

ASN 4510 / ASN 5120

DYNAMICS OF ASIA / JAPANESE RELIGION AND SOCIETY

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AIMS

This course provides an in-depth study of the various ways that the religious traditions of Japan, especially Shinto and Buddhism, have influenced the nation's intellectual and cultural history. The course will examine the development of religion in relation to the sequence of major epochs in Japanese history. Special emphasis will be given to the impact of religion on: philosophy, including writings on metaphysics and morality; social behavior, such as suicide and the relation between individuality and community; political movements, including millenarian and reform groups; and the literary and fine arts, such as monogatari (narratives) and medieval poetry and painting. In addition, the course will consider the themes of the relation between the intellectual approach of the philosophers and poets and the folk religion of festivals and shrine worship, as well as tradition and modernization, nativism and foreign influences.

We will also consider various methodologies for interpreting the periods of transition in Japanese history and their relation to the development of cultural trends—for example, from the classical to medieval, and the early modern to the modern periods. In recent studies, some commentators have called into question the conventional, static model of change and highlighted themes of continuity and linkage across the boundaries of historical epochs.

The following is a list of major topics, which will be covered for approximately two to three weeks each: First, we will discuss the **Ancient period** (Pre-Nara, or the early centuries of Japanese civilization up to the eighth century) -- This is the formative period of Japanese culture marked by the emergence of Shinto and the introduction of Buddhism from China and Korea. We will discuss the role of Shinto as both fertility cult and thaumaturgy for the legitimation and protection of the state, as well as the influence of continental culture on Japan. Then we will cover four main periods.

1. **Classical period** (Nara and Heian, or eighth through twelfth centuries) -- This is the flourishing of Japanese aesthetics marked by the integration of native poetry and Buddhist philosophy of time, death, and impermanence. The course examines how religion influenced the literature and lifestyles associated with the Tale of Genji and other examples of Court-related art based on a profound sensitivity to the fleeting nature of existence.

2. **Medieval period** (Kamakura and Muromachi, or thirteenth through sixteenth centuries) -- This is the period of continuing civil warfare during which Zen Buddhism emerged as the leading religious institution influencing both military affairs and the arts. The course analyzes the role of Zen in poetry, tea ceremony, gardening, swordfighting, etc. in relation to other Buddhist reform sects, including Pure Land and Nichiren.

3. **Early modern period** (Tokugawa, 1600-1868) -- This is the period of the unified Tokugawa shogunate and the isolation of Japan from contact with foreign cultures during which a revival of Shinto and state-supported Confucianism came to be dominant while Buddhist influence receded. The course discusses the development of the samurai code as a syncretic movement and the role of millenarianism in the "floating world" of townsman culture.

4. **Modern period** (Meiji and beyond, or 1868 to the present) -- This period encompasses the restoration of the imperial government in connection with nativist trends in Shinto before World War II and the postwar emergence of so-called New Religions in response to the decline of both Shinto and Buddhism. The course considers the impact of modernization and secularization on religious life in Japan today.

REQUIRED TEXTS

JAPANESE WARRIOR MONKS, Stephen Turnbull, Osprey Publishing
THE ZEN POETRY OF DOGEN, Steven Heine, Dharma Communications Press
FOUR MAJOR PLAYS OF CHIKAMATSU, Donald Keene, Columbia U Press
SHINTO: THE WAY HOME, Tom Kasulis, University of Hawaii Press
UGETSU, Keiko I. McDonald, Rutgers University Press
THE TEMPLE OF THE GOLDEN PAVILION, Yukio Mishima, Everyman's Library

GRAD STUDENTS ARE ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOWING – Assignments to be discussed

EMPIRE OF SIGNS, Ronald Barthes, Hill and Wang
LAST WRITINGS, Nishida Kitaro, U of Hawaii Press

SCHEDULE (by week)

- 8/28 Overview
- 9/4 Classical Period (Heian): World of Shining Prince, Chapters 4 & 5 (Handout)
- 9/11 Transition to Medieval Period: Japanese Warrior Monks
- 9/18 Medieval Period (Kamakura): Zen Poetry of Dogen
- 9/25 Medieval Period: Zen Poetry of Dogen
- 10/2 Medieval Period: Shinto
- 10/9 Medieval Period: Shinto

