Chinese Religions 中國宗教 (Rel 3318)

Prof. Mario Poceski (Religion Department, University of Florida)

Class Time & Location
Tue 3:00–4:55 pm and Thu 4:05–4:55, AND 21.

Office Hours & Contact Information
Thu 2:30–4:00 pm, and by appointment, 132 Anderson Hall.
(352) 392-1625x242; mpoceski@ufl.edu; www.clas.ufl.edu/users/mpoceski.

Course Description
The course is a comprehensive historical survey of the main religious traditions in China, including Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and popular religion. Through lectures, discussions, and reading of select primary and secondary sources, we will explore the formulations and subsequent transformations of key beliefs, doctrines, practices, and institutions that characterized specific religious traditions. We will also examine the patterns of interaction among different traditions and the general character of religious life in traditional and modern China.

Prerequisites
There are no formal prerequisites, although some prior knowledge of Chinese history or religion will be helpful. No knowledge of the Chinese language is required.

Course Format
This is primarily a lecture course, but students are encouraged (and expected) to engage in class discussions and critical analysis of the course materials.

Requirements
- Class attendance, participation, and (advance) reading of the assigned materials.
- Five quizzes (20% of the final grade).
- Two exams (each 35% of the final grade).
- Symposium report (10% of the final grade), due 2/14.

Required Texts
- Ching, Julia. Chinese Religions.¹
- Sommer, Deborah, ed. Chinese Religion: An Anthology of Sources.
- Poceski, Mario. Introducing Chinese Religions (Ch 2–6).²
- Lopez, Donald, ed. Religions of China in Practice (Ch 11 & 34).

Use of the Online e-Learning System
The syllabus and other course information will be posted online via UF’s e-Learning system. To access it, go to the e-Learning Support Systems homepage [http://lss.at.ufl.edu/]. Students must have an active GatorLink ID to access Vista, which can be obtained at the GatorLink website [http://gatorlink.ufl.edu].

¹ The first two textbooks are available from the Goerings Book Store (located on NW 1717, 1st Ave; tel: 377-3703).
² The relevant chapters from Poceski’s volume will be distributed directly to the students in e-book format, while the two selections from the Lopez volume are available via Course Reserves.

Poceski—Chinese Religions Syllabus
Lecture Topics and Course Schedule
(Tentative and subject to change)

**Week 1: 1/8 & 1/10**
1. Introduction to the Course
   Ching 1–12

**Week 2: 1/15 & 1/17**
2. Earliest Forms of Religious Life in China
   Ching 15–50; Sommer 3–16, 21–30

**Week 3: 1/22 & 1/24**
3. Confucius and the Classical Confucian Tradition
   Poceski, Ch. 2; Sommer 31–48, 55–70; (optional: Ching 51–84)

**Week 4: 1/29 & 1/31**
4. Early Texts and the Emergence of Religious Daoism
   Poceski, Ch. 3; Sommer 71–83 (optional: Ching 85–101)

**Week 5: 2/5 & 2/7**
No lecture: Symposium on Chinese Buddhism (Thu & Fri)
Video: Confucius (Tue)

**Week 6: 2/12 & 2/14**
5. Daoist Traditions and Practices
   Poceski, Ch. 4; Sommer 149–51, 199–203; Lopez 166–79; (optional: Ching 102–18)

**Week 7: 2/19 & 2/21**
6. Spread and Flourishing of Buddhism in China
   Poceski, Ch. 5; Sommer 119–43; (optional: Ching 121–36)

**Week 8: 2/26 & 2/28**
Exam 1 (Thu)
Video: Buddhism in China (Tue)

**Week 9: 3/4 & 3/6**
7. Schools and Practices of Chinese Buddhism
   Poceski, Ch. 6; Sommer 155–68; (optional: Ching 137–52)

