REL 223 - World Religions: East and West

Focus Questions for *Confucius Lives Next Door*

The book, *Confucius Lives Next Door*, chronicles the experiences of a modern western family living in Japan, and offers trenchant insight to the culture of the Far East and Confucianism. As you read, journal, and write your book review, consider the following questions:

How do you see the Confucian ethos and the Confucian virtues exemplified in Reid’s experiences in Japan?

Do you agree with Reid’s assessment of how and why the post-World War II “Asian Miracle happened” (e.g., Reid 14, 227–28)? Why or why not?

Do you think the “over politeness” of the social interactions, including formal ones (such as the way rules and laws are posted publically) is good or bad (e.g., Reid 81, 171)? Why?

What do you think of the Japanese people’s overall view of Americans? Do you agree with it? Why or why not? (e.g., Reid 108)

Why do you think the crime rates are so low in Japan (e.g., Reid 20–23, 188–89)? Is this something that could be replicated elsewhere? Why or why not?

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

Reid paints a very optimistic and positive picture of Japanese culture and Confucianism. Do you think he is passing over some downsides? What might these possibly be?

Also reflection anecdotes and aspects of the book and Reid’s experience that particularly struck you in some way—positively and/or negatively—and critically engage and assess why this was the case. There is freedom for you to pursue points of particular interest to you and/or relevant to your major...