The Chinese word for "religion" means "teaching." "Teaching" immediately implies at least two people and belief in China has always been theorized and practiced as mediated by the presence of others, miraculous and mundane. We will explore what Chinese people "taught" themselves about the person, society and the natural world and thus how social life was constructed and maintained. We will examine in historical perspective the classic texts of the Taoist and Confucian canon and their synthesis; Buddhism and the synthesis of the “Three Teachings.” We will introduce modern religious life on Taiwan and in the People's Republic.

REQUIREMENTS
Mindful reading and wakeful attendance. Two (6-7 page) essays on assigned topics. An 8-10 page paper on a choice of the novels Joy Luck Club or Monkey. Occasional short responses.

EVALUATION
Attendance and participation; short response papers-- 15%
Short essays -- 25% each. Final paper-- 35%
Only medical extensions granted.
READINGS
The following *books are required in their entirety—find them at the NYU bookstore
*Berger, Peter. The Sacred Canopy
*Chang, K. C. Art, Myth and Ritual
*Fingarette, Herbert Confucius: the secular as sacred
*Watson, Burton, tr. Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings
*Right, Arthur. Buddhism in Chinese History
*Thich Nhat Hanh The Heart of Understanding
(Optional—for consultation—you can buy them)
Chan, W. T. A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy
Gernet, Jacques. A History of Chinese Civilization

All other assigned readings are on Classes and available for download and printing. Complete bibliographic info for all sources, including books, is attached to the syllabus.
Readings due the day they appear.

I. CLASSICAL DEBATES: CULTURE, PERSONS, COSMOS

1. M 1/28 Introduction
   W 1/30 Archaic Religion
   *K. C. Chang, Art, Myth and Ritual 56-127

2. M 2/4 The production of culture/religion
   K. C. Chang 1-56
   W 2/6 *Peter Berger, The Sacred Canopy 1-101

3. M 2/11 Berger (cont)
   W 2/13 Confucian li/ritual
   W. T. Chan 14-48 “Analects of Confucius”

4. M 2/18 PRESIDENT’S DAY, NO CLASS
   W 2/20 Daoist Cosmos
   Wilhelm "Change" 3-34
   Tao Te-ching in *W. T. Chan 136-176

5. M 2/25 *Fingarette Confucius: The secular as sacred (entire)

********** FIRST ESSAY TOPICS GIVEN OUT **********

   W 2/27 Chuang-tzu, revisiting Daoism
   *Watson's translation, 23-95

Recommended as background for writing on pre-Han China:
*Gernet, A history of Chinese civilization, 51-101

6. MON 3/4 ESSAYS DUE IN CLASS for small group discussions—
   if you do not have your paper to hand in, you may not attend class.
II. IMPERIAL COSMIC EXPANSION

W 3/6 Han world/ Han cosmos
   *Gernet, 101-149
   Stephen Bennett, "Pattern"
   *W. T. Chan 271-84

7. M 3/11 Taoist ritual and body technologies
   *Gernet, 149-171
   Max Kaltenmark 107-148

W 3/13 Livia Kohn "Guarding the One" : 125-150
   Michael Puett: 223-252.
   Wang Bi and Hoshang Gong Commentaries to the Laozi

SPRING BREAK 3/18-3/22

8. M 3/25 Filiality
   *W. T. Chan, "The Great Learning" 84-95
   Laurence Thompson "The Family: Kindred and Ancestors" ; 34-56
   Ivan Chen, tr. Hsiao-ching: Book of Filial Duty 15-32

W 3/27 Filiality continued
   Patricia Ebrey, tr. The Book of Filial Piety for Women" 47-69
   Ivan Chen, tr. Hsiao-ching: Book of Filial Duty 15-32
   ADD Ying-shi Yu, “Oh Soul”

9. M 4/1 Buddhism, introduction
   Rahula, "What the Buddha Taught" pp. 16-50

W 4/3 Emptiness, Interbeing and Mahayana
   *Thich Nhat Han, The Heart of Understanding (entire book)