MIDTERM EXAM

- 10/16 Late Medieval Period: Ugetsu
- 10/23 Late Medieval Period: Ugetsu
- 10/30 Early Modern Period (Tokugawa): Chikamatsu
- 11/6 Tokugawa Period: Chikamatsu

PAPER TOPICS DUE

- 11/13 Modern Period: The Temple of the Golden Pavilion
- 11/20 Modern Period: The Temple of the Golden Pavilion
- 11/27 Research Presentations
- 12/4 Research Presentations

PAPERS DUE AND FINAL EXAM

REQUIREMENTS

1. Research Project on Japanese Society and Religion from Modern or Pre-Modern period (40 percent) --
 - a. paper (15 pages grad, 12 pages undergrad)
 - b. it examines and uses textual/literary, social scientific, or fieldwork approaches
 - c. power point final presentation
2. Midterm and Final Exams (20 percent each)
3. Class Presentations and Overall Performance (20 percent) – SEE BELOW

NOTE

- FIU Plagiarism** guidelines will be strictly enforced.
- Failure to cite sources** properly, especially an over-reliance on internet sources, will cause a paper to be evaluated accordingly. When in doubt, ASK show me a draft.

Grade Scale

92-100 A, 90-91 A-
88-89 B+, 82-87 B, 80-81 B-
78-79 C+, 72-77 C, 70-71 C-
60-69 D

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION POLICY STRICTLY ENFORCED

A constructive classroom atmosphere where there is a genuine give-and-take between a teacher and student is the most valued aspect of the educational process. This takes place 95% of the time. However, to ensure that this takes place 100% of the time, the following **NO EXCEPTION** policies are in effect:

- 1) In a class that meets once a week, **all students are expected to attend every class for the full class period.**
- 2) Coming more than a few minutes late or leaving early **will be counted as an absence.**
- 3) Any absence that is not a documented medical or legal item is “unexcused.”
- 4) **More than one unexcused absence will directly affect the final course grade, up to a full letter grade deduction. NO WARNING period (this is the warning!) No exceptions!**
- 5) **Leaving class early without a proper excuse will automatically be counted as a double absence (this includes leaving at break).**
- 6) Any behavior that is distracting, disruptive, or disrespectful will also have a double deduction.
- 7) **Assignments not completed on time will be accepted only by permission of the instructor.**

GUIDELINES FOR CLASS PRESENTATIONS

- 1) BE SURE TO Use a “critical” methodology—
 - a) Do **NOT** merely summarize!
 - b) Highlight main issues only in critical, constructive fashion.
 - c) **Must consult outside source(s) that are SUBSTANTIAL** (not just internet).
 - d) Pose questions for discussion (though do not necessarily try to lead this).
 - e) **TIME LIMITS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED –**
 - f) DO **NOT** READ POWER POINT! – USE IT AS A TOOL NOT A CRUTCH

JAPANESE RELIGION AND POLITICS

HISTORICAL EPOCH	RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION	POLITICAL IMPACT	THEORY/ PRACTICE
<u>Pre-History</u> Pre-Nara, -792	Primal Shinto Intro of Buddhism	Theurgy and thaumaturgy	Ritualized poetry
<u>Classical</u> Nara-Heian, 792-1185	Buddhism as state church Shinto assimilated	Supports court Nobility	Esoteric rituals Lyrical poetry (<i>Tale of Genji</i>)
<u>Medieval</u> Kamakura- Muromachi 1185-1600	Zen monasticism Pure Land devotion	"Warrior Zen"	Zen martial, fine and literary arts
<u>Shogunate</u> Tokugawa 1600-1868	Neo-Confucianism Shinto revival Buddhism exploited	Supports shogun's authority	Samurai Code Philosophical clubs
<u>End of shogunate</u>	Millennialism prophecies	"End of world" ancient shrines	Pilgrimages to
<u>Modern</u> Meiji, etc. 1868-1945	State Shinto separated from Buddhism	New Imperialism	Emperor "worship"
<u>Postwar</u> Showa-Heisei 1945-	New Religions (i.e., Soka Gakkai) Secularization	Traditionalism Fundamentalism	"Prosperity theology" Healing cults

