REL: 3930H: DREAMING ASIA: ASIAN RELIGIONS AND CULTURE IN THE WESTERN IMAGINATION

Professor: Ann Gleig (Ann.Gleig@ucf.edu)
Location: Honors College 0129
Time: Tuesday and Thursday 9.00-10.15
Office Hours: PSY: 236 Tuesday & Thursday 11.00-12.00 (or by appointment)

Course Description:

From the nineteenth-century Christian missionary anxiety over “the Mystical East,” to the current popularity of meditation and yoga, Asian religions have been a consistent preoccupation of the Western cultural imagination. Taking an historic and theoretical approach, this interdisciplinary seminar will examine the multiple ways that Asia has been imagined and represented by the West. We will explore how Asian religions have been encountered, (mis-) understood and constructed in Western literature, psychological-scientific discourse, religious dialogue, and popular culture. We will also consider how Asians have responded to the Western assimilation, appropriation, and transformation of their religious and cultural worlds.

Course Objectives:

• To become familiar with the wider historic processes and cultural contexts framing the Western encounter with Asian religions.
• To analyze and explore similarities and differences between the representation of Asian religions across the fields of religion, literature, psychology and popular culture
• To critically engage questions of authenticity, appropriation and authority in cross-cultural encounters.

Course Structure:

The course is organized around five modules each of which is between two-three weeks long:

• Module One: Theoretical and Historical Foundations: Colonialism, Orientalism and the Oriental Renaissance
• Module Two: Buddhism and Mindfulness in America
• Module Three: Hinduism and Yoga in America
• Module Four: The Guru Scandals
• Module Five: Asian American Voices

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

• Attendance and Participation (10%): Participation: Reading and discussion are an essential part of this class. Please come with questions and an engaged and awake mind. Review terms for the exams (see below) will come directly from the
readings and will be reviewed at the end of each module. You will also be required to complete a participation task: to list an Asian religious site in Orlando on webcourse so we can compile a list for the site presentations and/or extra credit visit. (See webcourse for date and details) Attendance: Apart from the case of documented illness or emergency, you are allowed 3 absences, for every class missed after that 2% will be deducted from your participation grade.

- **EXAMS (40%)**: There will be two exams: a mid-term and a final. Each will consist of around 60-80 multi-choice questions, which will test your understanding of the main concepts and themes of the class. The mid-term will cover modules 1-3 and the final will cover 4-5. At the end of each module, I will give you a list of review terms and concepts and exams will be drawn from these. Each exam is worth 20%.

- **Group PowerPoint Presentation: Ethnographic Site Visit (20%)**: In groups of 2-3, you will visit a site in the Orlando area that is connected with Asian religions in America. We will compile a list of possible sites on webcourse together. This presentation will require a reading of the site as “text” i.e. it will be analyzed through the themes of the class. Detailed instructions or prompts for this project and a sample presentation will be posted on webcourse.

- **Final Research Project (30%)**: For the final project, you will have three choices:
  - A standard 10-12 page research paper on a topic related to Asian religions in America. A one page proposal and bibliography must be submitted for topic discussion and approval first. I will distribute precise stylistic guidelines for the final paper but for a summary and grading rubric see p.8-9.
  - Create a website (you can use blog format) that examines some aspect of Asian Religions in America.
    Website Guidelines:
    Content: The website should be based around a research question on some aspect of Asian religions in America
    The content of the website must not only be descriptive but must also include an analytic dimension. In other words, I do not just want information on some topic, I also want to see that you are critically analyzing that material drawing on the critical theories of the class.
    Just like a research paper, the website must contain a list of academic peer-reviewed references. You must use at least 3 academic secondary references not including class texts.
    Aesthetic Dimension: The appearance of the website is also important. It needs to be easy to navigate and should also have relevant images that match and enhance the text.
    * Because of the technological skills needed you can work alone or in pairs for this assignment.
    Past Examples
    The two websites below all received a grade A and can be used as models for your
own website
http://americanbindi.weebly.com
(Links to an external site.)
(Links to an external site.)
  • http://healingthroughprayer.weebly.com/#/

