HONORS 350-003: HONORS SEMINAR IN THE HUMANITIES (HU)
Sacred Asia (Fall 2019)
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45 am, Honors House 195

Instructor: Hilary K. Snow, PhD
Office hours: Mondays – Thursdays 9 – 9:30 am
Mondays and Wednesdays 10:45 am – 12:15 pm
Thursdays 10:45 – 11:45 am
Other times by appointment
Office: Honors College 151
Email: snowh@uwm.edu

Course Description
Asia includes thirty percent of the world’s land mass and sixty percent of its population. This interdisciplinary class combining history, religious studies, anthropology, and art history explores the rich diversity of Asian culture through the lens of religion and belief in the divine. Unlike Europe, which has been dominated by Christianity until modern times, Asia had been shaped by three major religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam – as well as numerous smaller but still important belief systems such as Shinto, Jain, and Sikhism.

Sacred Asia includes natural features such as mountains and rivers, as well as man-made places and objects. We will investigate why and how parts of the natural world are designated “sacred” and the religious practices surrounding them. We will learn how worship spaces are constructed and employed. We will analyze religious art to understand how they reflect belief systems and culture. This course will place special emphasis on the material culture of Asian religions – the things people make and use as part of their religious practice. The course will also include local field trips to sites related to religions that originate in Asia.

GER Statement
This course fulfills UWM’s GER requirements. To this end, this course is intended to:
1. Increase students’ critical and creative thinking skills through classroom discussions and written assignments.
2. Provide students with opportunities to hone their effective communication skills through classroom discussions and presentations.
3. Stimulate students’ intercultural knowledge and competence through the introduction of new content and ideas.

Credit Hour Breakdown
The expected minimum number of hours of energy expended by students in this class is as follows:
Classroom discussion and discussion: 37.5 hours
Reading and outside activities: 56.5 hours
Paper research and writing: 50 hours
Total: 144 hours
University Policies
For relevant policies governing attendance, religious observances, disability accommodations, incompletes, and other issues, please visit: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf. Please notify me immediately if you need accommodations under any of these policies.

Textbook
There is no textbook for this class. All readings are available as PDFs or links on the course D2L site. Some links will not work if you are not on campus or the library does not recognize your computer as part of the UWM system. In those cases, use the citation information included in the syllabus to access the material through the library website by using Search@UW.

Not all PDFs contain full citation information to their original source. Full citations in Chicago Manual of Style format are included in the syllabus.

Assignments
Further instructions for written assignments will be distributed later in the semester.

- Discussion leading – At most class meetings, a student will lead the initial discussion of the reading through providing questions and background. Students will submit a reading questionnaire the day they lead discussion.
- Geertz critique paper – Students will write a 4-page paper exploring the relationship between religion and culture. Due Sept 24th.
- Object project – Students will use art and material culture objects to explore a facet of Asian religion. Due Oct. 29th.
- Research paper and presentation – Students will research a topic related to the course and present their findings to the class. Due Dec 5th.
- Critical response papers – Throughout the semester, students will write short (300-500 words) responses to field trips, readings and other ideas from class. Due as announced.
- Field trips – We will have two opportunities to visit local sites related to Asian religions. Both are within walking distance of campus. Further details will be announced.
  - November 19th at Islamic Society of Milwaukee University Center
  - November 26th at the Milwaukee Zen Center
- Students are expected to actively and productively participate in class discussions. Participation includes regular attendance, evidence of careful class preparation, active and productive contributions to class discussions, preparation of discussion questions, thoughtful responses to readings and peer critiques, and respectful engagement with peers.

Grading Procedure

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion leading</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geertz critique paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical response papers and other</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short assignments</td>
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