

Religious Studies 726  
*Topics in Chinese Religions—  
Recent Studies*  
McMaster University, Term II 2014–15  
[last revised: November 18, 2014]

University Hall 122  
Mondays 10:30–12:30

*Instructor*—**Dr. James A. Benn**

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*Office*—University Hall 120

*Office hours*—Mondays, 9:00–10:00, or by appointment

*Course Description*

In this seminar we shall read and discuss major studies of topics in Chinese Religions produced in English over the last ten years or so. In addition we shall survey trends in recent scholarship produced in other languages (Chinese, Japanese, French, German, etc.). Students will be required to write regular, short (1–2 page), critical responses in addition to a longer essay on the state of the field.

*Course Requirements*

You should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. I will assign one person to lead the discussion of each reading (NB. “discussion” does not mean “summary”). You will turn in a short (1–2 page) written critical response on each week’s reading. The other requirement is a 20 page research paper which will be due on Friday, April 17. You must turn in a proposal and annotated bibliography for that paper on Monday, February 23. A first draft of the paper is due on Monday, March 16. You will give an oral presentation of your research on Monday April 6.

Class presentations and participation:	20%
Critical responses:	10%
Seminar Paper:	70%

*Books and other resources*

I have ordered copies of the following books from *The Campus Store* (you may find them cheaper elsewhere), and placed them on reserve in the library:

Copp, Paul. 2014. *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. Columbia University Press.

McGuire, Beverley Foulks. 2014. *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu*. The Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies. New York: Columbia University Press.

Goossaert, Vincent, and David A. Palmer. 2011. *The Religious Question in Modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Katz, Paul R. 2014. *Religion in China & Its Modern Fate*. The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures. Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press.
- Kieschnick, John, and Meir Shahar, eds. 2014. *India in the Chinese Imagination*. 1st ed. Encounters with Asia. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Shinohara, Koichi. 2014. *Spells, Images, and Mandalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals*. Sheng Yen Series in Chinese Buddhist Studies. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sun, Anna Xiao Dong. 2013. *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yü, Chün-fang. 2013. *Passing the Light: The Incense Light Community and Buddhist Nuns in Contemporary Taiwan*. Topics in Contemporary Buddhism. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

In addition to these books we shall also read articles that I may distribute to you by other means.

You should also know that you have unlimited access through McMaster's libraries to important online dictionaries for East Asian and Buddhist terms: <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/>

1. January 5<sup>th</sup>

Introduction and Organisation

2. January 12<sup>th</sup>

The State of the Field—twenty years ago.

McRae, John R. 1995. "Buddhism. (Chinese Religions: The State of the Field, Part II, Living Religious Traditions: Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam and Popular Religion)." *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (2):354-371. [JSTOR]

Teiser, Stephen F. 1995. "Popular Religion. (Chinese Religions: The State of the Field, Part II, Living Religious Traditions: Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam and Popular Religion)." *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (2):378-395. [JSTOR]

Verellen, Franciscus. 1995. "Taoism. (Chinese Religions—The State of the Field Part II, Living Religious Traditions: Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Islam and Popular Religion)." *Journal of Asian Studies* 54 (2):322-346. [JSTOR]

3. January 19<sup>th</sup>

Goossaert, Vincent, and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*.

4. January 26<sup>th</sup>

Goossaert, Vincent, and David A. Palmer. 2011. *The Religious Question in Modern China*. Continued.

5. February 2<sup>nd</sup>

Katz, Paul R. 2014. *Religion in China & Its Modern Fate*

6. February 9<sup>th</sup>

McGuire, Beverley Foulks. 2014. *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu*

7. February 16<sup>th</sup>

Reading Week+++++

8. February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Kieschnick, John, and Meir Shahar, eds. 2014. *India in the Chinese Imagination*

\*\*\*Proposal and annotated bibliography due\*\*\*

9. March 2<sup>nd</sup>

Kieschnick, John, and Meir Shahar, eds. 2014. *India in the Chinese Imagination Continued*

10. March 9<sup>th</sup>

Copp, Paul. 2014. *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*

11. March 16<sup>th</sup>

\*\*\*First Draft of Paper Due\*\*\*

Shinohara, Koichi. 2014. *Spells, Images, and Mandalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals.*

12. March 23<sup>rd</sup>

Yü, Chün-fang. 2013. *Passing the Light: The Incense Light Community and Buddhist Nuns in Contemporary Taiwan*

13. March 30<sup>th</sup>

Sun, Anna Xiao Dong. 2013. *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities*

14. April 6<sup>th</sup>

Research presentations