



## ASIA\_V 110 Introduction to Religions in Asia

2025 Winter

Dr. Jessica Main

### Short Description

This course focuses on major religious traditions that have played an important role in Asia and introduces key aspects of religion: ritual, philosophy, history, hagiography, views of time and the world, as well as typical features of the texts and social structures associated with a given tradition. We will read religious texts and academic works, introducing key ideas and methods in religious studies.

We begin by studying the early religions of China (Yellow River) and South Asia (Indus River). Then, we explore major traditions like Daoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. In the medieval period, we look at the spread of Buddhism in East Asia, shamanism in East and North Asia (including Shintō), and the growth of devotional practices in Sufi Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism in South Asia. The course ends with a look at modern and indigenous religions, including those of the Ainu and Karen peoples.

**Mode of Delivery:** Online. All lectures are delivered synchronously using Zoom and Discord (Zoom for audiovisual, Discord for text chat). Zoom recordings will be posted.

### Sample Readings

Jones, Lindsay, ed. 2005. Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition, 15 Volumes. Macmillan Reference USA. (the "OED" of religion)

Riggs, Thomas, ed. 2006. Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices, 3 Volumes. Religions and Denominations. Gale.

Buswell, Robert E., ed. 2004. Encyclopedia of Buddhism, 2 Volumes. Macmillan Reference.

### Assignments

Quizzes and Instructor Check-ins | 10

Reading Responses | 35

Primary Source Analysis | 20

Discussion Portfolio | 15

This is an abridged sample syllabus. Information is subject to change.  
Full syllabus will be distributed to registered students when term begins.