

Religion 385

Religion in Chinese Society

Fall 2016
MW 5:15-6:35
Hall of Languages 211

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Course Overview

This course will survey the diversity of religious practice in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan both historically and in contemporary times. It will emphasize the culture of everyday Chinese religious life and the relationship between the practice of religion and larger social, political, and economic questions throughout Chinese history. The latter part of the course will focus on the practice of religion in contemporary mainland China.

Course Texts

The following texts, available at the university bookstore, are required for the course:

Chau, Adam Yuet. 2006. *Miraculous Response: Doing Religion in Contemporary China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Davis, Sara L.M. 2005. *Song and Silence: Ethnic Revival on China's Southwest Borders*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lopez, Donald E., ed. 1995. *Religions of China in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

In addition, a number of readings are available on the course blackboard page [BB].

Course Assignments and Requirements

1. Active Class Participation (15%).

You will be expected to come to class prepared to contribute your questions and insights on the course readings, lectures, and films. Periodic small-group and whole class discussions will be held. While regular participation is encouraged, the quality of student participation will count for more than the quantity. Attendance will be taken for each class. Students missing four or more classes will receive a failing grade in class participation.

2. Reading Questions (15%).

In order to facilitate class discussion, you are required to submit one reading question for each class period with assigned readings, marked by a star (*). The reading question should relate to a topic raised by the assigned readings about which you are uncertain or wish to probe further. Higher-graded questions will be those that are closely integrated with the context of the reading assignment and the class theme for the day.

You must submit your question to both gfisher@syr.edu and jdabercr@syr.edu no later than 9 a.m. on the day of the class. **Because the purpose of the questions is to facilitate class discussion, late questions will not be accepted.** Please write your question in the body of the e-mail message; do not submit it as an attachment (e.g., in Microsoft Word). **In addition:** you must bring a printed or electronic copy of your question with you to class each day as you may be called on to read or paraphrase it. A list of sample reading questions will be made available on the second day of class.

3. Midterm (Oct. 12) (15%) and final (December 16) (20%) papers relating course readings, films, and class discussions.

4. One research paper (10-20 pages) on a topic of your choice related to the course material: First copy (10%) due Oct. 26; Final copy due Dec. 5 (25%).

In this paper, you will combine library research with your own analysis on a topic of your choice related to the role of religion in Chinese society either historically or in the contemporary period. You are required to submit your proposed topic for the research paper *no later than Monday, Sept. 19 at 9 a.m.* by e-mail. A detailed list of guidelines for researching and writing the paper will be distributed on the first day of class.

Once the first copy is reviewed and graded, you will be scheduled for a fifteen-minute appointment with myself or John to get feedback. The final copy of the paper must follow our suggested revisions.

During the final week of classes, you will present a brief informal presentation of your research work to the class. This presentation will be worth 10% of the grade for the final paper.

Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's academic integrity policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of academic integrity policy. The presumptive penalty for a first instance of academic dishonesty by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. SU students are required to read an online summary of the university's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in

on MySlice. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.

Students with Disabilities / Special Needs

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), disabilityservices.syr.edu, located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call 315.443.4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue “Accommodation Authorization Letters” to students as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal is to create a learning environments that are useable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment or achievement, I invite any student to meet with me to discuss additional strategies beyond accommodations that may be helpful to your success.

Course Readings and Assignments

I. COURSE INTRODUCTION

Monday, Aug. 29

Outline of class; introduction of research papers

Wednesday, Aug. 31

The Three Teachings: Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism
(no assigned readings)

Wednesday, Sep. 7 *

- 1) Weller, Robert P. 1987. “Introduction.” In *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Edited and abridged by Gareth Fisher [BB].
- 2) Chau, *Miraculous Response*, pp. 59-72.

