

Osaka Gakuin University 2022-23 Fall Semester

Religious Identity in Modern Japan

Instructor :

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Lesson: Mon 4th period (13:30-15:15) [Selected days only]
& Fri 4th period (13:30-15:15)

Subject code: 1038

Course Description:

This course will examine the histories, teachings, beliefs, and practices of various religions in Japan, including Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, minor religions (i.e. Shugendo, Onmyodo, and other folk religions), and modern / contemporary religious phenomena referred to as New Religions. In addition, this course introduces various approaches to the study of Japanese religions. Students are encouraged to (1) challenge the traditional division of Japanese religions by analysing the relationship between various religions and recognizing the interconnectedness and/or syncretism between them and (2) have discussions on their religious, political, and/or socioeconomic issues. There will be a series of field trips in which students will visit various religious sites, explore the locations, and/or experience ceremonies/rituals (if possible) in order to examine contemporary religious practices in Japan.

Resources

Earhart, H. Bryon. Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity (2004)

Note: Other necessary hand-outs will be provided for each class

Evaluation

- Class Attendance / In-class Activities **(15%)**
- An Individual or Group Presentation(s) **(20%)**
- Field Trips and Worksheets/Reports **(25%)**
- Assignments (Homework & Others) **(15%)**
- Mid-Term [10%] and Final Examination [15%] **(25%)**

Note: (1) Class attendance and participation, particularly taking field

trips, are very important since this course places emphasis on the actual observation and experience of Japanese religions.

(2) Evaluation method may change at the instructor's discretion depending on the class size and other factors.

Notes:

No Previous knowledge on Japanese religions or culture is required.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Course orientation and introduction: What is religion?
What do you know about Japanese culture and religions?

Persistent themes in Japanese religious history:

Human beings and nature, family, and purification

***Reading for Wk 1:** Earhart, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

Week 2: Persistent themes in Japanese religious history

(cont.): Local festivals, individual cults, and religion in everyday life

Various approaches to the study of Japanese religions:

Research approaches and methods on Japanology / Japanese studies and religions

***Reading for Wk 2:** Earhart, Chapter 3

◆**Field Trip (1) Prehistoric heritage:** Burial Mound 古墳 (TBA)

Week 3: Group discussion: The reflection on Field Trip (1)

The prehistoric heritage: The religious significance of burial and the dead, fertility, and divine descent

***Reading for Wk 3:** Earhart, Chapter 3 (cont.) and Chapter 4

◆**Field Trip (2) Festival:** A festival 祭 in the Kansai area (TBA)

Week 4: Group discussion: The reflection on Field Trip (2)

Early Shinto: Mythology and the origins of Shinto

***Reading for Wk 4:** Earhart, Chapter 4 (cont.)

Week 5: Early Shinto (cont.): The organization of Shinto—

priests and rituals in shrines

Documentary or commercial film: Shinto (TBA)

***Reading for Wk 5:** Earhart, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6

◆**Field Trip (3) Shinto and Japanese Buddhism:** Shinto shrine 神社 and Buddhist Temple 寺・寺院 (TBA)

Week 6: Group discussion: The reflection on Field Trip (3)

Early Japanese Buddhism: Indian and Chinese influence; the Buddhism as a state religion; and the six philosophical schools of Nara Buddhism

***Reading for Wk 6:** Earhart, Chapter 7

Week 7: Early Japanese Buddhism (cont.): Indian and Chinese influence; the Buddhism as a state religion; and the six philosophical schools of Nara Buddhism

Confucianism and Taoism: Chinese importation; Confucianism and Taoism as Japanese traditions (i.e. Onmyodo)

***Reading for Wk 7:** Earhart, Chapter 7 (cont.)

Week 8: Folk Religion: Religiosity outside organized religion

Documentary or commercial film: Folk Religion (TBA)

***Reading for Wk 8:** Earhart, Chapter 7 (cont.) and Chapter 8

◆**Field Trip (4) Folk Religion:** A place of worship and activities (TBA)

Week 9: Group discussion: The reflection on Field Trip (4)

The development of Japanese Buddhism: The new Buddhism of the Heian period (Shingon and Tendai) and the way of mountain asceticism (Shugendo)

***Reading for Wk 9:** Earhart, Chapter 9 and Chapter 10

➤ **Mid-term Examination**

Week 10: Elaboration within Japanese Buddhism: The Emergence of Pure Land, Nichiren, and Zen Buddhism in the Kamakura period

Documentary or commercial film: Buddhism (TBA)

***Reading for Wk 10:** Earhart, Chapter 10 (cont.) and

Chapter 11

◆**Field Trip (5) Minor and/or New Religious Traditions and Practices:** Explore lesser-known religious traditions and practices in Kansai(TBA)

Week 11: Group discussion: The reflection on Field Trip (5)

The appearance of Christianity in Japan: The Introduction, acceptance, and expulsion of Christianity

***Reading for Wk 11:** Earhart, Chapter 12 and Chapter 13

Week 12: The appearance of Christianity in Japan (cont.):

Christians in Japan

Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism and restoration Shinto in the Tokugawa period: The Tokugawa government and religion; Neo-Confucianism, political stability, and social conformity; Motoori Norinaga and restoration Shinto

Documentary or commercial film: Religions during the Edo period (TBA)

***Reading for Wk 12:** Earhart, Chapter 14 and Chapter 15

Week 13: The Meiji Restoration and State Shinto: The political and religious significance of the Meiji Restoration; Shrine Shinto as an expression of nationalism and militarism

New Religions: Tenrikyo, Soka Gakkai, and others;

Religion in post-war Japan: Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity, and the post-war boom of New Religions

Religious life in contemporary Japan: Transformations of religious life in contemporary Japan

***Reading for Wk 13:** Earhart, Chapter 16 to Chapter 19

Week 14: Review

Individual or group presentations

Week 15: Individual or group presentations (cont.)

➤ **Final Examination**

Note: Course contents and schedule are subject to change depending on the class size and the discretion of the instructor.