HRHS 8152
Buddhist Traditions of East Asia

Spring 2012
Instructor: Charlie Pokorny - korin108@gmail.com
Office hours: by appointment

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

This course introduces the major historical and doctrinal developments in East Asian Mahayana Buddhism (in China, Korea, and Japan). The course briefly examines Buddhism in relation to other East Asian religious traditions, including Daoism, Confucianism and popular or folk practices.

Student Outcomes

• Students will be able to name the major lineages and “practice traditions” of Buddhism that have developed in East Asia, including Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, various Pure Land traditions, and esotericism.
• Students will be able to describe some of the major doctrines and practices associated with each of these traditions.
• Students will be able to name important East Asian Buddhist scriptures (such as the Lotus Sutra) and relate some of their content.

No Required Texts – all reading assignments will be available online.

GRADING OVERVIEW

Assignments

1. Forums. Each student is required to compose a new reflection thread per week (see guidelines below) and respond to at least three other threads.

2. Each student will write a paper (options: Term Paper, Temple Experience, or Book Reviews) on a topic related to the content of the course (please consult with the instructor to discuss acceptable topics).

Grading

• Forum participation: 50%
• Paper: 50%

FORUMS REQUIREMENT: GUIDELINES

A reflection post is a brand new thread.

A response post is a reply to either a reflection post or to another response post.

Each student must post one reflection post per week, no later than Tuesday, pertaining to the readings and respond to at least three other students’ reflection posts by Friday night.

Reflections should be at least at least half a page to one page in length (a page equals a standard 8x11 sheet of paper, single space). The goal of these first posts is to generate discussion for the class. Be sure to explain why you find something interesting, or why it is important for the class to consider a given topic, so other students can more easily respond to your ideas. Posts are graded on a credit/no credit basis.

1 This syllabus was developed by Lisa Grumbach, who generously shared it for use in Spring 2012. This syllabus has been modified by Natalie Quli and then subsequently by Charlie.
Ideas for reflection posts (due **Tuesdays**):

- What did you find interesting about the reading, and why?
- Did you learn something new that you would like to share with the class?
- Do you have a specific question about something in the reading, or about the topic generally?
- Was there something surprising or perhaps shocking in the reading that you would like to comment on?
- Can you make connections between this week’s reading and other reading that will help us understand Buddhism?
- Do you have a personal story or anecdote that connects to the week's reading?
- How does this week’s reading connect to your research interests or ministry?

Three response posts (due **Fridays**):

The length of your response posts is up to you. You may wish to ask the reflection post’s author a question or address the issue she raised. It’s fine to respond to other response posts, but be sure to respond to at least three reflection posts every week.

Be advised: all students must maintain a respectful and friendly tone. You may disagree with others, but only in a manner that generates discussion relevant to the goals of the course. Discourteous posts will count negatively against your grade. For more on etiquette expectations, visit http://online.uwc.edu/technology/onletiquette.asp

---

**PAPER REQUIREMENT: GUIDELINES**

All papers must follow these guidelines:

- Must use 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1” margins, .5” indent for each new paragraph.
- Papers must include no fewer than five reference works. Follow the citation style from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or *Turabian*. Include a References List.
- All students must receive the instructor’s approval for their paper idea by the 8th week of class.
- Students are expected to proofread their papers for typos and other errors and use correct English grammar. Proofreaders are available for a fee through GTU; contact the front desk for more information.
- Final papers are due the last week of class, no exceptions.

**Term Paper**

12–15 pages (no cover page)

The paper should explore in depth a topic relevant to the course. The paper should include a clear thesis statement and support the thesis with relevant examples. It is very important for your paper to be organized; the following format is suggested: Introductory paragraphs (identifiable and concise thesis statement, overview of at least three supporting arguments or points), body (three supporting points), conclusion (restatement of thesis and summary of points). This method is also known as “Say what you’re going to say; Say it; Say what you said.” Your topic is up to you, but you must email the instructor for approval of your topic by the 8th week of class.

