

Chinese Religions: Crisscrossing the Globe REL 294
Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Eichman

TR 1:10 PM-2:20 PM

PPHAC 103

Through an examination of religions in contemporary China, this course seeks to broaden our analytical framework for the study of religion in global context. Defining/redefining religion has been a primary scholarly activity of those in the field of Religious Studies: a task that has profound implications both for our conceptualization of the object of study and how we determine what counts as a legitimate research topic. Our task this semester is to refine our understanding of the current analytical frameworks employed in the study of “religion” and “modernity” as they apply in an Asian context. To facilitate this endeavor we will cover the following issues: definitions of religion, the problem of popular religion, ethnographic approaches, state control of religion, ethnicity and resistance, globalization, gender, and transnationalism.

Books for purchase:

1. Thomas Tweed. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*

Strongly Recommended:

2. Adam Chau. *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*
3. Maris Boyd Gillette. *Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption Among Urban Chinese Muslims*. Stanford University Press, 2000.

Optional:

4. Carolyn Chen. *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*
5. David Ownby. *Falun Gong and the Future of China*

All other readings are in *Reserves or under course readings on Blackboard*.

Requirements:

1. Weekly attendance and participation (23%)
2. Discussion Board Responses (22%)
2. **Religious Site Visit** or research paper on one of the topics covered thus far. Short, 5-7 page paper based on fieldwork. (15%) Due March 15th
2. Power point presentation of preliminary research findings. (10%)
3. Research paper (15-20 pages) due May 7 (30%)

Detailed instructions for the Religious Site Visit and the final research paper can be found under “assignments” on Blackboard.

Additional Notes: Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

Students are advised to review the Academic Honesty Policy (available in the Student Handbook posted on the Moravian College Website) and are required to follow the guidelines therein.

Our syllabus and various course documents will be posted in Blackboard, and updated periodically with any changes we find we need to make as we progress throughout the semester. You also may find your grades posted on the Blackboard gradebook. Please consult this throughout the semester to view and monitor your progress.

Schedule

1. January 18-20 Week One Transnationalism: Buddhism in America

Required Readings:

Richard Seager, "American Buddhism in the Making" pp. 106-119
Thomas Tweed, "Who is a Buddhist?" pp. 17-33

In *Westward Dharma*. eds. Charles Prebish and Martin Baumann. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

2. January 25-27 Week Two Taiwanese Buddhism and Modernity: An Earthly Pure Land

January 25th DVD: Becoming the Buddha in L.A.

January 27th

Appadurai, Arjun. "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology" in *Recapturing Anthropology*. edited by Richard G. Fox. Santa Fe: School of American Research Project, 1991, pp. 191-210.

Richard Madsen "Religious Renaissance and Taiwan's Modern Middle Classes," *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* edited by Mayfair Mei-hui Yang Berkeley: University of California Press, c2008, pp. 295-322.

3. February 1-3 Week Three Taiwanese Buddhism and Modernity: An Earthly Pure Land

The Shorter Sukhavativyuha Sutra (Chinese Version), pp. 145-151

(The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light)

“Humanistic Buddhism in Practice,” pp. 78-118.

“Globalizing and Localizing: Three Case Studies,” pp. 260-275.

“Globalizing Chinese Culture, Localizing Buddhist Teachings,” pp. 275-300.

In Stuart Chandler, *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspectives on Modernization and Globalization*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, c2004.

4. February 8-10 Week Four Globalization: Buddhism and Christianity East and West

“Introduction: Becoming Religious by Becoming American,” pp. 1-15.

“Becoming Christian,” pp. 38-76.

“Becoming Buddhist,” pp. 77-110.

Carolyn Chen, *Getting Saved in America: Taiwanese Immigration and Religious Experience*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, c2008.

5. February 15-17 Week Five Rejecting the West: Christian Movements in China

The True Jesus Church

“Lightening Out of the East,” pp. 42-62.