  • A 10-12 page contemplative/experiential project in which you will choose one new Asian religious practice such as meditation, yoga or scriptural study and practice it regularly for a 4 week period over the course. For example, you could attend the classes at ISKON once a week for four weeks:
You could practice yoga at or near UCF
http://www.centralfloridafuture.com/story/entertainment/2014/10/29/alternative-yoga-classes-spring-near-ucf/18132561/ You will then write up a reflection of the experience that will integrate your personal narrative of the practice and a research description of that practice in its original religious context. The aim of this project is to reflect on the relationship between textual and lived religion and also the ways in which religious practices adapt as they pass through time and culture.

Extra Credit

There is a possibility of earning a 1% extra credit in this course.
• A one page analysis of Asian Religions in the News post (1%) Details are available on web-course.

GRADING:

Grade Scale: Grades: A = 100-90, (a- 90-93) B = 89-80, C = 79-70, D = 69-60 F= 60- (0-2: minus. 7-9: plus)

Please see the last page of the syllabi for an explanation of my grading rubric for papers.

Grade Submission: I will be using the system at UCF that allows me to report your grades to you when you log into your ”MyUCF” page. The university follows the national FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) code, which does not allow the communication of grades to a student by email (including embedding them in documents, which means they cannot be placed on a paper emailed to me), or by posting them outside a professor's door. This is a confidentiality issue. Please do not ask me for your grade by email - by law I cannot send it.

Withdrawal Deadline: March 23rd

FINANCIAL AID: Please note that there is a new policy regarding financial aid. UCF must report attendance or non-attendance after the first week of class. To prove attendance you must complete the short syllabus quiz on webcourse by Friday 16th 11.59 pm.
Class Rules of Engagement

Cell phones, I-pods etc, must be turned off before class begins and stored out of sight. Laptops will be allowed in class for class related activities only. If I find anyone using laptops for anything other than this, you won’t be allowed to use your laptop for the rest of the semester. This is designed to help create the best learning environment for you and your peers. Seeing the person next to you checking profiles out on match.com isn’t a motivational tool.

Leaving class early: If you need to leave class early, please let me know at the beginning of the class.

Email format: When writing an email to your Professor, please begin with (Dear) Dr. X (Gleig). If we have a continuous conversation on email, then you don’t have to address me with every mail but all conversations should begin with the appropriate address. Please also check spelling and grammar on emails. This is a habit that I really want to encourage you to cultivate as in some of the larger UCF classes in which your Professor might never get the chance to know you personally, your emails are your sole representations. Please think about what an unaddressed, misspelt, text-style message conveys about you as a student, and how this might affect you when it comes to negotiating absences, handing in assignments late, and border grades.

It’s on the Syllabus! Please check the syllabus before writing to ask me a question, as in 99% of questions, the information is on here and my reply will only be, (Dear X), “It’s on the syllabus!” For further details see page 10.

Punctuality: The attendance sheet will circulate in the first 15 minutes of the class, if you come late and it has been returned to me, you won’t be able to sign in and that will count as one of your 3 allotted absences.

UCF Academic Integrity Code

All written assignments require strict adherence to the honor code and must include the following “I (print name) hereby certify that I have adhered to the UCF academic integrity code (signature).” I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism, which I consider an essentially cowardly and uncreative activity that undermines education, character and community:

UCF is committed to promoting a culture of academic integrity where faculty and students work together to meet our personal, professional, and social responsibilities. A degree from UCF is only valuable to the extent it reflects valid assessments of student learning. Misrepresenting your learning on texts, projects, reports, or papers invalidates your grades and tarnishes the credibility of UCF. While collaboration is encouraged in the learning and studying process, you should assume all tests, quizzes, ect. require your individual effort unless explicitly directed otherwise. Unauthorized collaboration, whether voluntary or not, is cheating. Unauthorized use of materials during a test, quiz or
other assessment is cheating. Regarding papers and projects, one of the core fluencies that students need to demonstrate is the ability to discern information that is common to the public from the intellectual property of individuals. Use of protected ideas, processes or language without attribution or proper citation is plagiarism.

