WS-540  Spirituality and Practices of Asian Religions  
Summer 2017  
Dr. Kenta Kasai

Time and Place: June 5-10 Meeting Room, Hartford Seminary

Course Description:
This course is intended for students to be introduced to religious life and spirituality throughout Asia, with a focus on daily practices. One way to approach religion is through doctrinal, theological, or philosophical studies, but there should also be other paths toward understanding living religions through other ways of interpretation. For example, there are rituals, exercises, and asceticism, on the one hand, and symbolism, iconography and iconology, on the other, especially those experienced in people’s physical performances and practices. This course will emphasize in particular these latter approaches to understand the spirituality and practices of Asian religions. Each instructor is a specialist in one tradition of Korean, Chinese, or Japanese religions, and will introduce the class to not only scholarly reading materials, but also to material objects, images, or videos. In some cases, the instructor will lead students into an example of performance or practice to reach a deeper understanding. This course is sponsored by Shinnyo-en Foundation, a secular and philanthropic arm of the Shinnyo-en Buddhist Order and includes with a field trip to the Shinnyo-en NY Temple in White Plains, NY.

Course Objectives:
- To learn basic ideas and teachings, as well as spirituality and practices, in different Asian religious traditions
- To understand each tradition and its worldview through the believers/followers point of view
- To recognize the differences/similarities between Asian religious traditions and one’s own religious traditions
- To think about the possibilities of further mutual understanding, coexistence, and collaboration among believers/followers of various religious traditions

Identified Seminary Learning Outcomes:

Master of Arts in Religious Studies: Learning Outcomes

1. To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and world views
2. To demonstrate knowledge of the practices of one’s own religious tradition and the capacity to appreciate the practices of other religious traditions
3. To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity
4. To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion’s communities exist.

Doctor of Ministry: Learning Outcomes
To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths.

Required Texts & Readings:
See the list of readings below by the day they will be covered.

Course Assignments:
If taking the course as an auditor, you are encouraged to read the text and participate in the classroom discussion. You are welcome to do the written assignment but it is not required.

Assignment Due Date(s) and Percent of final course grade
Active Participation  50%
Final Project  50%

One 15-page research paper is required for the students who wish to take this course for MA credit. Doctor of Ministry students are encouraged to write a 20-page paper and choose the comparative paper.
MA students should choose one of the following two subjects for the research paper: a) a comparative study on aspects of two traditions from Korea, China, or Japan covered by the class instructors; b) a summary of observations and analyses based on the field trip to the Shinnyo-en NY Temple.

Due Date for the Assignment The research paper must be submitted by e-mail by July 31, 2016 to Kenta Kasai.

Canvas
Hartford Seminary uses Canvas, a Learning Management System, to communicate with students and to manage course materials. Please accept the invitation from Canvas when you are prompted to do so. Readings and other materials will be available in the Canvas site.

COURSE OUTLINE:

June 5 - Day 1:
Introduction I (Dr. Kenta Kasai)
Introduction II (Dr. Michiaki Okuyama)


June 6 - Day 2:


**June 7 - Day 3:**

*Religion in China 2* (Dr. Jean DeBernardi)

*Diversity in Religion in Korea Today 1* (Dr. Donald Baker), Donald Baker “Religion in Twenty-first Century Korean Lives.pdf”

**June 8 - Day 4:**

*Diversity in Religion in Korea Today 2* (Dr. Donald Baker)

*Shinnyo-en in Asian Religious Traditions 1* (Dr. Michiaki Okuyama), [https://www.shinnyoen.org/](https://www.shinnyoen.org/)

*Preparation for the Temple Visit* (Dr. Kenta Kasai)

**June 9 - Day 5:**

Field trip to Shinnyo-en NY Temple, White Plains, NY

**June 10 - Day 6:**

*Shinnyo-en in Asian Religious Traditions 2* (Dr. Michiaki Okuyama)


*Course Conclusion* (Dr. Kenta Kasai & Dr. Michiaki Okuyama)

** Lunch will be provided each day.**

**Lecturers**

Religion in Japan: Clark Chilson (Associate Professor, University of Pittsburgh) [http://www.religiousstudies.pitt.edu/faculty/clarkchilson.php](http://www.religiousstudies.pitt.edu/faculty/clarkchilson.php)

Religion in China: Jean DeBernardi (Professor, University of Alberta) [https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/about/people-collection/jean-debernardi](https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/about/people-collection/jean-debernardi)

Religion in Korea: Donald Baker (Professor, University of British Columbia) [http://asia.ubc.ca/persons/donald-baker/](http://asia.ubc.ca/persons/donald-baker/)

Shinnyo-en and Japan: Michiaki Okuyama (Professor, Nanzan University, Nagoya, Japan) [http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/en/staff/mokuyama/](http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/en/staff/mokuyama/)

Co-Instructor of record Co-Instructor of record: Kenta Kasai (Research Fellow, Center for Information on Religion Tokyo, Japan) [http://www.circam.jp/en/about/](http://www.circam.jp/en/about/)

**Course Expectations and Classroom Policies:**
Attendance Policy: Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session, please inform the professor in advance. Missing one session (one day) may result in an automatic lowering of your final grade. Missing two or more sessions (two days or more) will result in automatic failure of the course.

Written assignment policy: A paper submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course without the prior permission of both instructors. Hartford Seminary strictly adheres to the Plagiarism Policy. Written papers and theses must be typed and should conform to the styles and format for footnotes and acknowledgments announced by the course instructor. For additional information on format, proper footnotes, acknowledgments, etc., students are directed to consult the Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper. These guidelines can be picked up in the student forms center or downloaded from our website at: http://www.hartsem.edu/currentstudents/student-writing-resources/. Students may also consult Kate L. Turabian’s, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, (9th Edition, University of Chicago Press).

Seminary Grading Scale:

A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
B+ (87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.
B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
B- (80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues. Meets basic expectations for the course.
C+ (77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.
C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

The Dmin grade scale Any DMin student should be graded on fail, low-pass, pass, high-pass. High Pass (95-100), Pass (83-94), Low Pass (70-82), and Fail (below 70)

Email Policy:
The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem email account regularly.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one’s own previous work used in another course. See “Plagiarism” at http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/.

Appropriate Classroom etiquette and use of technology: In order to respect the community within the classroom: 1) Mute all cell phones during class; 2) Utilize laptops for the sole purpose of
taking class notes. Please do not surf the web, email, or other programs during class time. Such use of
the computer during class is disrespectful of the class and professor, and may result in lowering
your participation grade. Inclusive Language: Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion
in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in
language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological
perspectives, and sensitivity to one another’s images of God. Extensions: Extensions for papers will
be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor. Official
Handbooks: For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check
the student handbook http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/ and seminary
policies at Academic policies are listed at http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/