“Cries in the Wilderness: The Underground Church in the Communist Era,” pp. 204-232.

In Xi Lian. *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

6. February 22-24 Week Six Transnationalism and Modernization: The Cult of Mazu, Empress of Heaven

DVD: *Happy Birthday Mazu Empress of Heaven, Goddess of the Sea*

Read this article before you see the DVD:

“Creating a Transnational Religious Community: The Empress of Heaven, Goddess of the Sea Tianhou/Mazu, from Beigang, Taiwan to San Francisco U.S.A.,” in *On the Corner of Bliss and Nirvana: Politics, Identity, and Faith in New Migrant Communities*, edited by Lois Ann Lorentzen, Joaquin Jay Gonzalez III, Kevin M. Chun, and Hien Duc Do. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.

Nyitray, Vivian-Lee. "Becoming the Empress of Heaven: the life and bureaucratic career of Mazu." Benard, Elisabeth; Moon, Beverly, eds. *Goddesses Who Rule*. Oxford, Eng.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 165-180.

Watson, “Standardizing the Gods: the Promotion of Tien Hou (Empress of Heaven) Along the South China Coast, 960-1960,” in Johnson, Nathan, and Rawski, eds., *Popular Culture in Late Imperial and Modern China*, 1985, pp. 292-324.

7. March 1-3 Week Seven Theoretical Considerations

March 1st Everyone reads “Confluences: Toward a Theory of Religion,” pp. 1-54

March 3rd “Dwelling: The Kinetics of Homemaking,” pp. 80-122.

“Crossing: The Kinetics of Itinerancy,” pp. 123-163.

Everyone is responsible for the conclusion

Tweed, Thomas. *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Spring Break!! Enjoy, Relax, Come back refreshed!

8. March 15-17 Week Eight Mainland Chinese Popular Religious Traditions in Modernity

Duara, Prasenjit: “Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity: The Campaigns against Popular Religion in Early Twentieth-Century China”, in: *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50.1 (1991), pp. 67–83.

Chau, Adam. *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*. We will start reading this work.

9. March 22-24 Week Nine Mainland Chinese Popular Religious Traditions in Modernity

We will continue reading this work and hold discussions about various chapters

Chau, Adam. *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*.

10. March 29-31 Week Ten Yiguan Dao Religious Hybridity: From Repression to Survival in Diaspora

“Yiguan Dao in Mainland China: 1930-1953” pp. 21-46.

“Yiguan Dao on Taiwan: 1949-1987” pp. 47-70.

Lu Yunfeng. *The Transformation of Yiguan Dao in Taiwan: Adapting to a Changing Religious Economy*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, c2008. Firestone: BL1943.I35 L75 2008

Thomas Dubois. *The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004. pp. 127-151.

11. April 5-7 Week Eleven Escaping the State: Falun Gong

“The Creation and Evolution of Qigong,” pp. 45-78.

Read one of the following chapters carefully, skim the other:

“The Life and Times of Li Hongzhi in China, 1952-1995,” pp. 79-124.

“Falun Gong Outside of China: Fieldwork among Diaspora Practitioners,” pp. 125-161.

In David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*. England: Oxford University Press, 2008.

12. April 5-7 Week Twelve Muslim Communities and Material Religion

Maris Boyd Gillette. *Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption Among Urban Chinese Muslims*. Stanford University Press, 2000.

13. April 19-21 Week Thirteen Islam and Material Religion

Finish Maris Boyd Gillette. *Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption Among Urban Chinese Muslims*. Stanford University Press, 2000.

Dru Gladney, “Islam and Modernity in China,” *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* edited by Mayfair Mei-hui Yang. Berkeley: University of California Press, c2008, pp. 179-208.

14. April 26-28 Week Fourteen Wrapping up: Modernity, Secularization, and Religion

Vincent Goossaert, “The Concept of Religion in China and the West” in: *Diogenes 52* (2005), pp. 13-20.

Final Examinations May 2-7

Final Paper Due on May 7th

