



Storytelling in Five Major Religions HUM 3213

Whoso, like you, O monkey-king, combines Dexterity and Valour and Resource, Shall see his routed foemen turn and flee. — Tayodhamma-Jātaka

“The strangest story!” said her sister. “If I live another night,” she said, “I shall tell you a stranger.” — 1001 Arabian Nights

Fall 2022 • Aug 22 – Dec 9 • MH 3.03.20

Tuesday-Thursday 11:30 am – 12:45 pm

James R. Adair • james.adair@utsa.edu (*all email correspondence should begin with HUM3213 on the subject line*)

Class website: <http://rosetta.reltech.org/UTSA/HUM3213/>

Office hours by appointment in FLN 1.03 • 210-363-8230

I. Course Description

How do five major religions use narrative to communicate their religious beliefs and values, while entertaining their audiences at the same time? Find out as we read non-scriptural selections from Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Christianity and discuss possible meanings and impact. Together we'll explore the forests and plains of India, tales of past lives of the Buddha, the world of ancient Israel and Judah, the stories that Scheherazade told the king over 1001 nights, and adventures of the knights of the Round Table.

II. Course Aims and Objectives

Aims

Students will read traditional works written by people from five different religious traditions that have had an impact on the thought and practice of both past and more recent readers, works that have helped to shape readers' understanding of important ideas and values in the context of each

religious tradition.

Specific Learning Objectives

- Students will acquire a basic knowledge of five works that reflect traditional beliefs and values from different religious traditions.
- Students will be able to identify specific themes or ideas present in the five works covered.
- Students will compare the ideas and values of traditional works with one another and with the ideas and values of modern adherents of the five religious traditions covered.
- Students will learn to read and listen critically and respond in a scholarly yet respectful manner to the ideas of others.
- Students will critically analyze books and articles related to the subject matter.

III. Format and Procedures

The instructor will meet with students twice a week for fifteen weeks on Tuesday and Thursday with class sessions of one hour and fifteen minutes. The instructor will use a lecture approach when introducing religious traditions and the assigned work and a modified seminar approach during student-led class discussions. Students are expected to have read assigned materials beforehand and to participate in class discussion. Students, in groups, will often be responsible for leading class discussions. Most class sessions will be devoted to student-led discussions. Class announcements, assignments, and supplementary material will be available on Blackboard and/or the class website.

Assignments are due on the date designated on the class website, and they should be submitted to Blackboard no later than 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Assignments are due on the assigned date regardless of whether the student attends class that week. Late work will be penalized one letter grade per week (or portion of week), with a minimum penalty of half a letter grade.

IV. Course Requirements

1. Class Attendance, Participation, and Assignments

Students will endeavor to attend every class, turn in every assignment on time, and participate in all class discussions. Students with more than four unexcused absences will be penalized three points on their final grade per additional class missed (as part of their Class Participation grade). Excused absences are illness, death in the family, and officially sponsored UTSA activities. The student will be expected to provide documentation for all excused absences. Students who are absent, whether the absence is excused or unexcused, are expected to complete assignments on time (see previous section). Students who know in advance they will be absent may make arrangements to turn in assignments early.

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be prepared in Times or Times New Roman font, 12 point type, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all four sides, and follow MLA specifications. Papers with a minimum page count specified will be considered short of the required minimum if they employ excessive margins. For example, a two-page paper must extend to the bottom of the second page, or it will be considered a one-page paper. Charts, illustrations, and other

non-textual material may be included in a paper when appropriate—in fact, they may well improve a paper in some instances—but the non-textual material will not be counted toward the total page count, so students should adjust the length of their papers accordingly.

2. Course Readings

Two of the assigned readings (*Legends of the Jews* and *The Jataka* are available online (see class website for links). The other three books must be borrowed or purchased:

Seale, Yasmine, trans., and Paulo Lemos Horta, ed. *The Annotated Arabian Nights*. New York: Liveright, 2021.

Egenes, Linda and Kumuda Reddy, trans. *The Ramayana*. New York: TarcherPerigee, 2016.

Eschenbach, Wolfram von and Cyril Edwards, trans. *Parzival and Titurel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

3. Reaction Papers

Students will submit papers (3-5 pages, double-spaced) expressing their reaction to the assigned reading for the unit. These papers, one for each unit, are due on the days specified on the class website. Although the main topic should be the reading assigned for the unit, references to other works (including readings for other units) are welcome.

5. Group-Led Discussions

The class will be divided into two groups of approximately equal size. Throughout the semester, except on the first day of each new unit, one group will be responsible for leading the class discussion over the portion of the reading assigned for that day. The group that is not leading the discussion will be responsible for reading the assigned work and contributing to the class discussion.

Group membership may be altered over the semester.

6. Term Paper

A term paper of at least 12 pages (plus a bibliography, which does not count toward the number of required pages) will be submitted no later than 11:59 pm on Dec 8, the day scheduled for the final exam. The paper should deal with three to five ideas or themes that run across the works covered in class. At least one of the ideas/themes must deal with a topic related to religious beliefs or practices.

The bibliography may include the five assigned books, but it must also include at least one additional scholarly source for each of the assigned books. See “Sources for Academic Research” on the class website for examples of acceptable scholarly sources. If in doubt, ask the instructor.

V. Grading

The student's grade will be determined as follows:

- a. Reaction Papers: 25%
- b. Group-Led Discussions: 50%
- c. Term Paper: 20%
- d. Class Participation: 5%

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following table:

A+: 97-100	B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	F: below 60
A: 93-96	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 63-66	
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62	

VI. Subject to Change

Assignments, grades, schedules, and other items detailed in this syllabus or on the class website are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. The instructor will give students reasonable notice of any changes that are made.

VII. Supplemental Information

UTSA offers many services to help students succeed in their classes. Some of the offices that provide these services are Counseling Services, Student Disability Services, and the Tomás Rivera Center, which offers Supplemental Instruction and Tutoring. Information on these services, as well as the Student Code of Conduct and Scholastic Dishonesty policies, can be found on the following web page: <http://provost.utsa.edu/syllabus.asp>. Please read the information on this page, which may be considered an appendix to this syllabus.