

HR 2850 : Traditions of Buddhism in the West

Fall 2013: Tuesdays, 2:10 - 5:00 pm

JSC Classroom 131

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 1 - 3 p.m. (or by appointment)

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.

This course fulfills the “Buddhism in the West” or “Buddhism in America” requirement for the Buddhist Chaplaincy program.

GTU doctoral students are encouraged to enroll.

Previous Buddhist studies courses helpful but not required.

Format: discussion, lecture.

Evaluation: class participation, student presentation, final research paper.

Student learning objectives:

- Students will learn of the various ways that Buddhism came to Western cultural contexts via colonial contacts and globalization
- Students will be able to distinguish different Buddhist communities, their unique histories, and challenges facing them in the contemporary world
- Students will employ different methodological approaches and lenses in the study of Buddhism in Western contexts, including, among others, cultural historical, postcolonial studies, and modernity
- Students will be challenged to relate Buddhist traditions in Western contexts to their own personal career goals either in ministry, chaplaincy, or the academy
- Students will have an opportunity to develop research and critical thinking skills valuable for future research projects

Required texts:

1. Donald Lopez, ed. *A Modern Buddhist Bible: essential readings from East and West*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
2. A course readers provided to students electronically

Evaluations and Assignments:

Evaluations for this course will be based on:

1. Class participation (25%)
2. Student presentation, week 8 (25%)
3. Final research paper (50%)

Student presentation (week 8):

Students will prepare an oral presentation for the class, the results of a research exercise verifying a citation within one of the assigned articles read in class. The purpose of this exercise is to:

1. *Develop research skills:* since this course requires a final research paper, students should learn more about how to locate research materials on topics that interest them
2. *Develop critical thinking skills:* the ability to critically analyze an argument and judge for yourself the validity of that argument is invaluable

See the attached instructions for more information on this assignment.

Final research paper (due December 13):

All students must submit a research paper that:

- is roughly 5000 words in length (approximately 15 to 20 double-spaced pages)
- engages an issue relevant to the course (is about Buddhist traditions in Western contexts)
- makes and defends an argument (is not simply a summary of existing ideas)
- utilizes both primary and critical secondary sources relevant to the topic
- follows the citation style mandated by the GTU (Turabian)
- For more details on my expectations, please see: http://scottmitchell.shin-ibs.edu/?page_id=122

Research papers begin with an idea that you are passionate about. Please check in with me throughout the semester to discuss paper topics, research ideas, potential lines of argument. Students will submit a 1-page prospectus for the final paper on week 9. The prospectus should include a tentative thesis statement, outline, and 3 to 6 sources. We will review your prospectus week 10.

Research papers are due December 13, 2013. No exceptions.