II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IN CHINESE SOCIETY

A. Cosmology, Fate, and Harmony

Monday, Sep. 12 *

- 1) Brokaw, Cynthia, “Supernatural Retribution and Human Destiny,” in Lopez, pp. 423-36.
- 2) Knapp, Ronald G. 1999. “Fengshui: Siting and Mystical Ecology.” In *China’s Living Houses: Folk Beliefs, Symbols, and Household Ornamentation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. Pp. 29-39 [BB].
- 3) Wang, Robin R. 2013. “Understanding of Yin Yang.” *Religion Compass* 7(6): 214-24 [BB].

B. The Imperial Metaphor: the Celestial Bureaucracy and the State

Wednesday, Sep. 14 *

- 1) Brokaw, Stephen, “Record of the Feng and Shan Sacrifices,” in Lopez, pp. 251-60.
- 2) Zito, Angela, “City Gods and their Magistrates,” in Lopez, pp. 72-81.
- 3) Wolf, Arthur P. 1974. “Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors.” In *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pp. 131-45 (Roman Numerals I and II only) [BB].

Monday, Sep. 19
RESEARCH PAPER WORKSHOP
No assigned readings

C. Popular Worship: Gods, Goddesses, and Ancestors

1. God and Goddess Worship

Wednesday, Sep. 21 *

- 1) Scott, Janet Lee. 2007. "The Practices of Paper Burning." In *For Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors: The Chinese Tradition of Paper Burning*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. Pp. 41-51 [BB].
- 2) Chau, pp. 77-95.
- 3) Film (in class): *Mazu: Taiwan's Guardian Goddess*.

Monday, Sep. 26 *

- 1) Yu, Chun-Fang, "A Sutra Promoting the White-Robed Guanyin as Giver of Sons," in Lopez, pp. 97-105.
- 2) Eberhard, Wolfram, ed. 1967. *Folktales of China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 100-16 [BB].

Wednesday, Sep. 28 *

2. Ancestor Worship

- 1) Stevenson, Daniel, trans. 2004. "How a Monk Freed His Mother from Hell," in *Buddhist Scriptures*, Donald S. Lopez, ed. New York: Penguin. Pp. 329-34 [BB].
- 2) Chau, pp. 129-42.

Monday, Oct. 3 *

D. Ghosts and Spirits

- 1) Hansen, Valerie, "The Law of the Spirits," in Lopez, pp. 284-92.
- 2) Kang, Xiaofei. 2005. "Sex with Foxes: Fantasy and Power in Traditional Chinese Stories." *River Gazette*. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University. p. 8 [BB].
- 3) Bosco, Joseph. 2007. "Young People's Ghost Stories in Hong Kong." *Journal of Popular Culture* 40(5): 785-807 [BB].

Wednesday, Oct. 5 *

E. Shamanism and Divination

- 1) DeBernardi, Jean, "Teachings of a Spirit Medium," in Lopez, pp. 229-38.
- 2) Potter, Jack M. 1974. "Cantonese Shamanism." In *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*. Arthur P. Wolf and Emily Ahern, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pp. 207-31 [BB].
- 3) Jordan, David K. 1972. "Divination" In *Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors: the Folk Religion of a Taiwanese Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 60-86. Available online at <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/scriptorium/gga/ggach04.html> (start from subheading "The *Kiō-á*").

Monday, Oct. 10 *

- 1) Eno, Robert, "Deities and Ancestors in Early Oracle Inscriptions," in Lopez, pp. 41-51.
- 2) Homola, Stéphanie. 2013. "Pursue Good Fortune and Avoid Calamity: The Practice and Status of Divination in Contemporary Taiwan." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 41(2): 124-38 only [BB].
- 3) Chau, pp. 99-108.

F. Institutionalized Religion and the Professional Priesthood

Wednesday, Oct. 12 *

- 1) Yao Xinzhong. 2000. "Confucianism and *ru*." In *An Introduction to Confucianism*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 16-21 [BB].
- 2) Welter, Albert, "Buddhist Ritual and the State," in Lopez, pp. 390-96.

MIDTERM PAPER DUE IN CLASS.

