

EAST 303: Religion in Modern China

Section 001, Winter 2018, TR 09:35 AM - 11:05 AM, Birks Building Room 105.

Instructor

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Course Overview

This course introduces religion in Mainland China from the end of the Qing Dynasty to the present. The aim is to give students an overall perspective of the role religious activities (and movements against religious groups) played in the development of modern China as well as issues relating to religion in contemporary China. It begins with a historical overview and then focuses on a different theme each week to consider the relationships that diverse religious practices have with politics, social life, urbanization, gender, ethnicity, media, and so on.

This is a lecture-based class and there is no participation grade, but discussion or questions in-class are welcomed. Lectures will expand on themes in the assigned readings and students are expected to read course material prior to lectures.

Outcomes

- Develop an understanding of the issues surrounding religion in modern China and be able to critically engage with these ideas.
- Read and analyze academic writing in terms of research questions, methodologies, and forms of argumentation.
- Write clear, concise, and well-structured responses to existing scholarly research.

Assessment

▫ In-Class Quiz (15%). February 1.

Based on readings and lectures up to and including January 30. The quiz will be made up of 25 short answer questions. See myCourses for study guide.

▫ Short Presentation (5%). Select a day from week five onward.

Following week four, the class will begin with a short presentation (around five minutes) from a student. There are two options for the presentation: 1) present a recent news item about religion in China, contrast how it is (or is not) presented in Chinese and non-Chinese journalism and the biases each present (see myCourses for list of potential news sources) or 2) present an object or activity related to Chinese religions found in Montreal and comment on how it relates to a topic or reading from class.

▫ Assignment One (20%). Due February 27.

Respond to two of three questions using citations from course readings. Each response should be 750-1000 words.

▫ **Assignment Two (20%). Due March 27**

Respond to two of three questions using citations from course readings. Each response should be 750-1000 words.

▫ **Take-Home Exam (40%). Exams will be available on April 5 and the deadline is set by the Examination Office.**

Respond to four of six questions using citations from course readings. Each response should be 750-1000 words.

Penalties

10% of the value of an assignment or the take-home exam will be subtracted for each day that the work is late, unless permission is obtained from the instructor before the due-date of the work. Under exceptional circumstances, alternative arrangements may be made. Presentations cannot be rescheduled unless permission is obtained from the instructor beforehand.

Undergraduate Grading and Grade Point Averages (GPA)

GRADES	Grade Points	Numerical Scale of Grades
A	4.0	85-100%
A-	3.7	80-84%
B+	3.3	75-79%
B	3.0	70-74%
B-	2.7	65-69%
C+	2.3	60-64%
C	2.0	55-59%
D(Conditional) Pass)	1.0	50-54%
F (Fail)	0	0-49%

DISE Undergraduate Grading Scheme with Suggested Criteria

A (exceptional): Expectations of the assignment have been surpassed and demonstrate creativity and originality. Work shows in-depth understanding and critical awareness of links between the individual assignment and other class readings and activities, in line with the goals and major themes of the course itself and goes beyond the course content and material. Language and format of the work are exceedingly well-structured, eloquent and error free.

A- (very good): Understandings and insights in the work are apparent, and there is evidence of critical engagement with the subject matter. Expectations are met, and some are surpassed. The language and format of the work are very well-structured and error free.

B+ (good): Expectations of the assignment have been met. Understandings and insights are apparent, and there is some evidence of critical engagement. The language and format of the work are well structured but may contain a few errors.

B (acceptable): Basic expectations of the assignment have been mostly met. Understandings, insights and evidence of critical engagement are somewhat apparent. The organization and structure of the work lack consistency and the work contains more than a few language errors.

B- (adequate): Some expectations of the assignment have been met. Work lacks organizational structure, logical coherence and clarity with frequent language errors.

C+ (problematic): Expectations of the assignment have been inconsistently addressed. Supporting ideas/content of work are vague. Work is disorganized and formatting is awkward. Numerous errors in language are present causing confusion at times.

C (very problematic): Expectations of the assignment have been poorly met. Misunderstandings are evident throughout. Work exhibits confusion and language contains numerous errors.

D (marginal): Expectations of the assignment have not been met. Serious misinterpretations are represented in content. Structure and organization are poor. Language errors are present throughout.

F (unacceptable): Expectations of the assignment have not been met. Work exhibits a profound lack of understanding. Structure and organization are absent. Numerous errors in language are present and interfere with comprehension throughout.

Assigned Readings

Assigned readings are available on the course's myCourses page.

Schedule

Week One. Introduction to the Course and Religion in China

Jan 9: Introduction to Course. No Readings.

Jan 11: Film screening: *Li Manshan: Portrait of a Folk Daoist*, directed by Stephen Jones (2017).

