



## MODULE DESCRIPTION

Module title	Code
<b>Asian New Religious Movements</b>	

Teacher(s)	Unit
<b>Co-ordinating:</b> Dr. Michael Strmiska	Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies

Cycle of studies	Level of module	Type of module
1st cycle	1/1	Optional

Mode of implementation	Period of instruction	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures	1 semester	English

Requirements for students	
<b>Prerequisites:</b> none	<b>Additional requirements (if any):</b> none

Module volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Independent study hours
5	133	32	101

Aim of module: competences developed by the study programme		
<p><b>The course surveys</b> a variety of Asian New Religious Movements (NRMs) as contemporary social phenomena from historical and social scientific perspectives, looking at Asian NRMS in Asia, such as the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo movement and the Vietnamese Cao Dai religion, as well as Asian NRMS that have become established in Europe and America, such as the Hare Krishna (ISKCON) movement and the Diamond Way Tibetan Buddhist movement. Students will pursue research projects on an Asian NRM of their choice, utilizing a range of theoretical models and methodological approaches, including an option to pursue ethnographic study of Asian NRMs in Lithuania, as part of a larger research project overseen by Prof. Strmiska. The <b>approach</b> of this course is necessarily interdisciplinary, combining historical, anthropological and sociological perspectives. <b>Competences</b> developed include general (critical thinking, intercultural awareness, working independently, academic writing), as well as subject-specific (understanding of culture and society of the area studied, understanding of sociological and anthropological theory related to religion in general and NRMs in particular, applying knowledge and understanding of NRMs in their specific social and cultural settings).</p>		
Learning outcomes of the module	Study methods	Assessment methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will demonstrate knowledge of social science theories of religion in general and New Religious Movements in particular; the history of Asian NRMs in both Asia and Europe; the cultural and social contexts in which these NRMs operate; the distinctive belief systems and behavior patterns of particular religious movements; the relationship of NRMs to government and society, including legal and security issues.</li> <li>- Learn to work independently in a manner of self-directed and self-managed learning; demonstrate initiative both in learning and studying and in time management; and develop critical reflection upon the scope and limitations of what has been ascertained and understood.</li> <li>- Will develop an understanding of and commitment to cultural diversity.</li> <li>- Will be able to critically engage with the area studied from several disciplinary and</li> </ul>	<p>Lecturing and demonstration (multimedia), active study methods (all-class and small-group discussion; presentation of research projects).</p>	<p>Weekly brief writing assignments will provide evidence of student attention to and comprehension of course readings and social scientific theories.</p>

interdisciplinary approaches, including, history, sociology, anthropology, and religious studies.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will be able to undertake an interdisciplinary examination of the function of religion in contemporary Asian and European societies.</li> <li>- Will demonstrate awareness of the potential for controversy and conflict that often attaches to New Religious Movements.</li> <li>- Read and use materials both incisively and with sensitivity, to compare and contrast ideas and concepts found within different disciplinary surroundings.</li> <li>- Will deepen library and internet research skills, proficiency in reading and analysis of texts both in Lithuanian and foreign languages and ability to analyze academic and social media documents as a medium for understanding another culture.</li> </ul>	Research methods (search for information, literature analysis, preparation of the essay).	Final research projects will involve students examining particular NRMs, utilizing theoretical models presented in course readings and lectures for presentations, and final papers of 1500 word minimum length
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will demonstrate ability to gather and systematically prepare information through individual and collective efforts.</li> <li>- Will be introduced to the variety of disciplinary, thematic, practical and ethical issues involved in researching religion.</li> <li>- Will learn to synthesize information, adopt critical appraisals and develop a reasoned argument based on such appraisals.</li> <li>- Work creatively, flexibly and adaptively with others and meet deadlines.</li> <li>- Will further develop ability to communicate ideas with clarity, coherence and persuasiveness, and analyze issues in the light of evidence and argument.</li> </ul>	Research methods (search for information, critical thinking, preparation and multimedia presentation, teamwork).	Research projects will be presented in two phases (1) as works-in-progress presented in class to test coherence of arguments and receive feedback (2) as completed research papers with appropriate academic format, presentation of evidence, and analysis of results grounded in social scientific theory

