

RL 352 50: Religions of China

Spring Term 2000: Thursday, 6:30 - 8:45 pm, JH 216

Instructor: Eriberto P. Lozada Jr.

Office: Anthropology Program, JH 349A

Office Hours: M, W, R, F 11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Telephone: 940-9270

email: elozada@butler.edu

homepage: <http://trevor.butler.edu/~elozada>

This course is a seminar on religions in contemporary China. We will be examining specific Chinese ritual practices such as marriage and funerals from an anthropological perspective, focusing on particular ethnographic descriptions of religious practices. As a result, the class readings will emphasize the social, historical, and political contexts of Chinese religious traditions.

Throughout the seminar, we will be exploring the issue of whether or not there is such a thing as a Chinese religion. What is Chinese about a religion practiced in China? Is there a system of Chinese beliefs and ritual practices? Is there an identifiable set of practices or social structure that we can call Confucianism? Is Christianity a Chinese religion?

Course Readings

Required Texts:

Lang, Graeme & Lars Ragvald 1993. *The rise of a refugee god : Hong Kong's Wong Tai Sin*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0195857445.

Overmyer, Daniel L. 1998. *Religions of China : the world as a living system*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press. ISBN 1577660005

Yang, C. K. 1961. *Religion in Chinese society; a study of contemporary social functions of religion and some of their historical factors*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 0881336211

Optional Text: (Recommended but not required)

Bays, Daniel H. 1996. *Christianity in China : from the eighteenth century to the present*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. ISBN 0804736510.

Dean, Kenneth 1998. *Lord of the three in one : the spread of a cult in Southeast China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN 0691028818.

The above listed books will be on reserve at Irwin Library. In addition, various articles will be required. One set of these articles will be available for students at the library and another will be available from the instructor.

Course Requirements

This course is not an introduction to anthropology, and students are expected to have either a background in social/religious theory or a willingness to learn it from the ethnographic material.

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Participation in class discussion will also be essential in this seminar, as indicated in the grading breakdown.

Each student will write five (5) response papers, one page and double-spaced. **Response papers are worth 15%** of the final grade. They are individually ungraded and require only timely submission for full credit.

There will be a **12-15 page term-paper worth 40%** of the final grade due in my office at JH 349A at **5:00 pm, 4 May 2000**. Topics will be selected by each student, but must be discussed with the instructor prior to 24 February 2000. An ethnography outside those assigned in the course, original field research material, or other ethnographic material must form the core of this research paper. A **draft of the research paper (no less than 8 pages and bibliography) worth 10%** of the final grade must be turned in at class on **30 March 2000**

Students will also make two in-class scheduled presentations; one presentation of the course material, and another presentation of their research paper. **Student presentations are worth 20%** of the final grade.

Participation in classroom discussions will be worth 15% of the final grade. Active participation requires that each student come to class prepared, having read the assigned material before class.

“Plagiarism is the fraudulent misrepresentation of any part of another person’s work as one’s own. Submitting any writing, including take-home exams, that does not properly acknowledge the quoting or paraphrasing of another person’s words, or that fails to give proper credit for another person’s ideas, opinion, or theory is plagiarism. Any unacknowledged use of sources to which one is indebted including but not limited to are music, video, audio, theatre projects, compositions, and computer software constitutes plagiarism.” – Butler University Student Handbook 1999-2000, pg. 92.

It is the policy and practice of Butler University to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification from Student Disability Services is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me and allow two weeks notice. Otherwise, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation can be received on a timely basis. If you have questions about Student Disability Services, you may wish to contact Michele Atterson, JH 136, ext. 9308.

Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

20 January 2000	Introduction Film: TBD
27 January 2000	Overview of Religious Traditions in China Reading: Overmyer, <i>Religions of China</i> (p. 11-55) Assignment: Response Paper Due
3 February 2000	Is there a system of Chinese beliefs and ritual practices? Reading: Overmyer, p. 57-86 C.K. Yang, p. 1-27 J.L. Watson article, Rites or Beliefs?
10 February 2000	What is the relationship between religion and Chinese family life? Reading: C.K. Yang, p. 28-80 Assignment: Response Paper Due
17 February 2000	Marriage ritual in China Reading: Rubie Watson article Maurice Freedman article Lozada chapter, Getting to the Church On Time
24 February 2000	Funerary ritual in China Reading: J. L. Watson article, Of Flesh and Bones E. Johnson article, Grieving for the Dead Lozada chapter, Catholic Ancestors Assignment: Response Paper Due
2 March 2000	Why is religion a political affair in China? Reading: C.K. Yang, p. 104-243 Lozada chapter, Introduction
9 March 2000	Popular Religion: Making a God Reading: Lang and Ragvald, Chapters 1 - 4
13-17 March	Spring Break
23 March 2000	Popular Religion: Beliefs, Practices, and Spreading the Faith Reading: Lang and Ragvald, Chapters 5 - 8 Assignment: Response Paper Due
30 March 2000	Daoism, Popular Culture, and Locality Reading: Dean, Introduction, Chapters 1, 7, 8, and Conclusion Assignment: Paper Draft Due
6 April 2000	Confucian Sagehood, Daoist Supernatural Power Reading: Dean, Chapters 4, 5, 6
13 April 2000	Is Christianity a Chinese religion? Reading: Bays (selections) Assignment: Response Paper Due
20 April 2000	Religion in Postsocialist China Today Research Presentations
27 April 2000	Research Presentations
4 May 2000	Research Papers Due