



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

**Renison University College**  
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo  
40 Westmount Road North  
Waterloo, ON Canada N2L 3G4  
Phone: 519-884-4404 | [uwaterloo.ca/renison](http://uwaterloo.ca/renison)

## **Renison University College Land Acknowledgement**

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Hodinohsyó:ni, and Attawandaran (Neutral) Peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River from mouth to source. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place in all corners of our campus through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach. We are guided by the work of our Reconciliation and Restoring Steering Committee and Anti-Racism and Decolonization Spokesouncil, as well as the [University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations](#).

## **Fall 2023**

---

**Course Code: RS/EASIA 206**

**Course Title: Japanese Religions**

***Class Times/Location: Tuesday/Thursday 11:30am-12:50pm,***

***Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays 1-2pm and by appointment***

## **Course Description**

This course examines the religious traditions of Japan. We will explore ideas and practices from Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto, and folk traditions.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes - (Upon completion of this course, students should be able to)**

- A. Comprehend fundamental practice and concepts of religious traditions in Japan, especially Buddhist and Shinto
  - Understand the central ideas and concepts, such as pollution and purity, kami, buddhahood, and rebirth.
  - Understand the relationships between different religious traditions
- B. Explain how religious phenomena manifested in different eras of Japanese history
  - Understand the myriad entanglements of religious phenomena and other cultural factors in Japan
  - Understand how religion and social change mutually influenced one another
- C. Gain insight into the religious experience of Japanese persons
  - Engage productively with sources from various Japanese traditions
  - Learn to take Japanese religious phenomena and experience on their own terms, not simply filtered through a non-Japanese lens

**Required Text**

- Kami no Michi, by Yukitaka Yamamoto
- Eat Sleep Sit, by Kaoru Nonomura
- The Hands and Feet of the Heart, by Hisako Nakamura

Copies of all three books are available on reserve at the Renison library. Kami no Michi can be read entirely online at <https://tsubakishrine.org/kaminomichi>. Copies of Eat Sleep Sit and The Hands and Feet of the Heart can be obtained at the UW bookstore.

**Optional Text**

- Religion in the Japanese Experience, by H. Byron Earhart

Due to the cost of this book, it is not required. However, the suggested readings will enhance your learning if you complete some or all of them. The book is on reserve in the Renison library.

**Readings Available on LEARN**

There are currently no readings posted on Learn. Students will be updated if readings are added.

## A Note About Content

Religion engages with, and reflects, the full range of human experience, behaviour, and attitude, including the ugliest parts of human life. Texts, films, and other media that we will read or view for this course contain a wide range of content, including things that may make individual students uncomfortable or upset. This may include physical or sexual violence, discrimination and prejudice, sexuality or nudity, frightening images and events, self-harm, religious, political, or cultural views at variance with your own, and other potentially disturbing content. Inclusion of such content does not indicate approval by the instructor. Please speak with the instructor if you wish to receive more information about particular types of content.

## Course Requirements and Assessment

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Date of Evaluation (if known)</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Attendance	ongoing	10%
Exercises	Sept 25, Oct 16, Nov 13, Nov 20, Dec 4	20%
Book responses	Oct 2, Nov 27, Dec 11	30%
Test 1	October 24	20%
Test 2	December 5	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### ***Attendance***

Attendance is expected for every class. Attendance will be marked at the start of class.

### ***Exercises***

Students will write five reflections upon experiential exercises (details of each exercise will be provided separately). Exercise responses should be at least 800 words in length, not including any bibliography (only necessary if works are cited). Reflections are due at 11:59pm on the day that each is assigned (as indicated under Course Requirements and Assessment). They are experiential in nature but are not opinion pieces: don't just state "I hate this exercise" or "This is really cool." Examine your experience and describe it, provide any insights you received, and try to relate it to the other course content if possible. Some possible approaches to help get you started on writing your exercise responses: What did I do? Why did I do the assignment the way I did it? What was the experience like? Was it similar or different from other activities I've participated in? Was it hard or easy? What did I learn? What surprised me about the experience? How does this relate to our course content? If I repeated the exercise, how might it be different?

### ***Book Responses***

Students will write three response papers to the required books that examine aspects of those readings in depth. Papers will be no shorter than 1,600 words in length, not including the required bibliography. They are due at 11:59pm on the day that each is assigned (as indicated under Course Requirements and Assessment).

