REL 223 World Religions: East and West

Book Review Guides

Book Review 1

The first Book Review is based upon required course readings that offer contemporary accounts of the lived experience of Confucianism and Islam. The reviews call for you to consider the contemporary expressions of these faiths and to reflect upon their relevance to your own and our collective societal experience—To consider how central teachings, principals and practices of these faith traditions could be introduced and implemented into your own life, experience and American culture so as to lend to your personal and our collective edification.

In light of the above description from our course syllabus, your review of T.R. Reid’s book, *Confucius Lives Next Door: What Living In The East Teaches Us About Living In the West,* ought to consider the following:

Reid and his family’s experience of Confucianism/the Confucian ethos during their residency in Japan in the 1990’s—An experience which he describes as East Asia’s Social Miracle.

How Confucianism/the Confucian ethos is expressed in contemporary Japanese culture—Including, when relevant/pertinent, consideration and assessment of central Confucian tenets operative in and experienced by the Reid’s during their residency in contemporary Japan, e.g., evidence of the 5 Confucian Virtues (*jen*, *yi*, *li*, *chih* and *hsin*); the 5 Confucian Key Relationships and corresponding 10 Appropriate Attitudes; the Confucian Doctrine of the Mean; Rectification; etc.

What lessons we can take from the Confucian/Japanese experience that might contribute to a better social experience in our culture and to the improvement of ourselves as individuals.

Additionally:

Allow the review to be an occasion by which you reflect upon and consider aspects, anecdotes and aspects of the book and the experience of the Reid’s which particularly struck you in some way—positively and/or negatively—and critically engage and assess why this was the case. This may lead some to gravitate on issues relevant to education or crime or social analysis or economics or cultural rites of passage or interpersonal relationships or…In short, there is freedom for you to pursue points of particular interest to you and/or relevant to your major…
Book Review 2

The Second Book Review is based upon required course readings that proffer contemporary accounts of the lived experience of Confucianism and Islam. The reviews call for you to consider the contemporary expressions of these faiths and to reflect upon their relevance to your own and our collective societal experience—To consider how central teachings, principals and practices of these faith traditions could be introduced and implemented into your own life, experience and American culture so as to lend to your personal and our collective edification.

In light of the above description from our course syllabus, your review of Ali Eteraz’s book, *Children of the Dust*, ought to consider the following:

- How journey is a common motif in spiritual writings—Eteraz’s journey from childhood to adulthood and from Pakistan to the United States and how these journeys, in turn, convey Eteraz’s evolving self-understanding, spiritual maturation, understanding of Islam, etc.

- Eteraz’s and his family’s experience of Islam/the Islamic ethos during their residency in Pakistan and America, respectively.

- How Islam/the Islamic ethos is expressed in contemporary Pakistani culture—Including, when relevant/pertinent, consideration and assessment of central Islamic tenets operative in and experienced by the Eteraz’s during their residency in contemporary Pakistan.

- The Eteraz’s experience of how Islam is perceived by certain segments of the population in the United States via consideration of relevant/pertinent experiences of the Eteraz’s during their residency in contemporary America…and how Ali’s American experiences impacted, informed, shaped and colored his spiritual journey and his understanding of his faith/religion.

- What lessons we can take from Eteraz’s experiences that might contribute to a better social experience in our culture and to the improvement of ourselves as individuals as we undergo our own journeys and spiritual maturation, and as our own religious understandings and sensitivities evolve.

Additionally:

- Allow the review to be an occasion by which you reflect upon and consider aspects, anecdotes and aspects of the book and the experience of Eteraz which particularly struck you in some way—positively and/or negatively—and critically engage and assess why this was the case. This may lead some to gravitate on issues relevant to social analysis or cultural rites of passage or interpersonal relationships or religious toleration…In short, there is freedom for you to pursue points of particular interest to you and/or relevant to your major…