

Leadership and Religious Values

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Class Room: Jepson 120

Class Time: Monday & Wednesday, 1:30 to 2:45 pm

Office Hours: [I post a sign-up sheet for my office hours online](#). Please sign up for office hours there. I update my office hours on Sunday afternoon for the upcoming week.

Overview

In this course, we'll explore how religious values and traditions influence leadership. Some questions that we'll consider together include:

- What are the values and ideals that are articulated by different religious traditions?
- In what ways do different religious ideals and values affect how leaders behave or should behave?
- How do different religious traditions conceptualize leadership?
- How does leadership affect the development of religious traditions and values?

We'll approach these questions by investigating religious values and ideals through the careful study and interpretation of primary texts, particularly the foundational scriptures in different religious traditions. We'll focus on religious values and principles related to leadership, toleration, war, gender, social justice, and other contentious moral issues.

Learning Outcomes

This course satisfies the general education requirement of Literary and Textual Inquiry.

Literary and Textual Inquiry

- Students will demonstrate their ability to apply at least two interpretive frameworks to objects of literary or textual analysis.
- Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze objects of literary or textual analysis in one or more mode or style.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which texts are created or received to serve specific ends.
- Students will demonstrate their ability to interpret and analyze specific texts in relation to one another and/or to other fields of experience within aesthetic, cultural, historical, philosophical, or experiential contexts.

Immersive Historical Simulations

This course will achieve these learning outcomes through the use of historical simulations. You'll first learn about major ideas and debates in religious traditions, and analyze some of their foundational texts through different interpretative lenses. You'll then apply what you've learned by playing the roles of important actors during pivotal events in history, such as diplomatic crises, revolutions, and international conferences.

Why learn about leadership and religious values through historical simulations? First, these simulations will deepen your understanding of the major ideas and questions that we will explore throughout this class. You'll need to debate concepts related to leadership and religion, and apply them to concrete historical situations. Second, the simulations develop your abilities to successfully engage in argumentative writing, oral communication, negotiation, and teamwork. You won't just learn *about* leadership in this class. You will also *practice* leadership.

Finally, these games are simply a lot of fun. Some students are nervous about the idea of participating in historical roleplaying games because they've never done anything like this. But the majority of students find participating in these simulations to be an enjoyable experience. To get a sense of what this class will be like, you should read the [watch this video](#) or [read this FAQ on the class](#). During the first week, we'll be playing a short historical roleplaying game and you can see whether this approach to

learning appeals to you after you've experienced it.

We'll play two long historical simulations and several short ones over the course of this semester. I've picked out the first two games, but *you, the students, will choose the other games that we play*. The games that we'll start with are:

- Zion in the Balance: The Debate over the Uganda Plan, 1903–1905. The year is 1903. In the great hall of the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basel, the air is thick with tension. Delegates from across Europe have gathered under the towering gaze of Theodor Herzl, whose dream of a Jewish homeland has brought them together year after year. But this Congress is unlike the others. Just months ago, in the wake of a brutal pogrom in Kishinev, the British government offered Herzl an astonishing proposal: a vast tract of land in East Africa, in what is now called the "Uganda Scheme." A safe refuge, they say, where Jews could live under self-rule. To some, the plan is a lifeline—immediate shelter from violence, a first foothold for the Zionist dream. To others, it is a betrayal of the movement's beating heart. The land is not Zion, not the soil of their ancestors, not the place sung of in prayers for two thousand years. On the Congress floor, voices rise and clash. The delegates know the decision they make here will shape the destiny of the movement—and perhaps the fate of the Jewish people—for generations to come.
- Ashoka: Becoming the Dharma King. In 260 B.C.E., Ashoka returned from his successful war against Kalinga, grieved at the great suffering and loss of life he had brought to the land. He was determined to become a better Buddhist and a king who ruled not through force, but through the Dharma (literally "law," but it comes to mean "true teaching" and "order of the universe"). As members of the Council, students represent the major traditions operative at Ashoka's time: Brahmin Traditionalists, Jains, Ajivikas, and Buddhists who must advise the King on the policies that will help him become the Dharma-king. However, each of the King's proposals is controversial because the Kingdom is home to so many different traditions. The King must seek to navigate between the different interests of the traditions. At the same time, the King believes that all traditions should honor and learn

