



Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

RHIB33, History of Religions: Asian Religious Practices in Global Contexts, 7.5 credits

Religionshistoria: Asiatiska religiösa praktiker i globala perspektiv, 7,5 högskolepoäng
First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2026-06-08 (U 2026/397). The syllabus comes into effect 2026-09-01 and is valid from the spring semester 2027.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding course. It can be included in a first or second cycle degree.

Language of instruction: Swedish and English
Elements in other Scandinavian languages may occur.

Main field of study *Specialisation*

History of Religions G1F, First cycle, has less than 60 credits in first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- identify and describe contemporary Asian religious practices using relevant academic terminology,
- account for how Asian spiritual practices interact with and shape global cultural contexts in Asia, Europe, the Americas, and beyond,

Competence and skills

- critically analyze, in written and spoken form, basic concepts and central practices within the Asian religious field,
- independently summarize the development and presence of Asian spirituality in global contexts,
- reflect on the religious field in Asia and its global impact by applying relevant theoretical perspectives,

Judgement and approach

- distinguish between emic terminology applied by believers and etic semantic choices and concepts applied in academic contexts.

Course content

From Zen meditation and Kundalini yoga to qigong, feng shui, and martial arts films, Asian spiritual and physical practices have spread across the globe. This course provides an overview of current developments in the religious field in Asia and their global implications. Students learn to contextualize contemporary Asian spirituality – for example yoga, meditation, divination practices, and martial arts – from historical and global perspectives. The course examines the social, cultural, and intellectual dynamics that shaped the emergence of reformist movements, practices, and organizations during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It also explores the global dissemination of spiritual and physical practices, their interaction with contemporary consumer cultures, and current debates concerning health, politics, social change, and environmental sustainability.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures and seminars. Attendance at all 10–12 teaching sessions is mandatory. Absence may be compensated for with written assignments in accordance with instructions from the lecturer. Students who are absent from more than 30 % of the teaching sessions will need to retake the course.

The course includes an ethnographic component in which students – individually or in smaller groups – plan and carry out a study visit. The visit may consist of participant observation, an interview, or other forms of structured insight into a group in which Asian spirituality is a defining element. Students are responsible for establishing contact with the field, conducting the visit, and documenting their observations applying ethnographic methods in accordance with research ethical principles. The course entails a mandatory oral presentation of the study visit.

Assessment

The assessment is based on a written take-home exam.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction

For a grade of Pass on the whole course, the student must have been awarded a grade of Pass for the written take-home exam. For a grade of Pass with distinction on the whole course, the student must have been awarded a grade of Pass with distinction for the written take-home exam.

Entry requirements

General entry requirements and successful completion of at least 15 credits within Religious Studies: Level 1 (REVA10/ÄRED11), of which at least 10 credits must consist of Modules 2 and 4. Alternatively, general eligibility and successful completion of at least 15 credits within Islamic Studies: Level 1 (ISLA11) or at least 15 credits within Jewish Studies: Level 1 (JUDA12/JUDA13), or the equivalent.

Further information

- The course is offered at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Lund University.
- The course is also included as module 2 of RHIB14, History of Religions: Level 2.
- The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.