



HR-2850: Buddhism and the West

Mondays 2:10 – 5:00 p.m.
Spring 2018, 1/29 – 5/14/2018

Instructor

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Instructor Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00

Course Description

This course surveys the history of Buddhist traditions in the West. Beginning with 19th century colonial contact and Asian immigration through 21st century global exchanges, we will explore the various ways that Buddhists, Buddhist communities, and Buddhist ideas have come to and developed in Western contexts. Previous Buddhist studies courses helpful but not required.

For spring 2018, the course will revolve around the following interlocking themes:

- 1) History: what can the past tell us about the present? how can the past be an example for the future?
- 2) Identity: how are Buddhist selves expressed through culturally constructed physical identities?
- 3) Modernity: how and why are Buddhists adapting the tradition in the modern era? how is authenticity defined and defended?

The intention of this approach is to focus our discussions, readings, analyses, and conversations in pursuit of a deeper understanding of Buddhism's development in Western contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

At the end of this course students will be able to:

Outcome	Assessment
1. understand the relationship between past and present Buddhisms in the global world	1. in-class participation and discussion
2. critically engage primary and secondary literature	2. in-class participation and discussion
3. develop research and critical reading skills	3. close reading and research projects
4. develop and defend an evidence-based argument	4. essay assignment 1
5. critically engage course themes and methods within one's own Buddhist/religious tradition	5. essay assignment 2

Course Requirements

1. In-class participation and discussion

Regular class attendance and active participation in discussions is a requirement in this course. Class discussions will be guided by the questions of critical analysis outlined below:

- Are the points made substantive and relevant to the discussion?
- Do comments show that the participant has been listening and sensitive to other perspectives in class?
- Do comments clarify and highlight the important aspects of earlier comments?
- Is the participant willing to interact with other class members?
- Do comments show evidence of analysis?
- Do comments add to our understanding of Buddhism, the West, or course themes?

2. Close reading exercise (March 5)

Students will be assigned two essays for March 5; please read both and be prepared to discuss. For in-class assignment, students should identify what argument the authors are making. What is the essay's thesis statement? Set aside whether or not you agree with the argument. In-class, students will be divided into two groups; each group will discuss one essay to determine its thesis and evidence offered in support of the argument. Each group will then present their findings to the class as a whole. At this point, we will collectively discuss whether or not the evidence supports the argument and whether or not we agree with the author.

3. Research exercise (April 2)

Students will choose one essay from the required readings from weeks 2 through 8. First, determine the argument the author is making (the essay's thesis). Then, find a citation, a place where the author has used another source to support his or her argument. Track down that source (i.e., go to the library). If the source in question has a citation, track down that source. You must go at least three citations deep or as far as your language skills take you. Once you've followed this trail of evidence, ask "Does this evidence support the original author's argument? Why or why not? Are there any contrary interpretations of the evidence?" Students will present their findings in class on April 2.

4. Short essay 1 (April 16)

Write a short essay (1500-2000 word, apx. 5 double-spaced pages) responding to the research question: how is the *Lotus Sutra*'s presentation of gender celebrated or problematized (choose one) by modern/contemporary Buddhist teachers? The essay must include a thesis (your argument) and supporting evidence in the form of, at a minimum, 2 primary and 2 secondary sources on the topic. In-class on April 16, students will discuss their essays.

5. Short essay 2 (May 18)

Write a short essay (1500-2000 word, apx. 5 double-spaced pages) in response to one of the following research questions (choose one):

- (1) How is authenticity defined and defended within your own Buddhist/religious tradition?
- (2) How have modern/contemporary Buddhist teachers used the *Kalama Sutta* in articulating a specifically modern Buddhism?

The essay must include a thesis (your argument) and supporting evidence in the form of, at a minimum, 2 primary and 2 secondary sources on the topic. In-class on May 18, students will discuss their essays.

** Note: doctoral students should expect additional readings and a formal 5000-7000 word research paper in lieu of short essay 2 on any topic directly relevant to course themes and topics.*

Required Readings

A course reader will be provided via Moodle.

Recommended Readings

Lopez, Donald S., ed. 2002. *A Modern Buddhist Bible: Essential Readings from East and West*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Lopez, Donald S., ed. 2005. *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Mitchell, Scott A. 2016. *Buddhism in America: global religion, local contexts*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Please see the attached bibliography for a full list of required and recommended sources for this course.

Weekly Schedule

See the Moodle site for all readings.

