Religious Experience: East and West

Instructor: NAGATOMO, Shigenori
Office: Anderson Hall 649
Year: Fall 09
Office Phone: 204-1749
Time: T, 2:00 – 4:30
Home Phone: 610-645-5296
Place: GH 839
Office Hours: T, 12:30 – 1:30 and TR, 12:30 –1:00 (or by appointment)

Instructor's e-mail address and website: snagatom@temple.edu; http://astro.temple.edu/~snagatom

Guidelines about contacting the instructor:
- I will try to respond to your email in a timely manner if you have any serious questions and concerns about the course, but I encourage you to talk to me before and after the class and/or during my office hours.
- When you call the instructor at home, please call after 10:30 a.m. and before 9:00 p.m.

Dates and times of any special sessions, field trips: No special sessions and field trips.

Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Course Description
This course examines the nature, the variety, the depths, and the meanings of religious experiences with the view to advancing a third alternative position to the two prominent contemporary philosophical positions which W.T. Stace and Steven Katz offered on this topic. As a preparation for this task, the course will first review some of the major classical texts, both Western and Eastern (e.g., Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart, Early Buddhism, Kūṇḍalinī Yoga, and Shintoism), so that the student will become familiar with the scope and the depth to which this course addresses. With a full knowledge of these texts, the course will examine the positions advanced by Stace and Katz. Some of the overriding philosophical questions that guide this course are: does language (and hence, culture and tradition) inform experience or does experience (e.g., catalepsy, asphyxia, OBE, NDE, ASC, ecstasy, union and oneness with God, the isolation of puruṣa, samādhi, nirvāṇa) inform language? (Both? or neither?) Is there a distinct personality type that colors a certain type of religious experience available to a practitioner? Is there a physiological constitution that tends toward a certain type of religious experience? Does a different type of self-cultivation methods (e.g., meditation, prayer, visualization) entail a different religious experience? As may be inferred from these questions, the methodological approaches which this course utilizes in understanding these texts will take into account the physiological, the psychological and the philosophical dimensions, while keeping in mind a most comprehensive philosophical scheme that covers the variety of religious experiences.

This course is designed with the following five goals in mind: 1) to understand the nature and variety of religious experiences that have surfaced in both Western and Eastern traditions, 2) to understand the hierarchical process leading to religious experience, 3) to understand the psycho-physiological changes that occur in the course of religious self-cultivation, 4) to understand various philosophical articulations of religious experience, 5) to think through and to articulate an alternative position to those advanced by Katz and Stace.

Course Policies:
- Attendance will be taken at all classes.
• A late arrival or early departure will be marked as equivalent to 1/3 of missing a class.
• If you miss 3 classes you will face a 10% reduction of your total accumulated points.
• Late paper will automatically be reduced by 10% of their original value.
• Bring the textbook to class.
• You are expected to attend all classes fully prepared: complete the reading assignment for each
  class with written notes, and be ready to raise specific questions and discuss points about the
  assigned reading.
• For assistance 1) with writing, make use of the Writing Center; 2) with personal confidence,
  consult the Counseling Center (Sullivan Hall); or 3) with complaints (fairness, grading, etc), see the
  the instructor.
• No incompletes are likely to be given for this course. So, try to finish the course by the end of the
  semester.

Course Requirements
The student is required to complete 1) a term paper and 2) a class presentation.

• **Term Paper:** the student is required to write a substantial research paper (15-20 pages, double
  spaced, font size 12: Times New Roman or something comparable) on a topic reflecting his/her
  interest related to the course materials. If the length exceeds this limit, it will be an automatic
  reduction of the grade. A topic for the paper must be approved in consultation with the instructor.
  (The student may entertain several possible topics before consulting the instructor.) At the time of
  consultation, he/she is recommended to present to the instructor an outline of his/her possible topic.
  Before turning in a final draft, the student is expected to submit a working draft for the purpose of
  improving the quality of his/her paper. Please refer to Paper Evaluation for the criteria that are
  examined in grading the paper.

• **Class Presentation:** The student is given an opportunity to present to the class his/her ideas on a
  topic related to the course. The presentation consists of twenty minutes of delivery and twenty
  minutes of discussion. The presenter must hand out an outline to the class before the presentation.

Due Date:
• Paper Due: Nov. 24

Grading Policy:
The final grade will be determined by averaging the points achieved for the term paper (70%), a class
presentation (20%), and class participation (10%). The numerical scale is shown below. In addition, class
attendance and participation in discussion are also considered toward the final grade.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 - 100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>93 - 90</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Policy on Religious Holidays:
If you will be observing any religious holidays this semester which will prevent you from attending a
regularly scheduled class or interfere with fulfilling any course requirement, your instructor will offer you
an opportunity to make up the class or course requirement if you make arrangements by informing your
instructor of the dates of your religious holidays within two weeks of the beginning of the semester (or
three days before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class).
Policy on Cell Phones:
Cell phones, pagers and beepers **must be turned off** during class except with special permission from your instructor.

Attendance Policy:
As you can see from the Class Participation and Course Grading Formulas, attendance is very important to your success in this class. You will be excused for 3 absences in the course grading process, but no more. For every 3 absences beyond the first three absences, your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade (e.g., from B- to C+). Students with an emergency (e.g., death in the family, illness, automobile accident) may have an excused absence, but if such absences amount to more than 20% of class hours for the semester, students should consider the possibility of withdrawal from the class.

Policy on Academic Honesty:
Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others. The prohibition against plagiarism and cheating is intended to foster this independence and respect.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, another person's assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism.

Academic cheating is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course which was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person.

Students must assume that all graded assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise noted in writing in this syllabus. I reserve the right to refer any cases of suspected plagiarism or cheating to the University Disciplinary Committee; I also reserve the right to assign a grade of "F" for the given paper, quiz or test.

Required Texts:
__________, *The Awakening of the Cakras and Emancipation* (unpublished mss).
Suggested Readings
Hiroshi Motoyama, tr. Shigenori Nagatomo and John Krummel, Being and the Logic of Interactive Function (Encinitas, Calif.: CIHS, 2009).
Kakuan, “Ten Ox-Herding Pictures.”
Paññājali’s Yogasūtra in A Source Book of Indian Philosophy, pp.453-485.
Samkhya Kārikā, in A Source Book of Indian Philosophy, pp. 424-452.

Tentative Schedule
Sept.  1  General Introduction
        8  Steven Katz, “Language, Epistemology and Mysticism,”and Nagatomo’s “A Critique of Steven Katz’s Contextualism.”
        15  W.T. Stace, a selection from Mysticism and Philosophy, pp.41-133.
        22  Motoyama’s “The Buddha’s Satori.”
        29  Plotinus, pp.13-105

Oct. 6  Eckhart, pp.
        13  St. Teresa’s The Interior Castle.
        20  Jung’s “Psychological Commentary on Kuṇḍalini Yoga,” and Motoyama’s Awakening of the Cakras.
        27  St. John of the Cross, pp. 1- 209.

Nov. 3  Hildgard of Bingen, and Carmen Blacker’s Catalpa Bow.
        10  to be announced
        17  Class Presentation
        24  (No Class?)

Dec. 1  Class Presentation
        8  Class Presentation