

University of California, San Diego
Global Seminars I
Summer 2024

CAT 125
Religion & the Posthuman Future

Monday & Tuesday
Lectures & discussions
2:00pm-4:00pm

Wednesday, Thursday Excursions

Summer Session I
July 1-August 3
Global Seminar
UCSD

Professor: Babak Rahimi

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This course offers an introduction to the study of religion and posthumanism. It examines how information technologies facilitate or transform religious practices and discourses in the context of societal processes, and in doing so radically challenge traditional religious understandings of human. The notion of posthuman is, therefore, meant to explore ways in which human transformation into deities can be realized through new technologies. More specifically, the course examines the intersection of neuroscience, robotic technologies, and digital practices in the configuration of new human behaviors and new states of consciousness. Considering the broader relationship between religion and modernity, we will explore older and emerging media such as television, internet, and cellphone to understand how religion interacts with technology. With South

Korea as a global innovator of new technologies, we explore the relationship between technology and religion in the context of the country's collaborative system of state, industry, and educational sector. We study how posthuman futures can be anticipated in the reconstruction of religious traditions, including ancient spirituality, Won Buddhism, Islam, Jeungsanism, messianism, and Protestant Christianity.

The basic goals of the course are as follow:

1. To acquire basic themes in the study of technology and religion and how mediums of communication, can shape a posthuman future.
2. To gain an understanding of religion in posthumanist conception.
3. Study of a non-European cultures and religions in relation with technological experiences.
4. To gain a familiarity with basic theoretical debates on religion and modernity.
5. To improve one's writing and critical skills.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

David F. Noble, *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention* (Penguin, 1999)

Laurel Kendall, *Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion* (University of Hawaii Press, 2009)

Pramod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (Polity, 2003)

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Assignments:

Assignments and grades will be determined as follows:

Reading Group Assignments	30%
Final Exam	40%
Excursion reviews	20 %
Class participation	10%

EXAMS:

- **Final exam** is a research paper on a topic of your choice related to the history of South Korea. Maximum: 1500 words. Your paper should include bibliography (APA, MLA, etc.); minimum 5 sources, aside from assigned texts. I will provide a study guide for the final exam.

- **Reading Group Assignments:** students will form small group of 3 people and write a group review of the week's assigned texts. The review should be 500 words, max. Your group review can range from critical reflections to a creative work based on an assigned text. No need for citation. Due Sunday 11:59pm, starting the first week.

- **Excursion Review:** After each excursion, you will submit 200 words review of what you experience and in do so relate it to the course material: themes discussed in lecture or assigned texts.

- **Attendance and Participation**

Active participation for each week comprises 10% of your grade. Students are expected to come to the lectures and are required to attend the sections. Students are also expected to have read the assigned reading materials and be prepared to talk about the reading material and lectures during discussion sessions. You can certainly ask questions during the lectures.

- You must complete all parts of the writing assignment, attend section, and take all exams in order to pass the course.

- Please note that make-up exams maybe allowed only in the case of justified reason for absence.

- The writing exam will be a research paper based on your experiences in excursions.

- You must complete all parts of the writing assignment, attend section, and submit all exams to pass the course.

CLASS POLICY & GUIDELINES:

Late Papers

You must complete all assigned papers in a timely manner to pass the course. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each class that they are late.

Plagiarism

The major part of your course assignments and exams involves writings based on your assigned reading. So, make sure to cite your sources, either quoted directly or paraphrased, so to avoid plagiarism. In other words, submit your own original work! See me if you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism. If you are caught cheating you will automatically fail the course.

Assistance

In case of disability that may require accommodation, please see me. ☺

Schedule for the course

- Monday and Tuesday: 10:00 am – 4:00pm lectures.
- Wednesday and Thursday – Excursion only day.

Schedule of Lectures

WEEK 1: July 1-5

July 1, Monday: Orientation in the morning

***Lecture in a Classroom**

10am-12:00pm

lunch

2:00-4:00pm

- **Tour of Seoul**

July 2, Tuesday: What is Posthumanism?

Lecture Site: Bongeunsa Temple & Bulguksa Temple

July 3, Wednesday: Excursion

- **Gyeongbokgung Palace & Myeong-dong Cathedral**

July 4, Thursday: Excursion

- **DMZ**

WEEK 2: July 8-12

July 8, Monday: What is Posthumanism?

Lecture Site: Jongmyo Shrine

July 9, Tuesday: Religious Diversity in South Korea and Technoscience

Lecture Site: Joygyesa Temple & Haedong Yonggungsa

July 10, Wednesday: Excursion

- **Seonamsa Temple**

July 11, Thursday: Excursion

- **Nami Island: Mt Seorak and Naksana Temple**

WEEK 3: July 15-19

July 15, Monday: “Korean Buddhism” & New Technological Future

Lecture site:

July 16, Tuesday: “Korean Buddhism” & New Technological Future

July 17, Wednesday: Excursion

- **Donghwasa**

July 18, Thursday: Excursion

- **Seakguram**

WEEK 4 July 22-26

July 22, Monday: Religion & Transmedia

- **Gospel City Church**

July 23, Tuesday: Religion & Transmedia

- **Seoul Central Mosque**

July 24, Wednesday: Excursion

- **Buseoka Temple**

July 25, Thursday: Excursion

- **Sanbanggalsa Temple & Gwaneumsa Temple**

WEEK 5 July 29-August 2

July 29, Monday: New Religion and New Technologies

July 30, Tuesday: New Religions and the New Humanity

July 31, Wednesday: Excursion

- **Gamcheon Culture Village**

August 1, Thursday: Excursion

- **Gamcheon Culture Village**

August 2, Conclusion & Goodbye dinner