**Week 10: 3/11 & 3/13**
No classes: spring break

**Week 11: 3/18 & 3/20**
8. Later Transformations of Confucianism
   Ching 153–69; Sommer 169–75, 187–96

**Week 12: 3/25 & 3/27**
9. Popular Religion
   Ching 205–220; Sommer 239–46; Lopez 423–36

**Week 13: 4/1 & 4/3**
10. Islam and Christianity in China
    Ching 170–201

**Week 14: 4/8 & 4/10**
11. Religious Life in Modern China
    Ching 221–30; Sommer 281–316

**Week 15: 4/15 & 4/17**
12. Contemporary Beliefs and Practices
    Sommer 331–348; video: To the Land of Bliss

**Week 16: 4/22**
Exam 2
**Grading**

- The final grade will be primarily based on the course requirements, but note that poor attendance or inappropriate behavior can lead to a failing grade (see below).
- Grades will be computed on this scale: A = 100–91%; B+ = 90.5–87%; B = 86.5–81%; C+ = 80.5–77%; C = 76.5–71%; D+ = 70.5–67%; D = 66.5–60.5%; E = 60% or less.

**Attendance**

- **Attendance is mandatory** for all students, starting with the first day of classes. Students who have problems with class attendance or punctuality should think twice before enrolling in this course.
- Valid excuses for missed classes must be submitted in writing and in a timely manner, along with pertinent documentation (such as a note from a doctor). Written excuses for planned absences (such as participation in athletic meetings or religious observances, for example) must be submitted in advance.
- In case of excessive absences from class, students will be prohibited from further attendance and given failing grades. After the first three (3) missed hours (regardless of whether they are excusable or not), each subsequent unexcused hour will lead to a 2% reduction of the final grade. Students who miss more than a total of seven (7) hours of class instruction will automatically receive a failing grade.
- Coming late, leaving early, being inattentive, and other forms of disruptive behavior can be counted as unexcused absences. (For more on the university’s attendance policies, see http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html).

**Exams**

- **No make-up exams** will be given, except in documented instances of illness or other emergency, in which case the student must directly contact the instructor before the exam, if feasible, or as soon as possible.
- If any student has a valid reason to request rescheduling of an exam—such as observance of a religious holiday—he/she must contact the instructor in person and make suitable arrangements one week before the examination. Failure to act in accord with these instructions will lead to a failing grade.
- The quizzes will not have a regular schedule and will be given without an advance warning. They will include the readings for that week, so students should come to class prepared to be examined on them. Remember, the readings are not optional. There will be no make-up quizzes.
- Students who are late will not be able to take the quiz and will have to wait outside until it has ended. Be considerate of your fellow students and the professor.
- The quiz with the worst score will not be counted for the final grade.
- Students should take all exams seriously and bear in mind that they should not count on having an opportunity to do additional work for an extra credit or a better grade.

**Guidelines for the Written Assignment**

- The report on the symposium on Chinese Buddhism held at UF should be 2–3 typed pages (1.5 spacing) and should follow standard academic format. Additional guidelines for the writing assignment will be given in class.
• A hard copy of the written assignment must be submitted in class on the due date, at the latest. You can also leave a copy of your paper in the instructor’s mailbox at the Dept. of Religion office any time prior to the deadline.
• **No late submissions** will be accepted under any circumstances; no other form of submission, such as emailing the paper, is acceptable.

**Other Notices**

• A student who has a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Note that the student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor, and that all arrangements for changes pertaining to the exams must be made one week in advance.
• Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties. For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure (posted online by the Dean of Students Office).
• Any form of disruptive and uncivil behavior in the classroom that adversely affects others and is contrary to the pursuit of knowledge will not be tolerated. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to: monopolizing class discussion, talking with someone, making late entrances or early exits from the classroom, displaying active disinterest in the class (e.g. sleeping or using computer), exhibiting challenging or insolent manner, putting down other students, and trying to undermine instructor’s authority in class. At instructor’s discretion, offending students will be prohibited further attendance and given failing grades.
• Registration in the course implies that each student enters a contractual agreement with the instructor, whereas he/she is accountable for fulfilling all course requirements and adhering to the course policies.
• Students are responsible for knowing and following all schedules and instructions contained in this syllabus, as well as any other instructions given in class (remember, attendance is not optional). Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor, preferably in person. Pleading ignorance or lack of common sense are not valid excuses for failures to fulfill requirements or abide by course policies.

"Humanity is the very mind of human beings, and righteousness is the road they must take. To neglect this road and not follow it is to lose one's mind and not know where to find it. Alas! When people lose a chicken or a dog, they know how to find it, but when they lose this mind, they do not. The way of study and inquiry is nothing more than seeking this lost mind."

— Mencius 孟子 (c. 371–289 BCE)