This is an introductory course aimed at developing a sound basic understanding of and experience in Zen Buddhist meditation practices. We will explore teachings on the Soto Zen practice of *shikantaza* “just sitting” as well as *kōan* practice in both the Soto and Rinzai traditions. Participation in meditation practice as well as discussion of traditional and contemporary literature on Zen meditation practice are essential aspects of the class. We will read and discuss writings that focus on Zen meditation practice as it occurs in ritual, bowing, and ordinary, everyday activities such as cooking. We will also consider Zen meditation practices as they relate to fundamental Buddhist teachings and practices. There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Student Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to describe the basic philosophy and practice of Zen Buddhist meditation including *shikantaza* and *kōan* practice.
- Students will develop experience and understanding of Zen Buddhist meditation practice through instruction, reading materials, short meditation sessions in class, as well as meditation outside of class.
- Students will explore the relevance of Zen Buddhist meditation practices for their spiritual and religious life through dialogue, personal reflection, and meditation practice.

**Required Text:**

- Please note that additional required and optional reading assignments will be available online through Moodle. Please make sure you will be able to access Moodle. The Moodle key for the course is: justsit

**GRADING OVERVIEW**

**Course Requirements:**

1. Weekly required reading and writing assignments. Through week 12, please prepare a one page paper on each week’s topic and reading materials. Papers will be presented in class as part of class discussion. Papers should include your reflections and questions on the topic at hand. Critical engagement is welcome.

2. Classroom attendance. Please check in with me when you will be unable to attend a class meeting. If you must miss more than two classes, it can affect your grade. Please check in with me about how you can make up for this.
3. Class participation. This includes actively participating in class discussions and short in-class meditation sessions. The nature and depth of this course is dependent upon class participation.

4. Commitment to a daily practice of meditation.

5. Visit to a Zen temple or practice center for zazen instruction, participation in a scheduled period of meditation, and one other activity such as a lecture, ritual, or teaching. A two page paper relating your experience to specific class readings due by week 13 of the semester. A list of local centers is available on Moodle.

6. Term paper (see below).

**Recommended:**

Commitment to maintaining a daily personal reflection journal is recommended but not required. *Journal entries are for your personal use.*

**Grading**

- Classroom attendance, preparation and participation: 50%
- Paper: 50%

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**PAPER REQUIREMENT: GUIDELINES**

All papers should follow these guidelines:

- Papers should be 15 pages in length. Please use 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1” margins, .5” indent for each new paragraph.
- Papers must include reference works. Follow the *Turabian* citation style. Include a bibliography.
- The final paper should work from or develop a theme or specific aspect of class material.
- Please be in touch with instructor regarding your paper topic by the end of reading week.
- 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).

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**SYLLABUS**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Week 1 – February 1st

*Introduction, Course Overview, Major Themes and Concerns of the Course, How to Take This Course*

No Reading Assignment
Week 2 – February 8th

How to Practice Zazen

Reading:

- ART OF JUST SITTING 95–100.

Optional Reading:


February 15th – No Class, “President’s Day”

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND OVERVIEW

Week 3 – February 22nd

Buddhist Meditation in India and China

Reading:

- ART OF JUST SITTING 177–186.
Optional Reading:


Week 4 – February 29th

Chan (Zen) Buddhism and the Sudden Approach

Reading:


Optional Reading:

• ART OF JUST SITTING 187–215.


Week 5 – March 7th

Soto-Rinzai Divergence

Reading:

• ART OF JUST SITTING ix–xii, 1–10, 13–18, 221–223.


Optional Reading:

• ART OF JUST SITTING 117–126


Week 6 – March 14th

Developments in Kōan Meditation

Reading:


Optional Reading:


March 21st – No Class, “Reading Week”

Week 7 – March 28th

Dogen and Soto Zen; Zazen and Shikantaza

Reading:


Optional Reading:


• Fouk, Griff. “Dogen’s Use of Rujing’s ‘Just Sit’ (shikan taza) and Other Kōans.” In Dogen and Soto Zen ed. Steven Heine. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 23–45.


III. TOPICAL DIMENSIONS

Week 8 – April 4th

Embodiment and Ritual Performance

Reading:

• ART OF JUST SITTING 21–23.


Optional Reading:


**Week 9 – April 11th**

**Thinking and Non-thinking**

**Reading:**


**Optional Reading:**


**Week 10 – April 18th**

**Zen Meditation, Precepts and Ethics**

**Reading:**

Optional Reading:


Week 11 – April 25th

Zen Meditation in Work and Daily Life

Reading:

• ART OF JUST SITTING 55–66, 101–104.


Optional Reading:


Week 12 – May 2nd

Women, Gender and Meditation

Reading:


• Dogen, Eihei. “Getting the Marrow by Doing Obeisance (Raihakitokuzui).” In Soto Zen Text Project (http://scbs.stanford.edu/sztp3/) translated by Stanley Weinstein.


**Optional Reading:**


**IV. CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES**

*Week 13 – May 9th*

**Critical Dimensions and Perspectives***

***Temple visit paper due***

**Reading:**


**Optional Reading:**


Week 14 – May 16th

Psychotherapy, Neuroscience and Zen Meditation

Reading:


Optional Reading:


*** Papers Due by Friday May 20th ***

Please email your papers in Word Doc format if possible to korin108@gmail.com

I will email them back to you with comments

(if you would rather turn in a hard copy, please check in with me first)