Date	Topic	Readings	Activities	Items Due
January 29	Introduction to Course	n/a	Introductions, review course syllabus and assignments	n/a
February 5	History: Colonialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Colonialism and Postcolonialism” from <i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i>• Halisey, “Roads Taken and Not Taken”• “Dharmapala” from <i>Modern Buddhist Bible</i>	Discuss colonialism’s impact on Buddhism in Asia and Buddhist responses to colonialism; review post-colonial theory	n/a
February 12	History: Empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharf, “Zen Nationalism”• Ketelaar, “Strategic Occidentalism”	Discuss the rise of Asian/Buddhist nationalism and American exceptionalism and their relationship to Buddhism’s introduction to US	n/a
February 19	President’s Day	No class	No class	n/a
February 26	History: On Pioneers and Priests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Busto, “DisOrienting Subjects”• Masatsugu, “Beyond this World...”	Discuss the introduction of Buddhism to US in early 20 th century as a missionary and immigrant religion	n/a

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selections from Imamura's <i>Kaikyo</i> 		
March 5	Modernity and Globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweed, "Tracing Modernity's Flows" • McMahan, "Modernity and the Discourse of Scientific Buddhism" 	Complete close-reading exercise; discuss timeline of US Buddhism	In-class presentation close-reading exercise
March 12	Identity: Internment and whiteness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omi and Winant, "Racial Formation" • Williams, "Camp Dharma" • Hsu, "Invisible Hand Clapping" 	Discuss the construction of whiteness and the "Asian other" and its role in the development of US Buddhism	n/a
March 19	Identity: Queering the Dharma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Feminism" from <i>Encyclopedia of Religion</i> • Cadge, "Gendered Religious Organizations" • Gleig, "Queering Buddhism or Buddhist De-Queering?" 	Discuss theories of gender performance and how fluid gender and sexual identities are impacting the development of US Buddhism	n/a
March 26	Reading Week	No class	No class	Continue work on next two assignments (research and first paper)
April 2	Down the rabbit hole	n/a	Complete research exercise; discuss final two assignments	In-class presentation of research exercise
April 9	Identity: how many Buddhisms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numrich, "Two Buddhisms Further Considered" • Hickey, "Two Buddhisms, Three Buddhisms, Racism" • Han, "Diverse Practices and Flexible Beliefs" 	Discuss the various "two Buddhisms" tropes in academe, how they manifest in popular discourse, their limitations	n/a

April 16	<i>The Lotus Sutra</i>	n/a	Presentation and discussion of first essay assignment	Short essay 1
April 23	Modernity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Modernity” from <i>Critical Terms</i> • Quli, “Multiple Buddhist Modernisms” • Other readings TBD 	Discuss various academic definitions of “the modern,” Buddhism’s place within that frame, and modernity’s impact on the study and practice of Buddhism	n/a
April 30	Modernity and the Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iwamura, “Oriental Monk” (chapter or short article) • Mitchell, “Tranquil Meditator” • Other readings TBD 	Discuss the various ways in which Buddhism, Buddhist images, and Buddhists have been deployed in media spaces	n/a
May 7	Modernity and Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quli, “Western Self, Asian Other” • Other readings TBD 	Discuss the issue of authenticity and how Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike make truth claims about the tradition	n/a
May 14	Final presentations	n/a	In-class presentation final essay assignment	Short essay 2

Assessment

Final Course Grade

- In-class participation and discussion – 10%
- Close reading exercise – 20%
- Research exercise – 20%
- Short essay 1 – 25%
- Short essay 2 – 25%

