

## INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES COURSE SYLLABUS

**Course Title:** Works of Shinran I: Shorter Writings & Tannisho  
**Course Number:** HRPH 8453  
**Semester:** Fall 2012  
**Instructor:** David Matsumoto  
**Units:** 3.00

### Description

An examination of the shorter works of Shinran (1173-1262), the founder of Jōdo Shinshū. The works include his interpretive notes and comments, collections of letters, Japanese-language hymns, and other writings. In addition, the *Tannishō* (A Record in Lament of Divergences) will be briefly considered. Each of the works will be read in English translation to support the study of original texts. Important Japanese and Chinese terms in the original texts will also be considered.

This course is required for ministerial aspirants. For degree students, it will fulfill the distribution requirement for Area I. Kyoshi certificate students may fulfill one of the program's courses by completing this course or Works of Shinran II.

Students will be expected to have some familiarity with Pure Land Buddhism, the Jōdo Shinshū tradition and Shin Buddhist thought, HRPH 1614 Introduction to Shin Buddhist Thought, and at least 1 year of college level Japanese language study (minimal level: ability to use character dictionary), or instructor's permission.

### Student Learning Objectives

Students will be able to identify, read, and engage in a critical examination of the shorter works of Shinran.

Students will be able to discuss the doctrinal themes and issues set forth in those works, and relate them to Shinran's critical perspective on the historical/doctrinal development of Pure Land Buddhist thought and practice.

Students will be able to utilize certain doctrinal terms and concepts in Japanese that will facilitate their ability to conduct further academic study of Shinran's thought.

### Class Format

In each class, we will closely read and examine one or more of Shinran's shorter works in English translation contained within *The Collected Works of Shinran*. Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997, together with selected passages from the original Japanese or Chinese works.

Our examination will cover the text's historical & doctrinal context, the style of the text and date of its composition, an outline of the text, the title of the text and its meaning, Shinran's purpose in composing the text, its place within the framework of Shinran's thought, and its role in the development of Shin Buddhist thought.

At the same time, we will focus on a number of doctrinal terms in Japanese to facilitate students' ability to conduct further academic study of Shinran's thought and to familiarize them with the exegetical method of *Shinshūgaku*.

## Schedule

This course will take place online. Lecture materials, reading assignments, and homework assignments will be provided on a regular basis to all students through the GTU Moodle system, which can be accessed at <http://moodle.gtu.edu/>. Students will be required to submit writing assignments and participate in online discussions using the Moodle system as well.

Each student must acquire a user ID and password from the registrar at his/her school in order to access the Moodle site.

## Requirements

Students will be required to do the following:

1. Read the assigned text carefully in English translation and identify the doctrinal issues discussed in them.
2. Identify significant doctrinal terms both in English and Japanese.
3. Participate fully in discussion forums and presentations.
4. Write a research paper of no more than ten (10) pages on a topic that is relevant to this course and approved by the instructor. The paper should reflect students' familiarity with and understanding of a selected shorter work(s) of Shinran. The paper topic must receive prior approval from the instructor.
5. Present a summary of their paper during the last class session of the semester.
6. The paper will be due one week after the final class session

## Grading

Grading is based on students' class attendance and participation in discussion in the class (50% of grade) and final papers (50% of grade).

## Office Hours

Please call 510-809-1448 (office) or (510) 384-3818 (cell), or email at [drmatsumoto@shin-ibs.edu](mailto:drmatsumoto@shin-ibs.edu) to the instructor to make an appointment.

## Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1	An Introduction to course. Overview of Shinran's works, including the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization and his shorter works.
Week 2	Passages on the Pure Land Way
Week 3	Hymns of the Pure Land
Week 4	Hymns of the Pure Land Masters
Week 5	Hymns of the Dharma-Ages
Week 6	Essentials of Faith Alone Notes on 'Essentials of Faith Alone'
Week 7	Clarification of Once-Calling and Many-Calling Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling
Week 7	Notes on the Inscriptions on Sacred Scrolls
Week 8	Reading Week
Week 9	Lamp for the Latter Ages and other Letters of Shinran
Week 10	Gutoku's Notes
Week 11	Hymn of the Two Gateways of Entrance and Emergence
Week 12	Other Shorter Works
Week 13	Tannishō
Week 14	Student Presentations
Week 15	Student Presentations

## **Required Texts**

*The Collected Works of Shinran*, Volumes I & II (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1997)

Alfred Bloom, *The Essential Shinran: A Buddhist Path of True Entrusting* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2007)

Additional reading materials and notes will be distributed each week by the instructor.

## **Supplementary Texts**

*Ryukoku Translation Series*, Vols. I - VIII (Kyoto: Ryukoku University)

*Jodo Shinshu Seiten, Chushakuban*, Vols. I & II (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, 1988, 1997)

*Shinshu Shogyo Zensho Hensanjo*, Vols. I, II & III, (Kyoto: Oyagi Kobundo, 1941, repr. 1981)