Recipe for successful book papers: Be focused. It is not possible to address all of the ideas in the assigned readings in a paper of this length. Briefly state some of the main points of the reading, then provide your response to them. Responses are up to you, but here are some suggestions that might help: What did you learn? Did you understand the main ideas in the text? How does the reading connect to readings, discussions, or exercises in this or other courses? What was most surprising or compelling to you? What do you wish you could've learned more about?

### ***Test 1***

This October 24 in-class test covers materials for weeks 1-6.

### ***Test 2***

This December 5 in-class test covers materials for weeks 7-13.

### **Course Outline**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	Sept 6 – 8	Introduction	None
2	Sept 11 – 15	Japanese Religious Background and Chinese Religious Systems (Confucianism and Daoism)	Optional readings from Earhart: 1-4, 157-164; 103-125
3	Sept 18 – 22	Shinto Myths and Practices	Start reading Yamamoto Optional readings from Earhart: 6-19, 28-34; 19-22, 34-38, 196-200
4	Sept 25 – 29	Ise Jingu and State Shinto	Continue reading Yamamoto Optional readings from Earhart: 23-28, 252-255, 236-242, 38-44
5	Oct 2 – 6	Popular Practices and Funerals	Optional readings from Earhart: 126-129, 135-139, 205-212; 185-194, 201-204
	Oct 7 – 15	Reading Week	

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
	Oct 9	Thanksgiving	
6	Oct 16 – 20	Christianity, and Shinto-based New Religious Movements	Optional readings from Earhart: 140-156, 308-312; 268-274, 279-283, 288-290
7	Oct 23 – 27	Japanese Buddhism	Optional readings from Earhart: 45-54, 60-65
8	Oct 30 – Nov 3	Tendai and Shingon Buddhism	Start reading Nonomura Optional readings from Earhart: 81-88, 54-60
9	Nov 6 – 10	Zen Buddhism	Continue reading Nonomura Optional readings from Earhart: 230-233; 99-102, 77-80
10	Nov 13 – 17	Pilgrimage	Continue reading Nonomura
11	Nov 20 – 24	Pure Land Buddhism	Start reading Nakamura Optional readings from Earhart: 88-94, 65-73
12	Nov 27 – Dec 1	Nichiren Buddhism and Buddhist-based New Religious Movements	Continue reading Nakamura Optional readings from Earhart: 94-98; 283-288, 275-278
13	Dec 4 – 5	Conclusion	Continue reading Nakamura

### **Late or Incomplete Work**

Late work without an accommodation is not accepted. Contact the instructor before the due date (be sure to provide enough time for your request to be considered and answered) if an accommodation may be necessary.

### **Coursework Submission Policy**

Students are expected to do all of the work assigned for this course, and to submit assignments using the Learn dropboxes or discussion forums (as appropriate). Students must do their own work, without help from others or so-called artificial intelligence tools.

### **Cross-listed Course**

Please note that this is a cross-listed course and there will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, this EASIA/RS cross-list will count in an EASIA minor average, even if the course was taken under the Religious Studies rubric.

## Policy on Plagiarism

“Policy 71’s glossary defines plagiarism, in part, as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others (whether attributed or anonymous) as one’s own in any work submitted whether or not for grading purposes”...

Among other practices that are not permitted, use of ChatGPT and similar “artificial intelligence” tools falls under prohibited plagiarism. These tools are not intelligent: they are just word generators that were trained without permission on other people’s writings. Thus the text they produce is always plagiarism (i.e. misuse of other people’s work), in addition to representing a prohibited form of cheating by not doing the work oneself.

The Vice-President Academic and Dean has the authority to assess instances of plagiarism (whether by A.I. or other methods) and the resultant penalties that are raised by an instructor. An instructor can propose a grade penalty to the Vice-President Academic and Dean, who will decide whether to accept the penalty or initiate a formal inquiry.”

For additional information on how plagiarism is dealt with at Renison, review the policy from where the above text is copied: [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. See Waterloo’s policy on [Fair Dealing](#). Violation of Canada’s Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#).

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided if they wish to submit an alternate assignment.

## **Electronic Device Policy**

Appropriate electronic devices are allowed in class, provided they do not disturb teaching or learning, but cell phones are not allowed (emergency exceptions may be allowed after consultation with the instructor). Students who violate this policy will have their final mark reduced.

Studies conclusively demonstrate that laptops, tablets, and similar devices cause excessive distraction for most students and their classmates, and that handwritten notes result in better comprehension and retention than electronic ones. Therefore, students are encouraged to minimize their use of any electronics in class. Use of devices to do non-class related work (such as watching YouTube, texting, etc) will result in penalties. All devices must be turned off during class viewings of films.