Disability: Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course must contact Disability Support Services. Please feel free to chat to me also.

REQUIRED READING:

Full Texts: All of these texts are in the bookstore and will be read in their entirety

Vijay Prashad, The Karma of Brown Folk
Jeff Wilson, Mindful America
Scott Carney Death on Diamond Mountain

Selected Chapters on Library Reserve: There are a number of chapters on reserve, please check under each lesson in advance for the specific reading

JANUARY

Introductions, Method and Definitions

12th Syllabus, Method, Definitions

Module 1: Theoretical and Historic Foundations: Colonialism and Orientalism

14th Orientalism

19th Orientalism (2)
Richard King “Orientalism and Indian Religions” and
Clarke “Orientalism: some conjectures”

21st No class: Video Assignment Analysis

26th Europe: The Oriental Renaissance
J.J. Clarke, chapters 2 China cult: The age of Enlightenment (pp. 37-53)

28th Europe: The Oriental Renaissance
J.J. Clarke, chapter 3 Passage to India: The age of Romanticism (pp. 54-70)

FEBRUARY

Module 2: Buddhism and Mindfulness in America
Module 2: Buddhism and Mindfulness in America

2nd Buddhism in America: Some Key Historic Moments
Four Foundations of Mindfulness:
http://www.stltai庙le.org/pdffile/FOUR_FOUNDATIONS_OF_MINDFULNESS_En
glish.pdf

4th -Wilson, Mindful America Intro, chap 1

9th -Wilson, Mindful America, chapters 2 -4

11th Wilson, Mindful America, 5-6 and postscript

Module 3: Hinduism & Yoga in America

16th Hinduism: The Basics
Gavin Flood, What is Hinduism? (library reserve)

18th Yoga in Historical Indian Context (library reserve)
Gavin Flood: Yoga & Renunciation

23rd Yoga comes to America “Awake: The Life of Yogananda”
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/02/opinion/sunday/how-yoga-won-the-west.html?_r=0

25th Yoga in the American Marketplace
Jain chapter 3 & chapter 4 Selling Yoga

Online access via UCF library

MARCH

1st Yogaphobia and Religious Purity
Andrea Jain, Is Downward Dog the Path to Hell? http://religiondispatches.org/is-downward-dog-the-path-to-hell/
Andrea Jain, http://religiondispatches.org/is-pope-francis-yogaphobic/
Andrea Jain http://religiondispatches.org/pat-robertson-warns-yoga-will-have-you-speaking-hindu/
Telegraph http://www.telegraph.co.uk/womens/womens-life/10969203/Priest-yoga-row-Am-I-going-to-hell-for-doing-yoga.html
3rd Mid-Term Review Class

March 7---12th SPRING BREAK (Mid-Term Exam Online Format)

Module 4: The Guru Scandals

15th Documentary: Kumare: Godman or Conman?
Scott Carney Death on Diamond Mountain Part One

17th Guru Devotion in Tibetan Buddhism
Scott Carney Death on Diamond Mountain Part Two
22TH  Death on Diamond Mountain
Scott Carney  *Death on Diamond Mountain* Part Two &
Mathew Remski “Spiritualized Narcissism”

http://matthewremski.com/wordpress/spiritualized-
narcissism-as-trauma-response-a-review-of-and-meditation-
on-a-death-on-diamond-mountain-by-scott-carney/

**March 23rd WITHDRAWAL DATE**

24th  Matthew Remski, “Writing About Gurus: Insiders V Outsiders and Other Problems”


29th  Wider Reflections on the Shadow of the Guru
Kathy Butler, Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America  
http://www.katybutler.com/publications/commonboundary/index_files/commbound_shad
owbuddhistusa_new.htm