Topics	Contact hours							Independent study time and assignments	
	Lectures	Consultations	*Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Practice	Total contact hours	Independent work	Assignments
<b>1. Introductions of professor and students, explanation of syllabus and course requirements</b>	2						2		
<b>2. What Are NRMs (New Religious Movements)? Background and Theories</b>	2						2	4	Readings: John Salibi, <i>Understanding New Religious Movements</i> pp. 127-164, Chapter 4, “The New Religious Movements in Sociological Perspective.” No written work due this week.
<b>3. Overview of Classical South Asian Religions: Hinduism and Buddhism.</b>	2						2	4	Readings: Readings: Articles on “Hinduism” and “Buddhism” from <i>New Catholic Encyclopedia</i> . Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.

<b>4. Overview of Classical East Asian Religions: Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto.</b>	2					2	4	Readings: Articles on “Chinese Religions” and “Shinto” from <i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i> . Writing assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>5. Three Early Asian NRMs: The Nichiren, Tàipíng, and Tonghak movements.</b>	2					2	4	Readings: Jacqueline Stone, “Nichiren and Nichiren Shu,” <i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i> (henceforth ER); Anna Seidel, “Taiping,” ER; Don Baker, “Tonghak,” <i>Encyclopedia of Modern Asia</i> . Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>6. NRMs in Japan: Omoto, Tenrikyo and Aum Shinrikyo.</b>	2					2	4	Readings: Readings: R. Ellwood and S. Susumu, “New Religious Movements in Japan,” ER; and, choose ONE of the following articles: <i>Brill Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements</i> Chapter 3 (Tenrikyo), 4 (Omoto), OR 12 (Aum Shinrikyo). Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>7. NRMs in China: Qi Gong, Fǎlún Gōng.</b>	2					2	4	Readings: <i>Brill Handbook</i> Chapter 22, Edward A. Irons, “Chinese Religions: An Introduction.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>8. NRMs in Korea: Korean Shamanism, Yōūido Sunbogūm Kyohoe, Tan Wōltū.</b>	2					2	4	Readings: Francisca Cho, “Korean Religion,” ER; <i>Brill Handbook</i> Chapter 15, Lukas Pokornoy, “Korean New Religious Movements: An Introduction.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>9. NRMs in Vietnam: Cao Đài, Hòa Hảo Buddhism.</b>	2					2	4	Readings: <i>Routledge Handbook</i> Chapter 15, Oscar Salemink, “Spirit worship and possession in Vietnam and beyond;” <i>Brill Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements</i> Chapter 29, Sergei Blagov,

									“Introduction to Vietnamese New Religious Movements: An Introduction.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words	
<b>10. Overview of Asian Religion in the West: Colonial Studies and Appropriations, Western Romanticization and Asian Transplants.</b>	2							2	4	Readings: Michael J. Altman, “The Construction of Hinduism in America;” Jan Nattier, “Buddhism Comes to Main Street.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>11. Asian NRMs in the West, Part One: ISKCON (Krishna Consciousness), and Diamond Way</b>	2							2	4	Readings: Michael Strmiska, “Eastern Religions in Eastern Europe: Three Cases from Lithuania.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>12. Asian NRMs in the West, Part Two: Soka Gakkai and Unification Church.</b>	2							2	4	Readings: Shimazono Susumu, “Soka Gakkai,” ER; Eileen Barker, “The Unification Church: A Kaleidoscopic Introduction.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>13. Asian NRMs in the West, Part Three: Falun Gong, Yoga and TM (Transcendental Meditation).</b>	2							2	4	Readings: Choose ONE: Mark Bell and Taylor Boas, “Falun Gong and the Internet: Evangelism, Community, and Struggle for Survival,” OR Scott Lowe, “Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science and Science;” OR Ellen Goldberg and Scott Singleton, “Gurus of Modern Yoga: Introduction.” Writing Assignment: Response Essay, 500 words.
<b>14. Student Research</b>	2							2	4	No class readings: research on approved topics.
<b>15. Student Research Continued.</b>	2							2	4	Continuing research.
<b>16. In-class presentations on works-in-progress by groups or individuals.</b>	2							2	4	Individual presentations of research in small groups.
<b>Writing period. Professor available for in-person or online consultation. Papers due on exam date.</b>									4 1	Completed research paper due on exam date. No exam.
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>			<b>4</b>				<b>32</b>	<b>10 1</b>	

\*Times of the seminars can change to accommodate the course and students’ needs. The changes will be announced in advance.

