

PAAS 100: Introduction to Pacific and Asian Studies

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Course description:

Welcome to Pacific and Asian Studies 100. This year's course will be centred upon the religions of India, with special attention to Buddhism. We will begin with an examination of the concept of religion itself, employing the model of worldviews provided by Ninian Smart. We will examine core concepts informing Indian worldviews, such as karma-samsara, liberation and dharma, as well as historical and philosophical developments in Buddhism. We will base our approach upon an examination of representative classical texts as well as modern interpretations of the doctrines they contain. This will necessarily involve a more general discussion of the art of textual interpretation. How have contemporary scholars of religion approached textual material? We will examine the historical development of hermeneutics, as well as particular debates in the field of Buddhist Studies.

Proposed assignments:

Exam # 1	30%
Book report	30%
Exam # 2	25 %
Final Quiz	15%

Course material:

1. Smart, Ninian (2000). Worldviews. 3rd Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
2. Hesse, Herman (1981) Siddhartha. Bantam Books.
3. Articles and links to online sources, posted to Brightspace.