KAMAKURA ERA "NEW BUDDHISM" (SHIN BUKKYÔ) SECTS

School	Sect	Founder	Main Teaching	Cultural Legacy
ZEN	RINZAI	EISAI	KÔAN STUDIES	ARTS AND BUSHIDÔ
	SÔTÔ	DÔGEN	JUST-SITTING	"FARMERS' ZEN"
PURE LAND	JODO	HONEN	NEMBUTSU	PIETISM
	JODO-SHIN (divided into East and West branches)	SHINRAN	THANKS-GIVING	DENY CELIBACY
	JISHU	IPPEN	ODORI	EVANGELISM
NICHIREN	NICHIREN SHU	NICHIREN	LOTUS SUTRA	NATIONALISM
	[SOKA GAKKAI] (modern movement)		CHANT	NEW RELIGION
RITSU		EISON	DISCIPLINE	SUPPORT OUTCASTS

OTHER KAMAKURA RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS

"Way of Arts" (Poetry, Calligraphy, Noh Theater) -- contemplative ideals of Sabi/Wabi, Yûgen

Hijiri (Wandering, Itinerant) Monks -- proselytizing and fund-raising

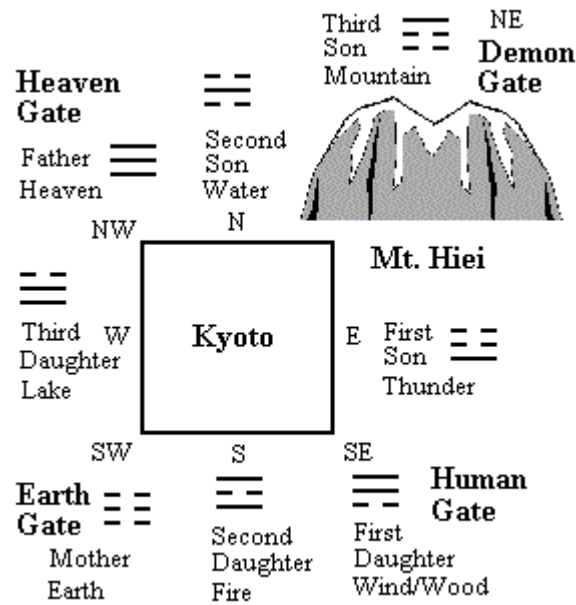
Yamabushi Practices -- extreme repentance and trance

Chômei's "An Account of My Hut" -- poetry and politics of reclusion

Myôe's "Dream" Poetry -- phantasmagoria and meditation

Esoteric Cults (Tachikawa, Dakini) -- gender/sexuality and syncretism

Popular Morality Tale Literature (Setsuwa Bungaku) -- the ethics of karmic retribution



The arrangement of the trigrams around the compass reflects Chinese *geomancy* (*feng shui*), i.e. the determination of the auspicious or inauspicious situation and orientation of places (cities, temples, houses, or graves). Chinese cities are properly laid out as squares, with gates in the middle of the sides facing due north, east, south, and west. The diagonal directions are then regarded as special "spirit" gates: northwest is the Heaven Gate; southwest the Earth Gate; southeast the Human Gate; and northeast the Demon Gate. The northeast was thus the direction from which malevolent supernatural influences might particularly be expected. The situation of the old Japanese capital city of Kyôto is particularly fortunate. To the northeast is a conspicuous, twin-peaked mountain, Mt. Hiei (corresponding to the Mountain trigram), which is crowned with a vast establishment of Buddhist temples to guard the Demon Gate. Later, Tôkyô (originally called Edo) was laid out with temples to the northeast on rising ground in the Ueno district; but both the ground and the temples are now entirely surrounded and obscured by the sprawl of Tôkyô.