Week Two. Historical Background, Part One: The End of the Qing Dynasty and Republican China

Jan 16: □ Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 17-65.

Jan 18: □ Lu Xun, "A Madman's Diary," in *The Big Red Book of Modern Chinese Literature: Writings from the Mainland in the Long Twentieth Century*, edited by Yunte Huang (W.W. Norton and Company, 2017), pp. 15-26
□ Justin R. Ritzinger, "The Awakening of Faith in Anarchism: A Forgotten Chapter in the Chinese Buddhist Encounter with Modernity," *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 15.2 (2014): 224-243.

Week Three. Historical Background, Part Two: The Communist Revolution and Maoist China

Jan 23: □ Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 139-198

Jan 25: □ Stephen Jones, *Daoist Priests of the Li Family: Ritual Life in Village China* (Three Pines Press, 2017), pp. 93-138.
□ Liao Yiwu, "The Fengshui Master" and "The Abbot," *The Corpse Walker: Real-Life Stories, China from the Bottom Up* (Anchor Books, 2009), pp. 61-92.

Week Four: Policy and Classification

Jan 30: □ Jason Ananda Josephson, "The Invention of Religions in East Asia" in *The Routledge Handbook of Religions in Asia*, edited by Bryan S. Turner and Oscar Salemink (Routledge, 2014).
□ Charlotte Gao. "Chinese Communist Party Vows to 'Sinicize Religions' in China," *The Diplomat*, October 24, 2017, <<https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/chinese-communist-party-vows-to-sinicize-religions-in-china>>.
□ James W. Tong, "The New Religious Policy in China: Catching up with Systemic Reforms" *Asian Survey*, 50.5 (2010): pp. 859-887.

Feb 1: **IN-CLASS QUIZ**

Week Five: Management, Professionalization, and "Evil Cults"

Feb 6: □ Yang Der-ruey, "Revolution of Temporality: The Modern Schooling of Daoist Priests in Shanghai at the Turn of the Twenty-Fire Century," in *Daoism in the Twentieth Century: Between Eternity and Modernity*, edited by David A Palmer and Xun Liu (University of California Press, 2012).
□ Shun-hing Chan, "Changing Church-State Relations in Contemporary China: The Case of the Fengxiang Diocese," *Chinese Sociological Review*, 45.2 (2012-13): pp. 65-77.

Feb 8:

- Benjamin Penny, "Animal Spirits, Karmic Retribution, Falungong, and the State," in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, edited by Mayfair Yang (University of California Press, 2008), pp. 135-154.
- Emily Dunn, "Reincarnated Religion? The Eschatology of the Church of Almighty God in Comparative Perspective," *Studies in World Christianity* 22.3 (2016): 216–233.
- Tom Phillips, "Cambridge University censorship U-turn is censored by China." *The Guardian*, August 22, 2017, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/22/cambridge-university-censorship-u-turn-china>>.

Week Six. Rural Religious Life

Feb 13:

- Wai Lun Tam, "Communal worship and festivals in Chinese villages," in *Chinese Religious Life*, edited by David A. Palmer, Glenn Shive, and Philip L. Wickeri (Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Watch: *Bored in Heaven*, directed by Kenneth Dean (2011) [see myCourses for viewing options, sections of the film will be shown in class].
- Cora Dean and Kenneth Dean, "Making Bored in Heaven: A Film about Ritual Sensation," *Visual Anthropology Review* 30.1 (2014): 50-61.

Feb 15:

- Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), pp. 172-198.
- Wu Ka-ming, *Reinventing Chinese Tradition: The Cultural Politics of Late Socialism* (University of Illinois Press, 2015), pp. 122-146.

Week Seven. Urban Development

Feb 20:

- Vincent Gooseaert, "Territorial Cults and the Urbanization of the Chinese World," *Handbook of Religion and the Asian City: Aspiration and Urbanization in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Peter van der Veer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).
- Daniel Benjamin Abramson, "Places for the gods: urban planning as orthopraxy and heteropraxy in China," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29 (2011): pp. 67-88.

Feb 22:

- Ian Johnson, "My Beijing: The Sacred City," *The New York Times*, May 1, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/01/travel/beijing-china-history-sacred-city-temples-culture.html?_r=0>.
- Gareth Fisher, "Losing the Neighborhood Temple (Or Finding the Temple and Losing the Neighborhood): Transformations of Temple Space in Modern Beijing," in *Place/No-Place in Urban Asian Religiosity*, edited by Joanne Punzo Waghorne (Singapore: Springer, 2016).
- Liu Peng, "House Churches: A Review of the Beijing Shouwang Church Incident," in *Religious Diversity in Chinese Thought*, edited by Perry Schidt-Leukel and Joachim Gentz (Palgrave-MacMillan, 2013).

