucius; Fundamentals of Confucianism
- 4/10 B. Confucian Texts; Film, “Confucianism” in *A Separate Peace* (time permitting)
- 4/12 C. Early Confucian History; The Modern Era

PART VI: SHINTO

- 4/15 A. Early Japanese Religion; Shinto After Buddhism; Key Characteristics; Shinto Mythology
You might want to go to <http://www.jinja.or.jp/english/s-0.html>. Read the brief, opening paragraph, then all of the subsections under item #4, “The Jinja Shinto.” This material is a very rich resource and will help considerably in your understanding of Shinto.
- 4/17,19 B. The Kami; Shinto Shrines; Shinto Worship
- 4/22 C. Shinto Festivals; Religious Blending in Japan
- 4/24 Wrap-Up and Course Evaluation
- 4/26 Buffer Day (in case we get behind!)

FINAL EXAMINATION: Monday, May 6, 2013, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

REACTION PAPER

You are to write a reaction paper to **ONE** of the religions discussed in this course. The purpose of this paper is to encourage you to reflect in an organized fashion on your personal encounter with at least one of the chosen religious traditions. The two basic questions which must be addressed in this paper are as follows:

- What did I find meaningful in this religion's theology, ritual, or morality? Of course, explain why.
- With what did I disagree most in this religion's theology, ritual, or morality? Of course, explain why.

*In short, carefully explain what you liked and why, and what you didn't like and why. And, when you react to a particular ritual or practice, don't react only to the particular actions, but react to the meanings behind those actions as well. It is possible that you may agree with the principle behind something, but not with the practice of it (or, vice versa!). I do not expect your responses to these questions to be balanced, i.e., that your positive reactions will equal your negative reactions. However, both topics must be covered seriously. This is not to be a description of the new things you learned about the religion. It should be your reactions to those things. As resources you should use: 1) Personal experience; 2) Class notes; 3) Notes from Eller's book. I want **your** words and **your** reactions. Do not paraphrase or quote Eller although you may surely refer to some of the religions' sacred texts. **Do NOT simply compare and contrast your own religion with the religion you are reacting to. I need more reasons for your reactions than merely that the religion in question is similar to or different from the religion you currently profess. Also, do NOT react to the religion's history.** *Please speak with me if you have any questions about my expectations here. The burden of understanding is on **your** shoulders.* Your paper must be type-written, double-spaced, and should be 3-4 pages long. It will be **due precisely ONE WEEK after that unit has been completed. The only exception to this is Shinto, in which case your paper will be due no later than the last day of regular class.** Please use standard fonts and margins. Your paper must also conform to the following Paper Policy:*

Paper Policy

The papers submitted in this course are expected to reflect those qualities epitomized by a liberal arts education. *Your grade will be directly affected by grammar, syntax and spelling. After determining your paper's grade, I will deduct 2 points for each grammatical error, and 1 point for each spelling and punctuation error. The greatest total penalty, however, will only be 10 points (i.e., one letter grade).* The simplest way to avoid such penalties is to have a reliable friend proof-read your paper before submitting it for a grade. For further information on plagiarism and the Honor Code consult the appropriate pages in the *Catawba College Catalog*. However, the following list of "thou shalt nots" should prove to be generally useful:

Some of the Most Common Types of Plagiarism

1. Failing to identify direct or word-for-word quotations by use of appropriate symbols and reference to the source.

2. Restating in your own words the work (ideas, conclusions, words) of another without reference to the source.
3. Presenting as your own the creative work (for instance, music or photographs or, of course, written work) of another without proper acknowledgment.

Rule of thumb: When in doubt, document.

Special Instructions for Submitting Papers

It is a requirement of this course that you submit your paper to me via *Blackboard*. You must follow the following instructions carefully:

- ◆ Compose your paper in **WORD (not in WORKS)**.
- ◆ The paper must be titled and must conform to all of the paper requirements stated above.
At the top of the first page you must type your name and your email address. If either is not there, I will deduct five points from your paper's grade.
- ◆ Save the paper in WORD, noting where you saved it. (Of course, always back up your paper to a thumb drive or some similar, secure storage device.)
- ◆ Log in to *Blackboard*. (Note: If you are using Internet Explorer 8, you may have trouble accessing *Blackboard*. If that is the case, I recommend that you download *Firefox*—another browser—and access *Blackboard* through it.)
- ◆ Go to this course and click on the *Assignments* link.
- ◆ Find the assignment for which your paper has been written, and click on the hyper-link for that assignment.
- ◆ To attach your file, use this sequence of commands:
- ◆ Browse; Choose File, Open, Submit (don't forget this one); **CLICK SUBMIT ONLY ONCE!**
- ◆ You will receive a day and time receipt window for your submission. You **MUST** copy and print that window and save it. If there is some question about your paper being submitted on time, this is the only proof you will have that you did so.
 - ◆ My remarks will be found in green print, embedded within your text, as well as in marginal "bubbles." Your grade will be found at the very end of your paper where I have typed and/or highlighted your name.

The Writing Center

The Catawba College Writing Center provides free, one-on-one consultations to all Catawba students. Our tutors have been intensely trained, and while they won't rewrite students' papers for them, they will give students feedback and encouragement at all stages of the writing process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, polishing). Students who use the writing center should be prepared to discuss the assignment they are working on and to begin making revisions, with the tutor's guidance, during the session. **All** students are encouraged to use the Writing Center which is open afternoons (in ADMN 211) and evenings (in the Library, Study Room #5). Walk-ins are welcome, but we honor appointments first. For more information or to make an appointment, call 704-645-4819 or stop by ADMN 211.

