**Hinduism**

* Ganesh(a) – in Hindi the a is masculine
  + God of education and obstacles
  + Son of Shiva
  + Lots of stories that pertain to Ganesh
* Is Hinduism polytheistic or monotheistic – mono
  + Overarching god is Brahmin
  + Other gods are deities or other representations or manifestations of Brahmin
  + Looks/feels like polytheism because of all these gods, a bit confusing
* 4 key pieces to Hinduism today
  + Why are we here
  + What is the human condition
  + Where are we going
  + How do we get to where we are going
* Oldest existing religion in the world – at least 10K bc
  + Believed if they didn’t chant the sun wouldn’t come up the next day
  + Probably multiple religions lumped together by Europeans, mixing of religion and culture
    - Very informal, can practice anywhere any time
  + No specific founder
  + 3rd largest religion in world
    - About 900 million followers
    - According to Hindu we are all Hindu, you can be more than one thing, cannot convert because you are born that way
  + Reincarnation after death and the oneness of the soul
    - Life sucks, and you’re going to die, and you are going to repeat this process over and over, have to figure out how to get out of the cycle
      * THIS IS THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF HINDUISM
    - Die is not a bad thing, what you don’t want to have happen is to be born again, ultimate goal is to not be born
  + Several sacred texts
    - Vedas
    - Upanishads
    - Mahabharata
    - Ramayana
    - Puranas
  + Holy sites – Ganges, Mt. Meru
  + Holy days – Diwali, Holi, Janmashtami
* Creation Story
  + At the beginning of the universe there was great overarching being named Brahman – disrupted and split into trillions of pieces, the sound om broke him up
  + All of us have a little Brahman in us, trying to reconnect that soul with Brahman
  + This happens every 4.1-8.2 billion years, depending on your interpretation
    - Earth is made
    - Goes through several ages/epochs – also known as Yugas
    - Destroys the world
    - Earth is reborn
  + Each epoch is divided into four ages
  + Currently a few thousand years into the last Yuga or kali Yuga
  + Hindus need the caste system because people don’t do what they’re supposed to do
    - Originally wasn’t supposed to be a hierarchy, but it became that way through the Brits wanting them to fight each other rather than the British
* Human condition
  + Trapped in Samsara – the rebirth cycle
  + Every action on takes, good/bad creates Karma which goes on to effect ones future
  + Bad Karma leads t degradation of the dharma (notion of interconnectedness) and descent into progressively worse Yugas
    - We are in the worst Yuga right now
  + When you achieve Brahman it’s called Moksha
  + Your intent matters more than the outcome
* Caste system doesn’t really work today because of capitalism, three paths today -
  + Devotion
  + Good works
  + Knowledge
* Where are we going -
  + Ultimate goal is to return to Brahman
  + Must break Samsara and reach Moksha
    - Reincarnation will no longer occur
    - Moksha can take several lifetimes to complete or just one
  + Traditionally done using you Dharma – doing your duty
  + When one has not achieved moksha, the atman will instead be reincarnated – three readings of reincarnation
    - Atman = soul
    - Karma
    - Atamans desire to try new things
    - Atman has one attempt to be human
  + Atman cannot achieve moksha
  + Have about 383,000 lives
    - If you cannot achieve moksha you might go to hell, be destroyed
* How do we get there
  + Four goals
    - Dharma – do your duty
    - Artha – prosperity, providing for family, economic values
    - Kama – pleasure, love, psychological values
    - Moksha – spiritually and liberation form the cycle of suffering
      * 1 is most important, 1-3 leads to 4
  + As capitalism has become more popular the there have become three paths

**Buddhism**

* Grows out of Hinduism
* Buddha’s life (also known as Siddhartha Gautama (birth name) known by many other names)
  + He was born a prince
  + His father lived in a prefect paradise
    - Had everything he could possible want
    - Held behind the palace walls for 25-30 years
    - Father found him a wife, whom he had sex with for years at a time
    - Have a child
  + Buddha decides he wants to leave the palace, sees 4 things
    - Old man – some people get old, he didn’t know this
    - Sick man – didn’t know people could get sick
    - Man who just recently died, didn’t know that people died
    - Wandering Brahmin ascetic priest –
  + Decides he cannot live in a world like this, decides to leave his perfection to go into the world
  + Finds the ascetic, lives with him for six years
    - Does anything he can do to get close to the gods
    - Decides after six years he hasn’t moved any closer to god, and says screw it.
      * Goes and sits under a fig tree
      * Sits there until he figures out the secret of life or dies
      * Lots of stories that exist from this time
        + Tempted by the god of death
      * Realizes the ultimate truth, that nothing in the world is permanent
        + Suffering will exist as long as people are connected to permanence
      * Says that the Buddha sat under the tree for 49 days
* Other Buddha’s
  + Other beings that have achieved some form of enlightenment
* Ultimate goal is Nirvana – nothingness
* Founded around the 5th century in India
  + Buddha was actually a person who walked the earth
  + Lived 80 years
    - Died from a woman serving him bad fish
* Three types of Buddhism
  + All that really matters is Buddhism is different by region
* 5th largest religion in the world
  + Most Buddhists live in Asia
* Non-theistic
  + Buddhist don’t care about god
  + Buddhists don’t like the idea that a god would let people suffer on the earth
* Buddhists believe in reincarnation
  + In Buddhism the soul is not a permanent thing, it can change
  + There are six things you can turn into – god, demigod, human, animal, hungry ghost, hell
    - God/Demigod – don’t do good things for humanity, don’t want this
    - Human – you want to be this
    - Animal – Same as Hinduism
    - Hungry Ghost – Ghosts who walk around, who are always starving, with mouths that are too small to eat anything, no knees
    - Hell – you can be sent there, have to work hard to get there
* Dali Lama –
  + Living Buddha
  + Spokesperson for 2% of Buddhism
  + Reincarnated version of a different Buddha
  + 14th Dali Lama
* Why are we here
  + Buddha refused to answer the question
  + Why do you care, why does it matter?
* What is the human condition
  + We are stuck in Samsara
    - There are three poisons in the world –
      * Maya – illusion/ignorance from a pig
      * Ta – craving or desire, represented by bird, always with its flock
      * Devsha – hatred, represented by snake because it’s always ready to attack
    - Represented by Dukkha, suffering, we need to break out of this
* Where are we going?
  + Trying really hard to get to Nirvana
  + Get a sense of self, unless you know yourself, how can you stop the various ideas of permanence, hatred, etc.
    - Thoughts count toward bad karma
  + If you do good things you get good karma, you do bad things you get bad karma
    - Double (both ways) if you are committing acts towards monks
* How do we get there
  + Turn the wheel of dharma
    - Start excepting Buddhism
    - Say the original Buddhist prayer
    - Accept the 4 nobles truths
      * Suffering exists
      * The origin of suffering is attachment
      * It is possible to end suffering
      * To end suffering follow the noble eight fold path
    - Eight fold path
      * Right understanding
      * Thought
      * Speech
      * Action
      * Livelihood
      * Effort
      * Awareness
      * Connection
    - The way you’re really going to get there is by becoming a monk
    - Supposed to take multiple lifetimes to become a Buddha