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Assessment time	Assessment criteria
---------------------	-----------	-----------------	---------------------

- Weekly response papers	40%	Weekly assignment throughout semester	Students write weekly 250 word minimum essays responding to and commenting on two or more of the readings provided for the week.  <i>The assessment is based on the following criteria:</i> - proper essay structure as explained by professor; - demonstration of knowledge of content; - exposition of personal reaction to content; - application of theoretical models where appropriate; - critical thinking.
- Research projects and presentations	20%	In the last week of classes prior to start of examination period	Students choose topic from list provided by professor for research projects, conduct research for two weeks allotted, then present their work-in-progress in-class, in groups, using PowerPoint. Students may opt for research on a NRM in Asia or an Asian NRM in Europe or America.  <i>The assessment is based on the following criteria:</i> - coherent presentation of findings about NRM under study; - application of theoretical models where appropriate; - critical thinking.
- Completed research papers	40%	On the official exam date	The research projects conclude with submission of complete research papers of 1500 word minimum length.  <i>The assessment is based on the following criteria:</i> - choice of the research question; - consistency of the argument / structure of assignment; - quality of literature / sources / data; - depth of analysis; - academic literacy.

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or a web link
<b>Compulsory reading list</b>				
John Salibi	2003	<i>Understanding New Religious Movements</i> , Chapter 4, "The New Religious Movements in Sociological Perspective."		Alta Mira/Rowman & Littlefield
Ed. Catholic University of America	2002	<i>New Catholic Encyclopedia</i> , articles on "Hinduism" and "Buddhism."		Gale e-books
Ed. Lindsay Jones	2005	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i> , articles "Chinese Religions-An Introduction;" "Shinto;" "Nichiren and Nichiren Shu;" "Taiping;" "New Religious Movements in Japan;" "Soka Gakkai."		Gale e-books
Ed. David Levison Don Baker	2002	<i>Encyclopedia of Modern Asia</i> , article "Tonghak."		Gale e-books
Ed. Bryan Turner and Oscar Salemink	2015	<i>Routledge Handbook of Asian Religions</i> , Chapter 15		Routledge
Ed. Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter	2018	<i>Brill Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements</i> , Chapters 3, 4, 7, 12, 18, 22, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31.		Brill

Michael J. Altman	2016	“The Construction of Hinduism in America.”	<i>Religion Compass</i>	Vol. 10, No. 8: 207-216 DOI: 10.1111/rec3.12204
Jan Nattier	1997	Jan Nattier, “Buddhism Comes to Main Street.”	<i>Wilson Quarterly</i>	Vol. 21, No. 2: 72-81.
Eileen Barker	2018	“The Unification Church: A Kaleidoscopic Introduction.”	<i>Society Register</i>	Vol. 2, No. 2: 19-62. doi.org/10.14746/sr.2018.2.2.03.
Michael Strmiska	2013	“Eastern Religions in Eastern Europe: Three Cases from Lithuania.”	<i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i>	Vol. 44, No. 1: 49-82
Mark Bell and Taylor Boas	2003	“Falun Gong and the Internet: Evangelism, Community, and Struggle for Survival.”	<i>Nova Religio</i>	Vol. 6, No. 2: 277–293. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2003.6.2.277">https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2003.6.2.277</a>
Scott Lowe	2011	“Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science and Science.”	<i>Nova Religio</i>	Vol. 14, No. 4: 54-76. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2011.14.4.54">https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2011.14.4.54</a>
Ellen Goldberg and Scott Singleton	2014	“Gurus of Modern Yoga: Introduction,” from Goldberg & Singleton, ed., <i>Gurus of Modern Yoga</i> , 1-14		Oxford University Press
<b>Additional reading list</b>				
Dušan Deák	2009	“Spirituality in the Post-communist Religious Marketplace: Indian-inspired New Religious Movements in Slovakia and their Conceptual Framework,” in <i>Subcultures and New Religious Movements in Russia and East-Central Europe</i> , ed George McKay et al, 305-338.		Peter Lang
Dušan Deák and Matej Karásek	2020	“Hindus and Hinduism in Slovakia,” in Knut A. Jacobsen and Ferdinando Sardella, ed., <i>Handbook of Hinduism in Europe</i> , Vol. II, 1428-1443.		Brill
Jan Nattier	1998	“Who Is a Buddhist? Charting the Landscape of Buddhist America,” in Charles Prebish, ed., <i>The Faces of Buddhism in America</i>		University of California Press
Anita Stasulane	2013	Chapter 10, “The Theosophy of the Roerichs: Agni Yoga or Living Ethics,” in Olav Hammer and Michael Rothstein, ed., <i>Brill Handbook of Theosophical Current</i>		Brill
Michael J. Altman	2016	“The Construction of Hinduism in America.”	<i>Religion Compass</i>	Vol. 10, No. 8: 207-216 DOI: 10.1111/rec3.12204
Jan Nattier	1998	“Who Is a Buddhist? Charting		University of California Press