## **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory. A first absence is excused (life happens, after all). Normally, each additional missed day of class results in a reduction of 1 mark (out of 10 possible marks) from the student's attendance. Late arrival or early exit from class without prior permission from the instructor may result in a reduction of ½ mark for each instance.

There are two types of excusable absences. Anticipated excused absences include the following: 1) The student is away from campus representing an official university function, (e.g., as part of an athletic team). A note from a University faculty or staff member (such as your coach) must be provided prior to the absence. 2) Required court attendance. A note certified by the Court Clerk must be provided. 3) Religious observances. The student must notify the professor and obtain permission prior to the holiday. 4) Required military duty. A note from the student's commanding officer is required.

Emergency absences include the following: 1) Serious illness or injury. A Verification of Illness form (<https://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services/verification-illness>) must be provided. 2) Death or serious illnesses in the family when documented appropriately. An attempt to verify deaths or serious illness may be made by the instructor. In all cases the reason for the unexpected absence must be reported to the instructor within one week of the student's return to class.

## **Communication Policy**

Email, using the uWaterloo provided email address, is the approved method of communication for Renison. The Office 365 email that you use to login using your WatIAM login and password is secure and confidential. Take caution when forwarding your WatIAM email to an external email service as confidential information forwarded to a third-party provider could be a data security breach and violation of FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) under which all students, staff, and faculty are bound by law.

## **Final Examination Policy**

There is no final exam in this course during the examination period. In-class tests will take place on October 24 and December 5.

## **Accommodation for Illness or Unforeseen Circumstances**

The instructor follows the practices of the University of Waterloo in accommodating students who have documented reasons for missing quizzes or exams. See [Accommodation due to illness](#).

## **Accommodation Due to Religious Observances**

The University acknowledges that, due to the pluralistic nature of the University community, some students may seek accommodations on religious grounds. Accordingly, students must consult with their instructor(s) within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which accommodation is being sought. Failure to provide a timely request will decrease the likelihood of providing an accommodation. [See Request for accommodation on religious grounds](#).

## **Academic Integrity, Grievance, Discipline, Appeals and Note for Students with Disabilities**

**Academic Integrity:** To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity](#) and the [Arts Academic Integrity](#) websites for more information.

Renison University College is committed to the view that when a problem or disagreement arises between a faculty member and a student every effort should be made to resolve the problem through mutual and respectful negotiation. Most issues are resolved by a student/faculty meeting to discuss differences of opinion. It is only after this stage, when a



common understanding or agreement is not obtained that further actions listed below could be taken.

***Discipline:*** Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity](#) website for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor or academic advisor. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check the [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

***Grievance:*** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the Department’s administrative assistant, or Academic Advisor, who will provide further assistance.

***Appeals:*** A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

***Academic Integrity Office (UWaterloo):*** The website can be found at [uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/)

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

[AccessAbility Services](#) is located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, and collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Students are encouraged to register with AccessAbility Services (AAS) at the start of each term if they require accommodations due to a disability. However, some students not connected to

AAS may require accommodations later in the term. In that case, you should immediately consult with your instructor and/or your Academic Advisor.

## **Intellectual Property**

Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in [Policy 71 – Student Discipline](#). Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor’s intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

## **Mental Health Support**

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

### **On Campus**

- [Counselling Services](#): counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4096
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- [Health Services](#) – Student Medical Clinic: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

### **Off Campus, 24/7**

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- [Empower Me](#): Confidential, multilingual, culturally sensitive, faith inclusive mental health and wellness service.

- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 844-437-3247
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning teens in Waterloo. Email: [ok2bme@kwcounselling.com](mailto:ok2bme@kwcounselling.com) Phone: 519-884-0000

Full details can be found online at the [Faculty of ARTS](#) website.

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe](#) app to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

### **A Respectful Living and Learning Environment for All**

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.

If you feel that you are experiencing the above from any member of the Renison community (students, staff, or faculty), you may contact Melissa Knox, Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officer, by email ([mnknox@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mnknox@uwaterloo.ca)) or by phone or text (226-753-5669). Melissa is an employment and human rights lawyer and part-time Assistant Crown Attorney for the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General. Melissa is experienced in case management, discipline and complaints processes, and works with organizations across Canada to foster safe, respectful, and inclusive work and learning environments through policy development, educational workshops, conflict mediation and dispute resolution, and organizational culture audits.

For additional information see Renison's [Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse](#) policy.