

Korean Philosophy and Religions

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Credit: 3

This course is a survey of the philosophical ideas and religious traditions of Korea including Confucianism, Buddhism, the Daoist influence, and a native belief system such as shamanism. The main thrust of the course is to find the major characteristics of Korean worldview and ways of thinking that are manifested in various forms of religious practices and philosophical issues. The ways of thinking and the system of values of Korean people are found not only in the native, folk belief system but also in the way how Koreans have transformed the foreign religious and philosophical traditions into uniquely Korean way and created “Korean Buddhism,” “Korean Confucianism,” and “Korean Shamanism,” etc. The emphasis of the course will be on finding a unique aspect of the Korean character among the East Asian religious and cultural traditions.

Required Text

James Huntley Grayson, *Korea- A Religious History*. London and New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2002

Young-chan Ro, *Korean Philosophy* (printed material will be available at the bookstore)

Optional Texts:

Charles Allen Clark, *Religions of Old Korea*. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc. 1981 (Reprint of the 1932 ed. Published by F.H. Revell Co. New York)

Ch'oe, Lee (ed.), *Sources of Korean Tradition (vol. 1 and vol. 2)*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1997 (vol. 1) and 2001 (vol. 2)

Requirements:

1. Participation in class including assigned readings and discussion.
2. Mid-term exam consists of several short answers and one essay question
3. Final exam similar to the mid-term exam in format but proportionally longer
4. A short paper (4-5 double spaced pages) on the chosen topic in consultation with instructor

Week

1. Introduction: Religion and Philosophy in Korean Tradition. Grayson, 13-21; foundation myth 239-248
2. Korean Worldview, shamanistic impulse, and early Buddhism and Confucianism 22-52 .
3. Koryŏ Buddhism and Confucianism. Grayson 53-100 .
4. Chosŏ Buddhism and Confucianism. Grayson 101-146
5. Late Chosŏn Confucianism and introduction of Christianity. Grayson 147-183
6. Ch'ŏndogyo and new religions in Korea. Grayson 184-236