**Temple Experience**

12–15 pages (no cover page)

The student will visit a Buddhist temple in a Chinese, Korean, or Japanese lineage, taking part in services or talking to clergy and/or attendees. The paper should, among other things, clearly identify the lineage and its history, as well as any important doctrinal issues for that lineage. The remainder of the paper’s focus is up to you; for example, ministerial candidates may wish to focus on issues of chaplaincy, while those interested in ethnographic methods may wish to present a more sociologically informed paper. The student MUST obtain prior permission from the temple to attend and report on the experience prior to visiting the temple, and the student MUST check with the instructor for the suitability of the site prior to the visit. If the student is a practicing Buddhist, it is preferable that he or she attends a temple from a different sect.
Example sites:

- Berkeley Buddhist Temple (Buddhist Churches of America)
- City of Ten Thousand Buddhas (in Ukiah)
- Berkeley Zen Center

Two Book Reviews

12–15 pages (no cover page)

The student will review two books in detail, devoting approximately 6 pages to each review. The review should summarize the book’s content, offer an evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, and make connections to what we’ve learned in class (via lectures and class materials). The books should deal with a subject pertinent to East Asian Buddhism.

All Papers: Grading

An “A” paper is well organized with a clear thesis statement that is supported in the body of the essay. Each paragraph includes a topic statement that is subsequently developed using logical arguments and specific examples. The writing style is superior, with varied sentence structures and appropriate academic tone. Footnotes or endnotes follow Turabian or Chicago style. A reference list is included.

A “B” paper has a clear thesis and is suitably organized. It is of lower quality than the “A” paper in that it may be less organized, provide less support for arguments, make some logical errors, and be stylistically less advanced. Footnotes or endnotes follow Turabian or Chicago style. A reference list is included.

A “C” paper is below average work that has a thesis statement, but the organization reflects poor planning on behalf of the writer. Common problems include vagueness, the use of statements that require further development or evidence, sentences that stray off topic, or stylistically unsophisticated writing. Footnotes or endnotes follow Turabian or Chicago style. A reference list is included.

A “D” paper is below average work that does not fully meet the requirements of the assignment. The thesis may be unclear or overly general, evidence may be lacking, organization may be problematic, and there may be serious problems with writing style and tone.
Week 1: January 30 - February 3
Introductions

I. BUDDHISM IN CHINA
Week 2: February 6 - 10
Buddhism Comes to China

Readings:

Optional Reading:

Week 3: February 13 - 17
The Lotus Sutra, Doctrinal Classification and the Tiantai School

Readings:

Optional Reading:

Week 4: February 20 - 24
Buddha-nature (tathāgata-garbha)

Readings:

Optional Reading:

Week 5: February 27 - March 2

Hua-yen (Avatamsaka) School

Readings:


Week 6: March 5 - 9

The Magical and Miraculous in Medieval China

Readings:


Week 7: March 12 - 16

The Chan (“Meditation”) School

Readings:


Optional Reading:


II. BUDDHISM IN KOREA

Week 8: March 19 - 23

Silla

Readings:

Optional Reading:


Week 9: March 26 - 30
No Class: Reading Week

Week 10: April 2 - 6
Modern Korean Buddhism: Popular Beliefs, Exorcism, and Zen (Son)

Readings:

- Younghee Lee, “Hell and Other Karmic Consequences: A Buddhist Vernacular Song,” in Religions of Korea in Practice, 100–11.

Optional Reading:


III. BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

Week 11: April 9 - 13
Early Japanese Buddhism and the State (and Korea)

Readings:


Week 12: April 16 - 20
Esoteric Buddhism(s) in Japan: Saichō and Kūkai

Readings:

Week 13: April 23 - 27

“New” Kamakura Buddhism: Part I. Original Enlightenment and Zen (Sōtō School)

Readings:

Optional Reading:

Week 14: April 30 - May 4

“New” Kamakura Buddhism: Part II. Pure Land (nenbutsu) Movements

Readings:
- Dobbins, Letters of the Nun Eshinni: 3–43.

Optional Reading:

Week 15: May 7 - 11

Buddhism in Meiji Japan: The Destruction of Buddhism (and Shinto), and Buddhism Encounters the West

Readings:

Week 16: May 14 - 18

Papers Due