**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