HRHS 1515
Buddhist Traditions of South Asia
Fall 2012, Tuesdays 9:40 – 12:30
Instructor: Charlie Pokorny
IBS/JSC Room 130
Office hours: by appointment
korin108@gmail.com

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE
This course introduces the Buddhist traditions as they originated in India and developed in South and Southeast Asia. It is the first half of a yearlong introductory survey of the entire Buddhist tradition.
Course format: Seminar/lecture.

Student Outcomes
- Students will develop knowledge about the major forms of Buddhism that arose in India, including Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, including an outline of their historical development, as well as aspects of their contemporary cultural instantiations.
- Students will be able to describe some of the key doctrines and practices associated with each of these traditions.
- Students will become familiar with some of the important texts of these Buddhist traditions including their content, structure and significance.

Required Texts:
- Please note that additional required and optional reading assignments will be available online through Moodle.

GRADING OVERVIEW

Course Requirements
1. Weekly required reading assignments.
2. Classroom attendance and participation. Please come to class prepared to make comments, raise questions and engage in discussion on the readings and lecture materials.
3. Paper: three options (choose one): Term Paper, Temple Experience, or Book Reviews. In all cases, the paper will be on a topic related to the content of the course (please consult with the instructor to discuss a proposed topic).

Grading
- Classroom attendance and participation: 50%
- Paper: 50%
PAPER REQUIREMENT: GUIDELINES

All papers must follow these guidelines:

- Please 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 Turabian citation style. Include a bibliography.
- All students must receive the instructor’s approval for their paper proposal by the 8th week of class.
- Final papers are due the last week of class.
- Please email your papers in Word Doc format if possible to korin108@gmail.com. I will email them back to with comments (if you would rather turn in a hard copy, please check in with me first).

There are three options for the final paper.


1. 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.

2. Temple Experience

12–15 pages (no cover page)

The student will visit a temple in the tradition of Theravadin or Tibetan Buddhism, taking part in services and/or performing an interview with clergy and/or attendees. The paper should clearly identify the lineage and its history, any important doctrinal issues for that lineage and clearly connect to material presented in the class. 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. What continuities and discontinuities do you see between the Buddhism we studied in the class and the Buddhism at this temple? What issues are being faced by temples in the West? The student must obtain 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, the temple experience should focus on a different tradition of Buddhism.

3. Two Book Reviews

12–15 pages (no cover page)

The student will review two books in detail, devoting approximately 6 – 7 pages to each review. The books should deal with a subject pertinent to South Asian Buddhism. Please consult with the instructor about the books you would like to review. The review should:

a) Summarize the book’s content

b) Offer a critical evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses (What was most helpful, striking or valuable? What was unclear? Where was the argument strong or weak? What kinds of inquiry did the work open?)

c) Make connections to what we have learned in class (through lectures, discussion and class readings)
Week 1: September 4
Introduction, Course Overview, Presuppositions

Optional Reading:

Part I. Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha

Week 2: September 11
The Buddha

Required Reading:
BIP, Chapter 32: Donald Swearer, “Bimba’s Lament,” 419–430.

Optional Reading:
BIP, Chapter 2: Donald Swearer, “Consecrating the Buddha,” 50–58.

Week 3: September 18
The Dharma–Basic Teachings of Buddhism

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:

Week 4: September 25
Buddhist Practice

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:
BIP, Chapter 28: Gregory Schopen, “Deaths, Funerals and the Division of Property in a Monastic Code,” 357–386.
Week 5: October 2

The Saṅgha

Required Reading:
Strong, The Experience of Buddhism: Chapter 2, “The Experience of the Sangha,” 56–96 (review for stories of interest, and be sure to read at least one piece from each section, i.e., 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5).

Optional Reading:


Part II. Abhidharma, Cosmology and Theravāda

Week 6: October 9

Abhidharma

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:


Week 7: October 16

Buddhist Cosmologies

Required Reading:
Randy Kloetzli, Buddhist Cosmology: From Single World System to Pure Land: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007):


Optional Reading:
Randy Kloetzli, Buddhist Cosmology:

October 23

READING WEEK–NO CLASS

Email the instructor regarding the topic for your research paper.
Week 8: October 30

Theravāda

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:

Part III. Mahāyāna Buddhism & Tantric Buddhism

Week 9: November 6
Development of the Mahāyāna

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:

Week 10: November 13
Mahāyāna Philosophy: Madhyamaka and Yogācāra

Required Reading:
Williams, Buddhist Thought: Chapter 5, “Mahāyāna Philosophy,” 98–123.

Optional Reading:

Week 11: November 20
Mahāyāna Soteriology

Required Reading:

[Optional reading on the next page …]
Optional Reading:
The Lotus Sutra:
  Chapter 4, “Belief and Understanding,” 80–96.

Week 12: November 27
Tantric Buddhism

Required Reading:
Strong, The Experience of Buddhism: Section 5.5, “Tantric Buddhism or the Vajrayāna,” 206–220.

Optional Reading:
BIP, Chapter 29: Donald S. Lopez, “A Rite for Restoring the Bodhisattva and Tantric Vows,” 387–396.

Week 13: December 4
Tibetan Buddhism

Required Reading:

Optional Reading:

Part IV. The End of the Dharma in India

Week 14–December 11
The End of the Dharma in India

* Papers Due *
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Required Reading: