RELIGION IN CHINESE SOCIETY

Credits: 3
Instructor: Prof. Zhang Chongfu
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Course Description
This course provides an introduction to the history and functions of religion in Chinese society, focusing on five religious traditions: Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Islam and popular religion. It covers not only religious and ethical ideas but also the practices of each tradition.

Field trips to temples, churches and mosques, and visiting some famous Buddhist monks and Taoists are part of the course.

Major Topics are the followings:
- Diffused and Institutional Religion in Chinese society
- Ancestor worship in the integration of the family
- Ritual and Belief in the State Cult
- State control of religion
- Religion and political rebellion
- Chinese religious traditions
- Confucianism as a ritual religion
- Immortality and Mysticism: Taoism as salvation religion
- The Buddhist Conquest of China
- Islam in China
- Popular religion and the great tradition
- Religion under socialism in China
- Religion in contemporary China


Suggested Readings:
1989 (student reading). A very readable short book, available in paperback. Although not written strictly from a sociological or anthropological point of view, nevertheless an appropriate text to assign.

- Anthropologists and historians deal with a key area of religion and ritual in China.

Course Requirement
1. Attendance is mandatory and punctuality is important. Two excusable absences are acceptable. Starting from the 3rd time, 1 point will be deducted from the total points for each additional absence.
2. No make-up exam will be granted without prior permission of the instructor.

Homework
Homework is assigned for each unit and must be submitted at the next meet time. Failing to complete and hand in the homework will negatively affect the final result of the course.

Exam
One exam for this course will be given in the last class of the semester. The exam is basically on the subject matters covered in the course.

Grading
Attendance & Participation: 10%
Homework: 30%
Exam: 60%

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Note:
No class between 1 – 7th of October during China’s National Day Holidays
Arrangements for field trips are to be announced.

RELIGION IN CHINESE SOCIETY
COURSE SCHEDULE
Feb. – Jun., 2012

Instructor: Prof. Zhang Chongfu

The following course schedule is provided on a unit (subject) base rather than time sequence for
UNIT I
Introduction to the Course
Diffused and Institutional Religion in Chinese society
To prepare students for a better understanding of the Chinese Diffused and Institutional Religion in Chinese society, some basic information on China is needed. Thus the following homework is assigned.

UNIT II
Ancestor worship in the integration of the family
Homework: to read the chapter II “Religion in the integration of the family” (P.28 - 57, Religion in Chinese Society) and write an abstract of the reading. (maximum words: 300)

UNIT III
Ritual and Belief in the State Cult
Homework:
2. Give a brief description of the Mount Taishan.

UNIT IV
State control of religion
Reading: Chapter VIII “State control of religion” (P.127 - 143, Religion in Chinese Society).
Homework:
1. What are the relationship between government and religion?
2. Why Chinese religion always under governments control?

UNIT V
Religion and political rebellion
Reading: Chapter IX “Religion and political rebellion” (P.218- 243, Religion in Chinese Society).
Homework: write an abstract of the reading. (maximum words: 300)

UNIT VI
Chinese religious traditions
Suggested Reading: Part one: “the indigenous tradition” (Julia Ching, Chinese Religion, Orbis Books, 1993)
Homework: write a short paper about the Chinese religious traditional. (maximum words: 300)
UNIT VII
Confucianism as a ritual religion
Reading: Chapter 3: “morality and rituals: Confucianism as religious humanism” (Julia Ching, Chinese Religion, Orbis Books, 1993)
Homework: Write a short paper about your comments on Confucianism. (maximum words: 300)

UNIT VIII
Immortality and Mysticism: Taoism as salvation religion
Reading: Chapter 6: “Taoism as salvation religion” (Julia Ching, Chinese Religion, Orbis Books, 1993)
Homework:
1. Did you learn Tai Chi or Martial arts?
2. Please the relation ship between Martial arts and Taoism?

UNIT IX
The Buddhist Conquest of China
Suggested Readings:
Reading: Chapter 8: “Buddhism becomes Chinese” (Julia Ching, Chinese Religion, Orbis Books, 1993)
Homework: write a short paper about your comments on “Buddhism becomes Chinese”? (maximum words: 300)

UNIT X
Islam in China
Reading: Chapter 9: “Islam and other middle eastern religion” (Julia Ching, Chinese Religion, Orbis Books, 1993)
Homework:
1. Please point out which minorities believe in Islam in China?
2. Did you visit any Moslem restaurants? Please describe the food you ate in the Moslem restaurant.

UNIT XI
Popular religion and the great tradition
Reading: Chapter 12 “Popular religion” (Julia Ching, Chinese Religion, Orbis Books, 1993)
Homework: Is Taoism a popular religion?

UNIT XII
Religion under socialism in China
Homework: Write a short paper about Marxism and Chinese religion. (maximum words: 300)

UNIT XII
Religion in contemporary China
Reading: Essential bibliographies can be found at
Homework: Please write a paper about the resurgence of traditional religions in contemporary China. (maximum words: 300)

Notes:
1. The schedule is flexible and subject to change so as to meet the individual needs of students.
2. Field trips are to be arranged. Dates for trips will be announced after the confirmation of the administration of the Office of Overseas Students.
3. The last day of the semester (Wednesday, Dec. 13th) is for the final examination.