RELS 301: Themes in Religious Studies: East Asian Religion and Literature  
Fall 2016  
Wednesday, 11:30-2:30  
Macdonald Hall 4  
Instructor: Christopher Byrne  
Office: Rm. 234, Theological Hall  
Email: christopher.byrne@queensu.ca  
Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00-4:00 p.m., or by appt. on Wed.’s

Course Description
From the earliest written records, Chinese literature has been closely entwined with religious functions that over time fused together elements from Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and popular religions. As the Japanese adopted Chinese writing, they similarly absorbed much of the Chinese religious and literary tradition, while producing distinctive literary forms of their own. This course examines how the composition and interpretation of Chinese and Japanese literature reflects East Asian religious attitudes and perspectives and how East Asian literature has often been crafted to express religious meaning considered to be beyond words.

The course is divided into four sections. The first section of the course considers the close relationship between literature and cosmology in early Chinese poetry. The second examines the development of classical Chinese poetry in relation to Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist conceptions of the self and language. The third looks at the manifestation of popular religion within the famous satirical and allegorical novel, Journey to the West. And the fourth turns to the study of how Japanese aesthetics and poetics adopted and transformed Chinese traditions.

Along with analysis and discussion of the literary selections in class, class time will be devoted to workshop-style literary activities based on East Asian compositional practices and aesthetics.

Course Objectives
At the end of this course students should:
- Develop familiarity with significant East Asian literary works and genres
- Be able to read and interpret East Asian literary works according to the standards of Chinese and Japanese poetics and aesthetics
- Be able to identify and analyze religious themes and elements within East Asian literature

Required Texts

All other readings are available for download on Moodle for RELS 301 East Asian Religion and Literature.

Copyright of Course Materials
Course material distributed in-class and online is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in this course. This material shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in these courses. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.
Assignments and Evaluation

Class participation (Weekly online journal and in-class activities) 20%
(2% each; best out of 10)

Four Essays/Renku Project (approximately 1500 words each) 4 x 20%

*Due dates:*
- First Essay: Friday, October 7, 5 p.m.
- Second Essay: Friday, October 28, 5 p.m.
- Third Essay: Friday, November 18, 5 p.m.
- Renku Project/Fourth Essay: Friday, Dec. 9, 5 p.m.

Total 100%

**Late assignment policy:** No extensions will be given for essay assignments. Late assignments are subject to a penalty of 2% per day, including weekends. No assignments are accepted after one week past the due date. Exceptions are only made in extraordinary circumstances (illness, family emergency), if arrangements are made in advance of the due date, and appropriate documentation (e.g., a medical note or a funeral notice) is provided to the instructor.

Assignment submission policy and grading: All assignments should be submitted through Moodle. A hard copy may be required in class for peer evaluation.

Class Participation:

**Weekly online journal**
In order to prepare for class discussion, every student will be asked to post a brief response (2-3 paragraphs, 150-250 words) each week in response to the readings. The entry should be posted on Moodle by **11:00 p.m. the day before class.** The journal should be a response to the readings and not a summary. The journals are informal and do not need to follow academic format but must be relevant and appropriate to the class material. The entry should also include at least **one question** for class discussion.

**In-class Writing Activities**
Along with lecture and in-class discussion of the readings, class time will be devoted to workshop-style literary exercises. These literary exercises are designed to simulate East Asian literary games and composition practices as well as the scholarly tradition of Western translation and interpretation. Their purpose is to give students direct insight into East Asian literary practices, aesthetic attitudes, and religious values as well as the challenges of translation. No knowledge of Chinese or Japanese is required or expected. Occasionally students may also be asked to include peer evaluation or another type of assignment as part of the in-class activities.

In-class writings can be submitted as a hard copy at the end of class or uploaded onto Moodle before the next week’s class. These assignments provide an objective record of class participation and are graded only for completion, rather than content or literary value.
Attendance
Attendance is necessary to receive credit for class participation. If, due to exceptional circumstances, you must miss more than two classes during the semester, you must make arrangements with the instructor in advance.

Grading Method
All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

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COURSE SCHEDULE

SECTION I. EARLY CHINESE LITERATURE AND COSMOLOGY

September 14. Introduction to Religion and Literature in East Asia

September 21. Music and Poetry in Early China: Shiijing (Book of Songs)
Selections from Waley, Arthur, trans. Book of Songs. New York: Grove Press, 1960. (#1, #2, #20, #22, #53, #63, #75, #87, #109, #116, #129, #204, #270, #276)

September 28. Shamanism, Politics, and Song: Chuci (“Songs of the South”)
SECTION II. POETRY BEYOND WORDS

October 5. Reclusion and the Classical Poetry Tradition

** FIRST ESSAY DUE: Friday, October 7, 5 p.m.

October 12. Tang Dynasty Poetry and Religion: Du Fu, Li Bo, and Wang Wei


SECTION III. THE CHINESE NOVEL AND POPULAR RELIGION

October 26. Journey to the West (I)

** SECOND ESSAY DUE: Friday, October 28, 5 p.m.

November 2. Journey to the West (II)

November 9. Journey to the West (III)

**SECTION IV. JAPANESE LITERATURE AND AESTHETICS**

November 16. Introduction to Japanese Literature, Aesthetics, and Religion [Haiku Workshop]

**THIRD ESSAY DUE: Friday, November 18, 5 p.m.**

November 23. Bashō’s Haiku and Zen [Renku—Japanese Linked Verse—Workshop I]

November 30. Issa’s Haiku and the Pure Land [Renku Workshop Bashō]

**RENKU PROJECT/FOURTH ESSAY DUE: Friday, Dec. 9, 5 p.m.**
**Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities [http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html)).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1)), on the Arts and Science website (see [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity)), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

**Disability Accommodation Statement**

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the DSO website at: [http://www.queensu.ca/hcds/ds/](http://www.queensu.ca/hcds/ds/)