Week Eight. China's "Crisis of Morality": The Return of Confucius and Religious Charities

Feb 27: **FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE**

- Anthony DeBlasi, "Selling Confucius: The Negotiated Return of Tradition in Post-Socialist China," in *The Sage Returns: Confucian Revival in Contemporary China*, edited by Kenneth J. Hammond and Jeffrey L. Richey (State University of New York Press, 2015).
- Shufang Wu, "The Revival of Confucianism and the CCP's Struggle for Cultural Leadership: a content analysis of the People's Daily, 2000-2009," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23.89 (2014), pp. 971-991.

Mar 1:

- Robert Weller, "Religion, Ritual, and the Public Good in China," in *Confucianism and Spiritual Traditions in Modern China and Beyond* (Brill, 2011).
- Keping Wu, "Buddhist and Protestant Philanthropies in Contemporary Southeast China: Negotiating the 'Grey Zone,' *Religion and the Politics of Development*, edited by Philip Fountain, Robin Bush, and R. Michael Fenner (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Mar 5-9 Study Break

Week Nine. Gender

Mar 13:

- C. Julia Huang, Elena Valussi, and David A. Palmer, "Gender and Sexuality," *Chinese Religious Life*, edited by David A. Palmer, Glenn Shive, and Philip L. Wickeri (Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Mayfair Yang, "Shamanism and Spirit Possession in Chinese Modernity: Some Preliminary Reflections on a Gendered Religiosity of the Body," *Review of Religion and Chinese Society* 2 (2015), pp. 51-86.

Mar 15:

- Megan Bryson, "Baijie and the Bai: Gender and Ethnic Religion in Dali, Yunnan," *Asian Ethnology*, 72.1 (2013), 3-31.
- Avron Boretz, *Gods, Ghosts, and Gangsters: Ritual Violence, Martial Arts, and Masculinity on the Margins of Chinese Society*, (Hawai'i, 2011), pp. 87-114.

Week Ten. Ethnicity, Islam, and Tibetan Buddhism

Mar 20:

- Dru C. Gladney, "Islam in China: State Policing and Identity Politics," in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, edited by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank (Stanford University Press, 2009).
- Qiangqiang Luo and Joel Andreas, "Using Religion to Resist Rural Dispossession: A Case Study of a Hui Muslim Community in North-west China," *The China Quarterly*, 226 (2016): pp. 477-498.
- Josh Chin and Clément Bürge, "Twelve Days in Xinjiang: How China's Surveillance State Overwhelms Daily Life," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 19, 2017, <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/twelve-days-in-xinjiang-how-chinas-surveillance-state-overwhelms-daily-life-1513700355>> [including "Life Inside

China's Total Surveillance State" video].

Mar 22:

- Clare Harris, "The Potala Palace: Remembering to Forget in Contemporary Tibet," *South Asian Studies*, 20.1 (2013): pp. 61-75.
- Alison Denton Jones, "Contemporary Han Chinese Involvement in Tibetan Buddhism: A Case Study from Nanjing," *Social Compass*, 58.4 (2011): pp. 540-553.

Week Eleven. Popular Media

Mar 27: **SECOND ASSIGNMENT DUE**

- Sean Macdonald, "Animation as Intertextual Cinema: Nezha Naohai (Nezha Conquers the Dragon King)," *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10.3 (2015): 205-221.
- Watch: *Nezha Conquers the Dragon King* 哪吒鬧海 (1979), directed by Yan Dingxian, Wang Shuchen, and Xu Jingda. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0SKGg8xOPs>>.
- Qingjiang Yao and Daniel A Stout, "China's Official Media Portrayal of Religion (1996-2005): Policy Change in a Desecularizing Society," *Journal of Media and Religion*, 10.1 (2011): pp. 39-50

Mar 29:

- Samuel Lengen, "Beyond the Conceptual Framework of Oppression and Resistance: Creativity, Religion and the Internet in China," in *Religion and Media in China Insights and Case Studies from the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong*, edited by Stefania Travagnin (Routledge, 2017).
- Weishan Huang, "WeChat Together about the Buddha: the Construction of Sacred Space and Religious Community in Shanghai through Social media," in *Religion and Media in China Insights and Case Studies from the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong*, edited by Stefania Travagnin (Routledge, 2017).

Mar 30 - Apr 2 Easter Break

Week Twelve. The Environment

Apr 5:

- Prasenjit Duara, *The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 195-238.
- James Miller, "Is Green the New Red?" *Nature and Culture*, 8.3 (2013): pp. 249-264.

Week Thirteen: The Future

Apr 10:

- Ian Johnson, "Chasing the Yellow Demon," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 76.1 (2017): pp. 5-24.
- Stephan Feuchtwang, "Chinese Civilization in the Present," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, 13.2 (2012): pp. 112-127.

Apr 12: Discussion of take-home final exam.

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