10. M 4/8 Buddhism in China
    *Arthur Wright, Buddhism in Chinese History 1-85
    Alan Cole Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism, 1-79

W 4/10 Buddhist Filiality and gender
    Alan Cole, 132-end of book
    Ivan Chen, Book of Filial Duty (pp. 33-60)

*****SECOND ESSAY TOPICS GIVEN OUT

11. M 4/15 Belief and social life in Medieval China
    *Arthur Wright 86-107
    *Barbara Reed, "Gender Symbolism of Guanyin Bodhisattva" 159-180
W 4/17 The “Three Teachings” synthesize in late imperial China
Judith Berling, “Religion and popular culture: the management of moral capital” : 188-218
Joanna Handlin-Smith, “Liberating animals in Ming-Qing China.. .” :51-84
Donald Sutton, “Prefect Feng and the Yangzhou Drought of 1490: A Ming social
*Gernet: 423-436 (optional)

12.  M 4/22 ESSAYS DUE IN CLASS for small group discussion
if you do not have your paper to hand in, you may not attend class.

III. MODERN PEOPLE'S PRACTICES

13.  W 4/24 Gods, Ghosts, Gender
Wolf, Arthur P. “Gods, ghosts and ancestors.” 130-182
P. Steven Sangren, “Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols:” 4-25
James Watson, “Of flesh and bones: the management of death pollution in
Cantonese society.” Pp. 155-186

**** FINAL TOPICS WILL BE GIVEN OUT ***********
*****PERHAPS BEGIN READING YOUR NOVEL ?? *****

14.  M 4/29 Religion in the People’s Republic
Goossaert, Vincent, “The Social organization of religious communities in the
20th century” 172-190
Laliberte, Andre, “Contemporary issues in state-religion relations”191-208

W 5/1  Dean, Kenneth, “Further partings of the way: The Chinese state and Daoist ritual
Film screening: Bored in Heaven Directed by Ken Dean http://www.boredinheaven.com/

A film about ritual sensation, Fujian, China, 2010

“Bored in Heaven” follows New Years celebrations in Putian, Fujian, Southeast China. An experiential
project based on 20 years of research by Kenneth Dean and Zheng Zhenman, this film illustrates the
growing intensity of local traditions, as rural villages and their temples transition into a new century.
Villages in this part of China are undergoing radical transformations. As land that was once public
and agricultural is rebuilt and changes hands, the intricate temple system has responded. During the Cultural
Revolution temples were torn down—now they are being built up into ritual alliances.

Filmed in two weeks, in a 400sq km area, see vibrant performances of local power, massive community
processions, elaborate Taoist rituals, and trance dances by spirit mediums, all performing parts of the
overall ritual in honor of the gods. The film builds on the story of the Theater God. His story is told in a
ritual performance, by actors, opera singers and puppeteers.

15.  M 5/6 Chau, Adam, “ The sensorial production of the social” pp. 485—504
Siu, Helen F., “Recycling ritual: Politics and popular culture in
contemporary rural China” pp.121-137
W 5/8 Ritual, cosmology and filiality
Discussing *Joy Luck Club* and *Monkey*

16. M 5/13 LAST DAY OF CLASS
Tan/Waley **PAPERS DUE IN CLASS** for a workshop
*if you do not have your paper to hand in, you may not attend class.*

There will be NO EXTENSIONS—this paper constitutes the FINAL EXAM.

**Belief and Social Life in China: complete bibliography**

Below you will find every book and essay assigned in the course, listed in alphabetical order by author, with its complete bibliographical information. You should use this info when you do your own footnotes and bibliographies. **The order of assignments is on the syllabus**—use this bibliography WITH the syllabus and “Classes”.

*Books* for sale at Shakespeare’s Books on Broadway.


Sangren, P. Steven. “Female gender in Chinese religious symbols” Kuan Yin, Ma Tsu, and the “Eternal Mother”. Signs (Autumn 1983): 4-25


*Tan, Amy. The Joyluck Club.