Mini-essays

What are they? A portion of your grade for this course requires you to write 15 Mini-essays. These essays are in response to the essay questions that are embedded within the TRY IT sections of many (not all) of your reading assignments. There are twenty-nine essay prompts from which you must choose those fifteen essays. A list of the appropriate essay prompts and where they are found will be distributed in class.

What are the requirements for each essay? Each essay should be one paragraph long, using acceptable grammar and spelling. How long that paragraph should be will be determined by the question asked, and by the thoroughness with which you answer the question. Some of the questions ask for your personal reaction, while others require you to explain an important feature of the particular religion. The grade distribution for each essay will be as follows:

Thoroughness: 90%

Grammar & Spelling: 10%

How do I submit them? You will type these essays into the appropriate window in the TRY IT portions of your readings assignments. *You may choose to submit your Mini-essays on paper. If you do, then you MUST have your name on the page, and it must be type-written.*

When are they due? **Each essay is due by 9:00 a.m., on the day the reading assignment which contains it is due.** For example, your first mini-essay option is on p. 22 of "What is Religion?", a reading within the module called "Exploring Religion." That reading preparation is due on Friday, 1/11. So, if you choose to respond to that essay prompt, then your mini-essay is due by 9 am, January 11. I prefer that you submit your mini-essays through the Interactive Grade Book system connected to your text. However, *if you choose to submit a written copy of your mini-essay, then it is due at the beginning of class on the day the appropriate reading assignment is due.* Now, hear this loud and clear: **NO LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR ANY REASON.** Should you find that you will not be able to meet the deadline for a particular mini-essay, do not submit that essay to be graded, either via the Interactive Grade Book, or in hard copy. Do not submit both digital and hard copies of your mini-essays. That is a waste of trees, one of our most valuable resources. The astute student will realize that IT IS FINE FOR YOU TO COMPLETE THESE MINI-ESSAYS WELL AHEAD OF TIME. Just understand that they may not be graded until after their deadline.

Using the Thinking Strings web Interactive Grade Book (Students)

1. Launch your browser.
2. Navigate to <http://interactivegradebook.com/> (NOTE: If you are using Internet Explorer, you will need to navigate to <https://interactivegradebook.com/session/new>.)
3. You will see the Interactive Grade Book log in screen. In the Student Log In fields enter your courseware serial number (case-sensitive) and your class Pass Key.
4. Once logged in successfully, you will see your name, contact information, your password and password reminder for your courseware, your course information and your Interactive Grade Book data.
5. Looking at your Interactive Grade Book data, you will see the titles of the modules of your courseware horizontally across the screen. A "+" indicates that you have done some of the work for this module, but it is incomplete. A "date" indicates the date on which a module was completed. If you click a module title, it will expand and you can view your data for the sections of that module. Click a section title and it expands to show you the Concepts. Continue expanding until you can see how many times you viewed a page and for how long. Click the Display Essays button to see your Essay submissions.

Revealing[®] World Religions: Notes to Students

1. **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQs) concerning use of *Revealing World Religions* are answered on the Thinking Strings web site. Go to www.thinkingstrings.com and click "Support." For additional technical assistance, click "Contact **Thinking Strings Support**" and complete the request form (<http://www.thinkingstrings.com/serviceform.html>), or email support@thinkingstrings.com. Include your name, academic institution, the title of your courseware, and your *Revealing World Religions* serial number in all correspondence.
2. If you have any question concerning **installation and registration** of your courseware, contact Thinking Strings immediately by email at support@thinkingstrings.com. Don't wait until the day before an assignment is due!
3. When you register your *Revealing World Religions* courseware using your Pass Key (provided by your instructor), your **registration information** will be sent to your instructor's Interactive Grade Book[®] so be sure the information you enter is accurate.
4. **IMPORTANT:** If you are using *Revealing World Religions* in a computer lab, you **MUST** store your data on a USB jump/flash drive. You *cannot* store your data on the university server (the university will delete it).
5. Be sure to **read the instructions** on the package insert. Additionally, a more comprehensive **user guide** (WR User Guide.pdf) is available on your DVD-ROM.
6. **Audio** enhances your experience with *Revealing World Religions*. If you are working in a computer lab, bring a pair of headphones.
7. **Printing Essays:** To print any of your written Essays for safekeeping, just click the "Print" button on the screen on which you have entered your response.
8. **Print your progress report:** To print your current Progress Report, which is essentially your Achievement Profile™, click the Print Progress Report button on the Achievement Profile™ screen.
9. On the **Assistance Palette** (which you open by clicking the Question Mark button in the lower right of every screen), you can copy from the Bibliography and the Glossary by selecting the text and typing Ctrl-C (command-C on the Macintosh). Paste the text into your Notepad (also in the Assistance Palette) or a word processor by typing Ctrl-V (command-V on the Macintosh).
10. **Print or Copy Text:** Print the text of any screen by clicking the Print Page button at the lower right of the screen. Many students find it useful to print the "Summary" page of each section to use as a study guide. Copy the text of any screen to paste it into another application by shift-clicking the Print Page.
11. **Glossary:** Display a term's definition by clicking on the term. You can display additional definitions by clicking on terms within the definition.
12. To **place your order** for *Revealing[®] World Religions*, go to the Thinking Strings web site: www.thinkingstrings.com. Click on "Products." Then, click on "Place Your Order." Thinking Strings accepts Visa or Mastercard. You can also pay by check (the courseware will be shipped after the check clears) or money order. Shipping is by USPS Priority Mail from New Jersey.
NOTE: If your instructor already gave you your Revealing World Religions DVD-ROM, order "Serial Number Only."