

# 34020 JAPANESE RELIGIONS I

## RELIGION IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

**INSTRUCTOR:** Raj Susai

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to the religious life of the Japanese people today. In a highly developed and cultured country, Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, folk religions, and new religions co-exist in harmony. The course presents the history and development of religious thought in Japan and provides students with the opportunity to experience the practical side of religion in context in Japan through field trips to a Shinto shrine, Buddhist temple, and a Zen monastery. Please note that auditing is not permitted for this course.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

1. General introduction to religion and an outline of religious thought in Japan and Japanese religions
2. Introduction to Shinto: Shinto religious thought, Shinto and the Japanese way of life, and the influence of Shinto on Japanese society
3. Introduction to Buddhism: Basic Buddhist principles and the Buddhist teachings
4. Major Buddhist schools: Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism; Chinese Buddhism
5. Introduction to Japanese Buddhism: Japanese Buddhism and its development through the centuries
6. Heian Buddhism, Tendai Buddhism, and philosophy
7. Pure Land Buddhism
8. The foundation of Kamakura Buddhism and its key features
9. New Buddhism and the birth of new religions in Japan; The second wave of new religions in Japan
10. Religious reform movements: Christianity and Buddhist renaissance
11. Mainstream Buddhism and new religions before and during World War II
12. Zen Buddhism: The Soto, Rinzai, and Obaku schools
13. Field trip to a Shinto shrine and a Buddhist temple
14. Postwar new religions and the future of established religion (Buddhism and Shinto) in Japan

### TEXTS

#### *Textbook*

Ichiro Hori et al. (eds.), *Japanese Religion: A Survey by the Agency for Cultural Affairs*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1981.

#### *Required Reading*

Mark R. Mullins et al. (eds.), *Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Selected Readings*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1993.

Masaharu Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion*. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1963.

Kiyomi Morioka, *Religion in Changing Japanese Society*. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975.

Shigeyoshi Murakami, *Japanese Religion in the Modern Century*, tr. H. Byron Earhart. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1980.

Noriyoshi Tamaru and David Reid (eds.), *Religion in Japanese Culture: Where Living Traditions Meet a Changing World*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1996.

#### *Supplementary Reading*

Thomas P. Kasulis, *Shinto: The Way Home*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Nobutaka Inoue (ed.), *Folk Beliefs in Modern Japan*, tr. Norman Havens. Contemporary Papers on Japanese Religion, vol. 3. Tokyo: Kokugakuin University, 1994.

Joseph M. Kitagawa and Alan L. Miller, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.

Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism*, vols. 1 & 2. Tokyo: Buddhist Books International, 1992, 1988.

Heinrich Dumoulin, *Understanding Buddhism: Key Themes*. New York: Weatherhill, 1994.

Yoshiro Tamura, *Japanese Buddhism: A Cultural History*. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 2000.  
D.T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1959.  
D.T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. London: Rider, 1953.  
D.T. Suzuki, *The Field of Zen*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.  
Antony Fernando, *Buddhism and Christianity: Their Inner Affinity*. Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Empire Press, 1983.  
David Reid, *New Wine: The Cultural Shaping of Japanese Christianity*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1991.  
Mark R. Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.  
Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism*. Delhi, India: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991.

#### **ASSESSMENT**

Class participation 20%; Mid-term reflection paper 30%; Final report 50%

The reflection paper is based on the material presented in class in the first half of the semester and reflects the student's own perspectives, thoughts, and reflections. The paper should not be longer than five pages (1,250 words). The final report should be about ten pages (2,500 words) in length. Report topics should be discussed with the instructor.