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

Required Reading

Supplementary Reading

**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.