In this course we will examine the following cultures, civilizations, and religions in regard to their beliefs related to the afterlife, that is to say, to what happens to someone after death and whether or not there is a judgment, reward, punishment or annihilation, etc. We will view works of art which illustrate the various beliefs. We will devote more time to some religions than to others, according to how much interesting art is available and accessible.

Ancient Egypt

Ancient Mesopotamian civilizations

Zoroastrianism - the religion of ancient and pre-Islamic Iran – still practiced to some extent in India and Iran

Ancient Greece

Ancient Rome

Hinduism

Buddhism – originally in India and then spread to China, Japan, and Tibet

China and Japan - religions other than Buddhism

Judaism

Christianity

Islam
Visions of Heaven and Hell: The Afterlife in World Art
Spring Quarter, 2015
Roberta Shaw

ANCIENT EGYPT

Chronology – (dates are approximate)

Early Dynastic Period – 1st & 2nd Dynasties
3100 – 2700 BCE

OLD KINGDOM – 3rd to 6th Dynasties
2700 – 2200 BCE
  Stepped pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, c.2630-2611 BCE, 27th century BCE
  Great Pyramids and Great Sphinx at Giza, c.2550-2472 BCE, 26th-25th c. BCE

First Intermediate Period – 7th to 10th Dynasties
2200 – 2100 BCE

MIDDLE KINGDOM – 11th to 13th Dynasties
2125 – 1650 BCE

Second Intermediate Kingdom – 14th to 17th Dynasties
1650 – 1550 BCE

NEW KINGDOM – 18th to 20th Dynasties
1550 – 1070 BCE
  Famous Pharaohs: Hatshepsut (15th c. BCE), Akhenaten and Queen Nefertiti (14th c. BCE), Tutankhamen (14th c. BCE), Ramses II (13th c. BCE).
  Various Books of the Dead, e.g. papyrus scrolls for Hunefer, Ani (13th c. BCE)

Third Intermediate Period – 21st to 25th Dynasties
1670 – 660 BCE

Late Period – 26th to 30th Dynasties
660 – 343 BCE

Persian Kings
343 – 332 BCE

Macedonian Kings (after conquest by Alexander the Great)
332 – 305 BCE

Ptolemaic (Greek) Period
305 – 30 BCE
  Cleopatra ruled from 51 to 30 BCE

Roman Period
30 BCE – 395 CE
  Egypt becomes a Roman Province under Octavian/Augustus in 30 BCE

SOME IMPORTANT EGYPTIAN DEITIES:

ATUM-RE (a.k.a. AMUN, AMUN-RE, RA, etc.) – self-created supreme Creator God and Sun god, created humans, created gods SHU (air) and his sister TEFNUT (moisture) who became parents of SEB (earth) and NUT (heaven/sky). They in turn became parents of four deities: OSIRIS, who became Lord of the dead; ISIS who was sister/wife of Osiris and mother of their son HORUS; NEPHTHYS, their sister; and SETH their brother who was the founder of evil on earth, hence the god of chaos and adversity.

ANUBIS – mortuary god, shown as a black dog or a Jackal. He supervises mummification of the dead and oversees the weighing of the heart of the deceased during the judgment after death.

MAAT – goddess of cosmic order, truth and justice, shown as human wearing ostrich plume, or as the feather alone, which is weighed against the heart of the deceased in the judgment after death.

THOTH – god of wisdom and knowledge, shown as an ibis, or a human with ibis head, or a baboon. Patron of scribes, he records the result of the judgment of souls of the dead.