

Fall Quarter, 2007
M-W-F: 11:00-11:50
North Hall #1006

RS 4: Introduction to Buddhism

Professor: Vesna A. Wallace
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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the wide range of the Buddhist ideas and practices that have developed within the diverse regions of South, Central, and East Asia. This course will also introduce students to the various Buddhist literary and artistic expressions. The course covers a wide range of Buddhist traditions: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, Chan/Zen, Pure Land Buddhism, and so on. The course will address several areas—namely, the historical continuities and discontinuities of Buddhism across Asia, the ways in which the pre-Buddhist ideas shaped the Buddhist tradition in the given geographical areas; and it will address the social and political conditions that have facilitated the ideological and practical changes within various Buddhist traditions.

Course Reading

- Charles Prebish and Damien Keown. *Introducing Buddhism*. New York and London: Routledge, 2006
- *Course Reader*: available in the Alternative Copy Shop, 6556 Pardall Road, Isla Vista

Course Requirements

- All students are expected to regularly attend the class and the assigned sections with Teaching Assistants, participate in the section discussions, and submit weekly assignments given by their Teaching Assistants.

- Students who are taking the course for a grade or pass/fail are required to take 3 assigned exams taken in the class and write a final paper (4-5 pages). Exams and the paper are each 20% of the final grade, and weekly assignments in TA sections make an additional 20% of the final grade.

Schedule of Exams

- Midterm exam #1 - 22 October (M)
- Midterm Exam #2 - 14 November (W)
- Midterm Exam #3 - 30 November (F)
- Final Paper Due - 12 December

Schedule of Classes

I: Foundations of Buddhism

29 September (F): Introduction to the Course

1 October (M): Social and Historical Backgrounds to Buddhism

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part I: Chapter: “Background to Buddhism”

3 October (W): Early Buddhist Worldview: Cosmology and the Doctrines of Karma and Rebirth

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part I: Chapter 1 (“Karma and cosmology”)

5 October (F): The Life and Death of a Historical Buddha

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part I: Chapter 2 (“The Buddha”)

8 October (M): The Four Noble Truths

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part I: Chapter 3 (“The Dharma”): pp. 43-54
Course Reader: “The Four Noble Truths”

10 October (W): The Buddhist Doctrine of No-Self (Identitylessness)

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part I: Chapter 3 (“The Dharma”): pp. 54-59
Course Reader: Rupert Gethin, “No Self: Personal Continuity and Dependent Arising”

12 October (F): Three Pillars of Buddhism: Ethical Life, Meditation, and Wisdom

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part II: Chapter 7: pp. 114-125

15 October (M): Buddhist Meditation

Reading: *Course Reader*: Rupert Gettin, “The Buddhist Path: The Way of Calm and Insight”

17 October (W): Early Buddhist Communities and Their Scriptures

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part I: Chapter 4 (“The Buddhist Saṅgha”)

19 October (F): October (M): “In the Footsteps of the Buddha” (Theravāda Buddhism in Śrī Lankā)

Reading: *Course Reader*: “The Growth of the Sangha”

22 October (M): **Midterm exam #1**

Part II: Buddhism in South Asia

24 October (W): Early Buddhist Schools in India

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part II: Chapter “Development” and Chapter 5 (“Buddhism in India”): pp. 73-88

26 October (F): Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Bodhisattva Ideal

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part II: Chapter 5: pp. 88-94; and Chapter 6

29 October (M): A Concept of Emptiness in Mahāyāna (Madhyamaka School)

Reading: *Course Reader*: Peter Harvey, “Mahāyāna Philosophy” and “Mahāyāna Holy Beings”

31 October (W): A Development of the Mahāyāna Schools in India

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part II: Chapter 7

2 November (F): Relics, Stūpas, and Pilgrimage

Reading: *Course Reader*: Donald Lopez, ““Enshrining a Relic,” “The Consecration of the Buddha Image,” and “Pilgrimage”
Todd Lewis, “Stūpas and Spouses”

5 November (M): Tantric Buddhism and the Vajrasattva Ideal

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part II: Chapter 7: pp. 129-133
Course Reader: Paul Williams, “Mantrayāna/Vajrayāna—
Tantric Buddhism in India”

7 November (W): Ritual Practices in Tantric Buddhism and the Role of a Teacher

Reading: *Course Reader:* Todd Lewis, “The Refuge of Mantra Recitation: The *Pañcarakṣā*”

Lama Yeshe: “Inspiration and the Guru” and “Overthrowing the Tyranny of Ordinary Experiences”

9 November (F): The Role of Maṇḍalas in Tantric Buddhism

Reader: *Course Reader:* Martin Brauen, “Inner Mandala: The Person” and “The Other Mandala: The Tantric Method”

12 November (M): Holiday

14 November (W): **Midterm Exam #2**

Part III: Buddhism Beyond India

16 November (F): Buddhism in Southeast Asia

Guest Speaker: Nathan McGovern

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part III: Chapter 8: pp. 137-154

19 November (M): Buddhism and Violence in Contemporary Thailand

Guest Speaker: Michael Jerryson

Reading: *Course Reader:* Michael Jerryson, “Buddhist Violence in Thailand: Representation and Performance of the Sacred”

21 November (W): Buddhism in East Asia: China

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part III: Chapter 9: pp. 154-162

Course Reader: Carl Olson, “Chinese Buddhist Tradition”

23 November (F): Thanksgiving Holiday

26 November (M): Buddhism in East Asia: Japan

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part III: Chapter 9: pp. 166-174

Course Reader: Carl Olson “Devotional Voices of the Pure Land” and “The No-Narrative of the Seated Meditation”

28 November (W): Buddhism in Tibet

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part III: Chapter 10

30 November (F): **Midterm Exam #3**

Part IV: Buddhism and Modernity

3 December (M): Buddhism in the West

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part IV: Chapters 11, 14

5 December (W): Socially Engaged Buddhism and Buddhist Ethics from Western Perspective

Reading: *Introducing Buddhism*, Part IV: Chapter 12-13

Course Reader: Christopher S. Queen, "The Peace Wheel: Nonviolent Activism in the Buddhist Tradition"

7 December (F): Review of the Course

12 December: Due date for the submission of final papers