from each other. The King cannot afford to rule autocratically. He needs to keep peace within the Kingdom so he cannot simply impose his Buddhist views. He also knows that many kings have fallen before, so he must always be on the lookout for plots against his rule that can even come from his own family. He cannot afford to alienate any of the traditions that could serve as a base for opposition to his rule. The primary texts for this simulation are largely selected from ancient Buddhist scriptures known as the Pali Canon as well as scriptures associated with Hinduism and Jainism. This game will help us to learn more about the “Dharmic” religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, which are today practiced by hundreds of millions of people.

Each game will better familiarize us with world religions and require us to analyze and interpret their foundational texts. Remember that you’ll choose the second major game that we play and the topic of this second game will focus on the Abrahamic religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and/or Judaism.

Supporting Your Learning

I care about your success in this class and I’m willing to help you in any way possible. If you’d like to meet with me, you can sign up for my office hours [here](#) (note that I update my office hours for the coming week on Saturday or early Sunday).

If you’d like to leave me an anonymous comment with any questions or concerns, please see [this form](#).

Course Requirements

There is a total of 1000 possible points in this class. The points will be distributed as follows:

Description

Class Participation (250 points)

For each historical simulation, there are two components: a more academic setup and the actual simulation. For the setup, you’re expected to

Click on the above link to see a rubric for each assignment!

listen attentively to other students, participate in class discussions, and complete in-class activities and assignments. For the simulations, I would like you to enthusiastically participate in the game and try hard to achieve your objectives and remain faithful to your character's biography.

Speeches **(50 points)**

As part of the games, you'll need to deliver speeches from the perspectives of your characters. The goal of the speeches is to introduce your character to the class, present your perspective, and persuade other plays of the merits of your cause. This exercise will also help you to practice and hone your public speaking skills. Out of all the speeches that you give, I'll select the best two and count these toward your grade on this assignment.

Annotations **(100 points)**

We will use an online social program for the readings called [Persuall](#). Persuall is a collaborative annotation tool that helps students to do the readings in a more effective and thorough way. I will typically assign readings through Persuall and you'll annotate them before class begins. To do this, you'll write comments on the readings and respond to other students' comments.

Written Assignments **(600 points)**

For each historical simulation, you will need to complete writing assignments. But the nature of your specific assignments will depend on your character in each simulation. You'll learn more about the details of your assignments after I assign you a character. But you can expect to write four or five short papers during the course of the semester. Each of these papers will require you to interpret and engage with primary texts from the perspectives of your roles.

Extra Credit

You can earn extra credit in this class by achieving the victory objectives of your characters in the simulations.

Laptops and Other Devices

Please do not use your laptop, ipad, or phone during class unless I direct you to do so. I ask this because a growing body of research finds that the use of laptops and cell phones in class diminish student learning. So, if you use a laptop or other device without authorization during class, I'll ask you to put it away. Please review the class participation rubric for more information on my policies regarding laptops.

The Readings

All readings are available on the blackboard page for this class. I may make some modifications to the syllabus as the semester progresses. I'll announce any changes to the syllabus in class and you can always find the updated syllabus on blackboard.

Week 1: Introduction

Monday, August 25th: Introduction

- No Reading.
- Role distribution.

Wednesday, August 27th: Zion in the Balance

- Read historical context for the game.
- Read Theodor Herzl: The Jewish State (1896).
- Play Zion in the Balance in-class.

Week 2: Becoming the Dharma King

Monday, September 1st:

- All readings will be in the gamebook, which you can find on blackboard under the readings for this week.
- Historical readings, pages 4-33.
- The Rigveda, pp. 110-113.