Monday, Oct. 17 *

- 1) Saso, Michael R. 1989. "The Chiao Ritual: An Emic Description." In *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press. Pp. 75-101 [BB]
SKIM MOSTLY.
- 2) Tsu, Y.Y. 1998. "Diary of a Chinese Buddhist Nun." In *The Chinese Way in Religion*, Jordan Paper and Lawrence G. Thompson, eds. New York: Wadsworth. Pp. 156-60 [BB].
- 3) Watson, James. 1985. "Funeral Specialists in Cantonese Society: Pollution, Performance, and Social Hierarchy." In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. Pp. 109-34 [BB].

Wednesday, Oct. 19 *

G. Sectarian Movements and Religious Communities

- 1) Shek, Richard. 2004. "Ethics and Polity: The Heterodoxy of Buddhism, Maitreyanism, and the Early White Lotus." In *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek, eds. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. Pp. 73-108 [BB].

II. RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

Monday, Oct. 24 *

A. The End of the Imperial Era and the Beginning of "Religion"

- 1) Goossaert, Vincent. 2008. "Republican Church Engineering: the National Religious Associations in 1912 China." In *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*. Mayfair Yang, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 209-32 [BB].
- 2) Chau, Adam Yuet. 2010. "Mao's Travelling Mangoes: Food as Relic in Revolutionary China." *Past and Present* Supplement 5: 256-75 [BB].

Wednesday, Oct. 26

Continued discussion of religion in Republican and Maoist-era China (no assigned readings).

RESEARCH PAPER FIRST DRAFT DUE.

Monday, Oct. 31 *

B. A Struggle for Revival

- 1) Chau, pp. 169-95; 211-39.

Wednesday, Nov. 2

C. Mediating Modernity

- 1) Fisher, Gareth. 2016. "Losing the Neighborhood Temple (Or Finding the Temple and Losing the Neighborhood): Transformations of Temple Space in Modern Beijing." In *Place/N o-Place in Urban Asian Religiosity*. Joanne P. Waghorne, ed. Springer Press. Pp. 109-30 [BB].
- 2) Dutournier, Guillaume and Ji Zhe. 2009. "Social Experimentation and 'Popular Confucianism': the Case of the Lujiang Cultural Education Centre." *China Perspectives* 4: 67-81 [BB].

Monday, Nov. 7 *

Guest Speaker: Prof. Robert J. Shepherd, George Washington University.
READINGS TO BE ANNOUNCED.

Wednesday, Nov. 9 *

- 1) Klein, Jakob A. 2016. "Buddhist Vegetarian Restaurants and the Changing Meanings of Meat in Urban China." *Ethnos* [online only]. Pp. 1-25 [BB].

Monday, Nov. 14 *

D. Religion on the Margins

- 1) Fleischer, Friederike. 2011. "For the Love of God: Finding Support in the Church-Community: a Case Study from China." *Religion, State and Society* 39(4): 443-59 [BB].
- 2) Zhang Yinong. 2012. "Between Nation and Religion: The Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Network in Post-Reform China." *Chinese Sociological Review* 45(1): 55-69 [BB].

Wednesday, Nov. 16 *

- 1) Johnson, Ian. 2004. "Turning the Wheel." In *Wild Grass: Three Stories of Change in Modern China*. New York: Pantheon Books. Pp. 185-200, 213-23, 252-92 [BB].

Monday, Nov. 21 and Wednesday, Nov. 23 – THANKSGIVING BREAK; NO CLASS.

Monday, Nov. 28

E. "Minority" Religion

- 1) Davis, *Song and Silence*, pp. 1-12, 17-23, 25-32, 49-60, 68-73.

Wednesday, Nov. 30

- 1) Davis, pp. 123-78.

Monday, Dec. 5 *

CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

RESEARCH PAPER FINAL COPY due in class

No Assigned Readings

Wednesday, Dec. 7

CLASS PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

No Assigned Readings

FINAL PAPER: Due Friday, Dec. 16 at 5 p.m. to Hall of Languages 501.