SO/RL315 RELIGION IN CHINESE SOCIETY
IES Abroad Shanghai Syllabus

DESCRIPTION: This course is designed to introduce students to the sociological study of religion in traditional Chinese society and late modern world. The purpose of this course is to make the student aware of differing perspectives in understanding the significant role of Chinese religion in both the traditional and contemporary world and developing scholarly resources in support of intellectual dialogue and mutual understanding between China and the West. Discussion then turns to the similarities and contrasts in the dynamics of modernization as experienced in China and in the West, especially those spiritual convictions that lie at the heart of the Chinese heritage of popular belief and practice.

INSTRUCTOR: Fan Lizhu

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: Seminar, field trips

ADDITIONAL COSTS: None

LANGUAGE OF PRESENTATION: English, with introduction of relevant Chinese terms

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT: Classroom attendance, participation, and class discussion (10%); three 1500-word written assignments (30%); midterm essay exam (20%); final 3,000-word research essay (30%); oral presentation due at the end of semester analyzing a topic discussed in class (10%) Each student should prepare reading assignments in advance of class. All required readings are provided in a course reader, and will include all works listed in the below bibliography.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Explain Confucianism and its relationship to other Humanistic Religions
- Describe Taoism and its role as a salvation religion in China
- Identify how Buddhism became part of Chinese religion
- Describe the development and role of Christianity in China
- Discuss communal worship in China
- Identify the role and use of religion during the Cultural Revolution
- Compare and contrast religion in China and Taiwan
- Describe the future role of religion in China
- Develop skills of critical analysis, oral presentation and primary source research, by combining your experience from internship with in-class knowledge

CONTENT:
1. Introduction: Beliefs and Values of one of the World’s Oldest Living Cultures
   Overmyer, Daniel, Chapter 4, Religions of China, the World as a Living System, Harper San Francisco, 1986. September 18

2. Confucianism and Humanistic Religion
   Readings:
   Yang, C. K. Confucian Thought and Chinese Religion, Chinese Thought and Institutions:

3. Taoism as salvation religion

4. Excursion: visit San Guan Tang (a local Buddhist temple)
Assignment 1, excursion report

5. Buddhism Became Chinese

6. Christianity in China

7. Communal Worship and Temple Festivals

8. Movie: Lifetimes (Huo Zhe)
Assignment 2, Movie Review

9. Some Background Introduction of Cultural Revolution and Maoist Cult

10. Religion in China Today: From Spiritual Hunger to Spiritual Nourishment

11. China’s Religious Heritage as Moral Capital
Berger, Peter Secularity: West and East http://www.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/berger.html

12. Excursion: Visiting She Shan Cathedral (Catholic)
Assignment 3, Report

13. Chinese Religious Renaissance in Taiwan

14. Burgeoning of Popular in Rural China

15. The Future of Religion in China

16. Oral Presentation
The course outline is subject to change at the instructor's discretion with due notice given to the student.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Berger, Peter Secularity: West and East http://www.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cimac/berger.html
Overmyer, Daniel, Chapter 4, *Religions of China, the World as a Living System*, Harper San Francisco,
1986. September 18

**INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY:**

**Lizhu Fan** is a sociologist of religion who holds the Ph.D. from Chinese University of Hong Kong. A native of Tianjin China, she is currently Professor in the Department of Sociology at Fudan University in Shanghai. In addition to her ethnographic work on contemporary expressions of Chinese traditional religious heritage, Dr. Fan’s research interests include the role of NGOs/NPOs in China’s modernization. She has published widely in both Chinese and international journals, and edited several volumes of cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary research papers. Her most recent publication is *The Transformational Patterns of Religious Belief Systems in Contemporary China: Case Study of Popular Believers in Shenzhen*, and Religion in Late Modern World (coauthored with James Whitehead, Evelyn Whitehead).