Ann Gleig, Sex, Scandal and the Shadow of the Guru  http://sweepingzen.com/the-

*Module 5: Asian American Voices: Immigrant Patterns, Responses and Critiques*

31st  Japanese Buddhist Internment Experience
-Tweed and Prothero, ch. 9
-Duncan Williams, “Camp Dharma: Japanese-American Buddhist Identity and the
Internment Experience of World War II”

**APRIL**

5th  South Asian American Voices
Read: Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (pp. 1-109)

7th  South Asian American Voices
Read: Vijay Prashad, *The Karma of Brown Folk* (109-203)

12th  Student Project Week
14th Student Project Week

19th STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

21st STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

26th LAST CLASS: Exam Review & Final Project Submission

April 28th Final Exam Thursday April 28th 8.50-9.50am
FINAL RESEARCH PAPER: GUIDELINES AND RUBRIC

Your final research paper should include the following:

**Research Question:** Pose a thoughtful, creative question that engages you in challenging or provocative research. The question breaks new ground or contributes to knowledge in a focused, specific area – it is not overly generalized and vague.

**Information Seeking/Selecting and Evaluating:** gather information from a variety of quality electronic and print sources, including appropriate licensed databases (for example the academic databases on the library web pages). Sources are relevant, balanced and include critical readings relating to the thesis or problem. Primary sources (such as references to the Bible or other religious texts) are included if appropriate. The site must have a minimum of four such quality academic sources.

**Analysis:** carefully analyze the information collected and draw appropriate and inventive conclusions supported by evidence. You should make sure that your own voice comes through – in other words, don’t just ‘collect references’ or information but talk the reader through the argument and make your position clear.

**References:** Your final research paper must have at least four (peer-reviewed) academic references, not including the class texts. I will deduce points if not.

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**Grading Rubric**

**Dr. Ann Gleig**

**Competent/Credible/Complete:**

If you meet these first three standards, you are writing competently and will earn a grade of "C" (70-79).

1. **Unity**
   Contains a center of gravity, a unifying and controlling purpose, a thesis or claim, which is maintained throughout the paper. In particular, the essay clearly responds to the prompt and drives toward a specific point about the topic.
   Organizes writing around a thesis or according to the organizational requirements of the particular assignment (e.g., summary, narrative, argument, analysis, description, etc.)

2. **Evidence/Development**
   ● Develops appropriate, logical, and relevant supporting detail and/or evidence.
   ● Includes more specific, concrete evidence (or details) than opinion or abstract, general commentary.

3. **Presentation and Design**
   ● Follows Hacker guidelines for standard English grammar, punctuation, usage, and documentation.
   ● Meets assignment requirements for length and/or format.

**Skillful/Persuasive:**

If you meet all of the competency standards above and, in addition, achieve coherence and exhibit audience awareness, you are writing skillfully and you will earn a grade of "B" (80-89).

4. **Coherence**
●●Uses words and sentences, rhythm and phrasing, variations and transitions, concreteness and specificity to reveal and emphasize the relationship between evidence and thesis.
●●Explains how, why, or in what way evidence/detail supports point/claim/thesis/topic/ideas.
●●Incorporates evidence from outside sources smoothly, appropriately, and responsibly.

5. Audience Awareness
   ●●Demonstrates a sense that the writer knows what s/he's doing and is addressing real people.
   ●●Reflects a respect for values that influence ethos (e.g., common ground, trustworthiness, careful research).

Distinctive:

If you meet all of the competency standards, achieve coherence and exhibit audience awareness, and, in addition, demonstrate a mastery of one or more features of superior writing, you are writing distinctively and you will earn a grade of "A" (90-100).

6. Distinction
   ●●Your writing stands out because of one or more of the following characteristics: complexity, originality, seamless coherence, extraordinary control, sophistication in thought, recognizable voice, compelling purpose, imagination, insight, thoroughness, and/or depth.

Ineffective:

If your paper does not meet competency standards, either because you have minor problems in all three competence areas (1-3 above) or major problems in one or two competence areas, you will earn a grade of "D" (60-69) or "F" (<60)
KEEP CALM AND READ YOUR Syllabus