

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

RS 4/ EACS 5

Fall Quarter, 2011

M-W-F: 10:00-10:50

IV Theater 2

Professor:

Vesna A. Wallace

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Office Hours: M: 11:00-12:00

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Syllabus and Additional Information

Available at <http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/classes/rs4.htm> and on the **Gauchospace**

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. The course also introduces students to diverse Buddhist literary and artistic expressions and covers a wide range of Buddhist traditions: Theravāda, Mahāyāna, Vajrayāna, Chan/Zen, Pure Land Buddhism, and so on. It focuses on a variety of pertinent issues: on 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 on the social and political conditions that have facilitated ideological and practical changes within various Buddhist traditions.

Course Readings

- Peter Harvey. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, history, and practices*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Donald Lopez, ed. *Buddhist Scriptures*. London: Penguin Books.
- *Course Reader*: available in the Alternative Copy Shop, UCEN

Course Requirements

- Regular attendance to the class and to the assigned sections with Teaching Assistants
- Active participation in sections and submitting weekly assignments given by Teaching Assistants
- Students who are taking the course for a grade or pass/fail are required to take 3 in class exams and to submit a 3 page-long essay as their final. Each exam is 20% of the final grade, the final paper is 20%, and the assignments given in TA sections make an additional 20% of the final grade.

Schedule of Exams

- Midterm exam #1 – 17 October (M)
- Midterm Exam #2 – 7 November (M)
- Midterm Exam #3 – 30 November (W)
- Final Paper – 5 December (M)

Schedule of Classes

Part I: Foundations of Buddhism

23 September (F): Introduction to the Course

26 September (M): Social and Historical Backgrounds to Buddhism

Guest Lecture: Nathan McGovern

Reading:

Course Reader: “Indian Civilization Before the Buddha” and “India in the Time of the Buddha” from *Indian Buddhism*

28 September (W): The Life and Death of the Buddha: History and Legend

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 1: “The Buddha and His Indian Context”
Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters 14-16, 23-24

30 September (F): Early Buddhist Worldview: Cosmology and the Doctrines of Karma and Rebirth

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 2: “Early Buddhist Teachings: Rebirth and Karma.”

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 1-4

3 October (M): The First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma: The Four Noble Truths

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 3: “Early Buddhist Teachings: The Four Noble Truths”

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 9, 17-20

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

Reading:

Course Reader: “Non-Self: Empty Person” from *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction*

7 October (F): Early Stages in the Development of Buddhism in India

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 4: “Early Developments in Buddhism”

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 22-24

10 October (M): Buddhist Monasticism

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 10: “Buddhist Practice: The Saṅgha”

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 25-30

12 October (W): Buddhist Ethics

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 9: “Buddhist Practice: Ethics”

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 35-36, 44-46, 50

14 October (F): Buddhist Meditation

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 11: “Buddhist Practice: Meditation and the Development of Wisdom”

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 37-40, 49

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

Part II: Mahāyāna and Tantra

19 October (W): Mahāyāna Buddhism

Reading:

Course Reader: “Introduction” from *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations Buddhist Scriptures*, Chapters: 29-30, 37-38, 43, 51, 60

21 October (F): Madhyamaka

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 5: “Mahāyāna Philosophy”
Course Reader: “The Madhyamaka Philosophy” from *Madhyamaka Schools in India Buddhist Scriptures*, Chapter: 52

24 October (M): The Mind Only School and The Buddha Nature

Reading:

Course Reader: “Yogācāra” from *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*

26 October (W): Mahāyāna Cosmos and Pantheon

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 6: “Mahāyāna Holy Beings”
Buddhist Scriptures, Chapter: 3

28 October (F): Devotional Practices: Prayers, Relics, Stūpas, and Pilgrimage

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 8: “Buddhist Practice: Devotion”
Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 22-24

31 October (M): Tantric Buddhism and the Vajrasattva Ideal

Reading:

Course Reader: “Mantrayāna/Vajrayāna—Tantric Buddhism in India” from *Buddhist Thought: A complete Introduction to the Indian tradition Buddhist Scriptures*, Chapters 53-55

2 November (W): Esoteric Practices and the Role of a Teacher

Reading:

Course Reader: “Inspiration and the Guru” and “Overthrowing the Tyranny of Ordinary Experiences” from *Introduction to Tantra: The Transformation of Desire*

4 November (F): Maṇḍalas in Tantric Buddhism

Reader:

Course Reader: “Inner Mandala: The Person” and “The Other Mandala: The Tantric Method” from *The Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism*

7 November (M): **Midterm Exam #2**

Part III: Buddhism in Other Geo-Cultural Regions

9 November (W): Later Developments in South and Southeast Asia

Guest Lecture: Nathan McGovern

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 7: “The Later History and Spread of Buddhism,” pp. 138-147; and Chapter 12: “The Modern History of Buddhism in Asia

11 November (F): Holiday

14 November (M): Buddhism in East Asia: China

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter: 7, pp. 148-158

Course Reader: “Buddhism in Central Asia and China” from *The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction*

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters: 31-33

16 November (W): Buddhism in East Asia: Japan

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter: 7, pp. 161-169

Course Reader: “Devotional Voices of the Pure Land” and “The No-Narrative of Seated Zen Meditation” from *The Different Paths of Buddhism: A Narrative-Historical Account*

Buddhist Scriptures, Chapters 34, 41-42, 56-60

18 November (F): Buddhism in Tibet

Guest lecture: Nathaniel Rich

Reading:

Course Reader: “Lamas, Monks, and Yogins” from *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*
Buddhist Scriptures, Chapter: 48

21 November (M): Buddhism and Gender

Reading:

Course Reader: “Sakyadhita, Daughters of the Buddha: Roles and Images of Women in Early Indian Buddhism,” and “Setting the Stage: Presuppositions of the Buddhist Worldview”

23 November (W): Tibetan Buddhism in Diaspora

Documentary Film: “Yogīs of Tibet”

25 November (F): Holiday

Part IV: Buddhism beyond Asia

28 November (M): Western Encounters with Buddhism

Guest lecture: Joel Gruber

Reading:

An Introduction to Buddhism, Chapter 13: “Buddhism Beyond Asia”

Course Reader: “Mental Balance and Wellbeing: Building Bridges between Buddhism and Western Science,” available at <http://www.sbinstitute.com/readinglibrary.html>

30 November (W): Midterm #3

2 December (F): Review of the Course: What is Buddhism: Religion, Philosophy or Science?

5 December (M): **Final paper submission**