Wednesday, September 3rd:

- First Persuall Assignment:
 - Section 2, Historical Background: Brahman Shramanas through Ājīvikas, pp. 33-44.
 - Section 3, The Game, pp. 51-71.
 - Section 5, Readings 2, On Sacrifice: Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, pp. 121-124.
 - *From now on, every reading will be a Persuall assignment unless noted otherwise on the syllabus.*

Week 3: Becoming the Dharma King

Monday, September 8th:

- Gamebook, Section 2, Historical Background: Buddhists, pp. 44-48.
- Gamebook, Section 5, Readings 1: Introduction to Buddhism, pp. 84-109.

Wednesday, September 10th:

- Workshop on writing assignments and giving speeches.
- You should begin reading "On Sacrifice" and "On Dharma." For these readings, see the blackboard folders for week 4 and 5.

Week 4: Becoming the Dharma King

Monday, September 15th: Paper 1

- In-class writing.

Wednesday, September 17th: Banning Sacrifice

- Game Session 1.
- Readings: "On Sacrifice."
- Speeches on Animal Sacrifice: Vajraloman, Devasarman, Lakshmana, Vrishasena, and Moggallāna

Week 5: Becoming the Dharma King

Monday, September 22nd: Recruiting Royals and Public Works

- Readings: "On Dharma."

- Game Session 2.
- Speeches on Dharma Traditions: Khemā, Jīvasiddhi, Meghanād, and Kāmadeva.
- Speech on Public works: Sattuka.

Wednesday, September 24th: Royal speeches and commissioning Dharma-mahamatras

- Game Session 3.
- Readings: "On the Ajivikas."
- Speech on Religious Conversion: Prince Rādha and Princess Sangamitta
- Speech on Dharma-Mahāmātras: Mantāniputta
- Speech on Cave Donations: Yuyutsu

Week 6: Becoming the Dharma King

Monday, September 29th: Paper 2

- In-class writing.
- Reading: "On Women."

Wednesday, October 1st:

- Game Session 4.
- Speeches on Protecting Bhikshunis: Upāli and Revata
- Speeches on the Ajivikas: Jambū and Yuyutsu or Kāmadeva

Week 7: Becoming the Dharma King

Monday, October 6th:

- Game Session 5.
- Speeches on Women Shramanas: Vimalā and Nānduka

Wednesday, October 8th:

- Debriefing

Week 8: New Game

Monday, October 13th: Fall Break

Wednesday, October 15th:

- You, the students, will select the next game that we play! The choice is between the following games:
 - Constantine and the Council of Nicaea: Defining Orthodoxy and Heresy in Christianity, 325 CE.
 - The Fourth Crusade: The Remaking of the Medieval World, 1204
 - Egypt, 1920s: Feminism, Nationalism, and Islam
 - Two Nations, One Land: UNSCOP and the Question of Israel (1947)
- Keep in mind that, after we select a new game to play, I'll need to update the syllabus to reflect this fact and the schedule may change somewhat. Please check the blackboard page for the most up-to-date syllabus.

Week 9: New Game

Monday, October 20th:

- Setup Session 1
- Reading

Wednesday, October 22nd:

- Setup Session 2
- Reading

Week 10: New Game

Monday, October 27th:

- Setup Session 3
- Reading

Wednesday, October 29th:

- In-class writing

Week 11: New Game

Monday, November 3rd:

- Game Session 1

Wednesday, November 5th:

- Game Session 2

Week 12: New Game

Monday, November 10th:

- Game Session 3

Wednesday, November 12th:

- In-Class Writing

Week 13: New Game

Monday, November 17th:

- Game Session 4

Wednesday, November 19th:

- Game Session 5

Week 14: New Game & Thanksgiving Break

Monday, November 24th:

- Game Session 6

Wednesday, November 26th:

- No class.

Week 15: Debriefing and Final Game

Monday, December 1st:

- Debriefing
- The class will choose our final, short game. Your choice is between:
 - o Conclave, 1492: The Election of a Renaissance Pope
 - o The Second Buddhist Council: Rule and Schism in the Early Sangha
 - o A Crisis of Faith: Byzantine Iconoclasm and the Search of Holiness in the Medieval World
 - o Perhaps more options.

Wednesday, December 3rd: Setup for final session

- Reading

Final Session: Final Game

Tuesday, December 9th from 9am to 12pm

- In-Class Writing
- Final Game