Assignment Rubrics

Essay assignments will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (A)	Meets Expectations (A-/B)	Below Expectations (C)	Problematic (D)
Thesis/argument	Excellent. This is an ambitious, perceptive project that grapples with complex ideas. The thesis is clearly stated and contextualized in the introduction. The essay presents more than a summary of existing ideas, and is not simply repeating what the student has read or learned in class.	The project reaches high and achieves its aim. The thesis is stated clearly but perhaps with less contextualization. The author does more than summarize existing ideas, but some areas may require more depth or the essay includes stray, irrelevant ideas.	The project has conceptual problems. The thesis may be unclear or poorly stated. The essay lacks an argument but is merely a summary of existing ideas or a personal reaction to the topic (i.e., mere opinion).	The project is incoherent or is extremely problematic in any of the areas mentioned.
Organization	The essay is clearly and explicitly organized. The introduction lays out the structure of the essay, and essay sections include transitions and summaries of ideas. The conclusion both summarizes the essay's argument and points toward potential research vistas.	The essay is well organized, the introduction states the essays structure and intent. Some connections may still need to be made, especially in regards to transitions between sections. The conclusion summarizes the essay's argument.	The essay is poorly organized; the introduction does not state what the author is going to do; there are no transitions or summaries of ideas.	The essay is not organized in any logical fashion.
Evidence	The author employs appropriate and relevant primary and critical secondary sources. Evidence is both contextualized and related explicitly to the thesis or argument.	The author employs appropriate and relevant primary and critical secondary sources. Evidence is contextualized; however, there may not be enough evidence or it is not thoroughly engaged.	Evidence provided is irrelevant or culled from inappropriate or unreliable sources. What (good) evidence is supplied is not engaged, contextualized, explained or related to the thesis/argument.	Evidence is either not presented or is wholly irrelevant and unreliable.
Writing/style	Language is clean, precise, elegant, and jargon-free. Ideas and terms are introduced and explained appropriately. The author uses the correct citation format, and typos and other errors are at a minimum (or nonexistent).	Language is adequate and clear, and the author has used the correct citation format. Vernacular language is avoided, and typos and grammatical errors are minimal.	Language and word choice is unclear; sentences are awkward, illogical, or contradictory; punctuation, grammar, etc., are problematic. There is an over-reliance on vernacular language. Correct citation format is not used.*	The essay contains an overabundance of grammatical and stylistic errors, or inappropriate language.

** **Note:** non-native English speakers are strongly encouraged to seek help from peers when writing papers to check for errors. Please see me if you have concerns.*

Required GTU Policies

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another's ideas, methods, research, or words without proper acknowledgement. It runs the gamut from failing to cite a reference (sloppy scholarship), to passing off another's work as one's own. It includes close paraphrasing as well as lifting of entire lines nearly verbatim without acknowledgement. As the effects of the plagiarism will be the same regardless of intent, intent will not be construed as essential to the act, although it may be considered in determining whether the charge of plagiarism should be pursued or what the penalty may be. For general requirements for proper acknowledgement in written work, see the most current edition of Kate Turabian, *Manual for the Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* and *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

Arrangements in Cases of Documented Disability

If you will need special arrangements for meeting course requirements for reasons of documented disability, please speak to one of the instructors very early in the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. A description of the GTU policy regarding accommodation for differently abled students is online at:

<http://gtu.edu/admissions/life-at-gtu/students-with-disabilities>

Honor Code

Students in all courses and phases of the Doctoral Program are subject to the GTU Honor Code, described on p. 15 of the on-line Student Handbook. Please note: "Documented evidence that a student has violated the honor code may result in immediate expulsion from the program."

Other GTU Policies

Students and faculty in required Doctoral Seminars are also subject to GTU Institutional Policies, detailed on pp. 54 ff. in the on-line Student Handbook, including: Non-discrimination, AIDS non-discrimination, and Drug Free Environment (52), Inclusive Language (54), Plagiarism (55 ff.), Exceptions and Accommodations (63 ff.), and Sexual Misconduct (65 ff.).

Required IBS Policies

Please see the IBS catalog for a complete list of institution-specific policies.

Incompletes

Permission to take an incomplete in a course is by petition only. Petitions must be made no later than the last day of instruction. Failure to file an incomplete form by this time will result in a failing grade for the course. An Incomplete (I) grade must be made up within three weeks of the end of the current semester. Faculty must turn in the grade three weeks after the submission of the student's work. If no grade is turned in by the end of the sixth week after the semester ends, the "I" will automatically change to a grade of "F" and will not count toward graduation requirements (i.e., no credit is earned

for the course, it counts as a 0 for GPA). This becomes the student's permanent grade for the course. The course can be repeated when it is offered at a later time; however, the failing grade remains on the student's transcript.

One Paper for Two Classes

Any student wishing to submit one paper in fulfillment of the writing requirements of two classes must first obtain the written consent of both instructors. Second, the paper must meet the cumulative requirements for the writing assignment required in both classes. This applies not only to such items as total page length and stylistic requirements, but also to topics and kinds of treatments. For example, if one class requires 15 pages and the other 20, the student will need to complete a 35 page paper. Similarly, if one requires examination of a particular individual's thought, and the other a report on an historical era, the final paper must both report on an historical era and examine the thought of a particular individual. Students are advised that actually fulfilling the requirements for two classes is more difficult than writing two separate papers. Failure to follow the guidelines of this policy will be considered an instance of academic dishonesty, and will be dealt with accordingly. This could result in failing both classes, being reported to the Office of the Dean, and dismissal from the program for academic dishonesty.