		the Landscape of Buddhist America,” in Charles Prebish, ed., <i>The Faces of Buddhism in America</i> , 183-195.		
Michael Strmiska	2013	“Eastern Religions in Eastern Europe: Three Cases from Lithuania.”	<i>Journal of Baltic Studies</i>	Vol. 44, No. 1: 49-82
Knut A. Jacobsen Ferdinando Sardella	2020	<i>Brill Handbook of Hinduism in Europe</i>		Brill
Burkhard Scherer	2011	“Macho Buddhism: Gender and Sexualities in the Diamond Way.”	<i>Religion and Gender</i>	Vol. 1, No.1:85-103
Marika Laudere	2020	“Women’s Contribution to the Development of Buddhism in Latvia.”	<i>SHS Web of Conferences</i>	85. no. 0004 <a href="https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20208501004">https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20208501004</a>
Emilia Sulek	2006	“Imagining Tibet in Poland: A Contribution to Anthropology of Imagined Countries.”	<i>Tibet Journal</i>	Vol. 31, No. 6: 49-68
Mark R. Bell, Taylor C. Boas	2003	“Falun Gong and the Internet: Evangelism, Community, and Struggle for Survival.”	<i>Nova Religio</i>	Vol. 6, No. 2: 277–293. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2003.6.2.277">https://doi.org/10.1525/nr.2003.6.2.277</a>
Scott Lowe	2011	“Transcendental Meditation, Vedic Science and Science.”	<i>Nova Religio</i>	Vol. 14, No. 4: 54-76 <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/nr.2011.14.4.54">http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/nr.2011.14.4.54</a>
Kengo Harimoto	2021	“How Yoga Became Yoga: Yoga and Meditation up to the Classical Period.” Chapter 6 in <i>Routledge Handbook of Yoga and Meditation Studies</i>		Routledge
Suzanne Newcombe		“The Institutionalization of the Yoga Tradition: “Gurus” B. K. S. Iyengar and Yogini Sunita in Britain,” in Mark Singleton and Ellen Goldberg, ed., <i>Gurus of Modern Yoga</i>		Oxford University Press/LSE Research Online <a href="http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62024/">http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/62024/</a>
Robert Jay Clifton	2000	<i>Destroying the World to Save It: Aum Shinrikyo, Apocalyptic Violence and the New Global Terrorism</i>		Henry Holt
Lama Ole Nydahl	1999	<i>Entering the Diamond Way</i>		Blue Dolphin
Milda Ališauskienė, Ingo W. Schröder	2011	<i>Religious Diversity in Post-Soviet Society: Ethnographies of Catholic Hegemony and the New Pluralism in Lithuania</i>		Ashgate
Derek Beres, Matthew Remski, and Julian Walker	2023	<i>Conspirituality: How New Age Conspiracy Theories Became a Health Threat</i>		Hachette