

INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: Works of Shinran I: Shorter Writings & Tannisho
Course Number: HRPB 4566
Semester: Fall 2016
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 students in any degree program. For degree students, it will fulfill the distribution requirement for Area I. Kyōshi 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, HRPB 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 gain a structured and critical exploration of the Shin Buddhist tradition as the basis for Shin Buddhist ministerial formation and the development of facilities to provide pastoral care.
- Specifically students will be able to
 - identify, read, and engage in a critical examination of the shorter works of Shinran.
 - 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.
 - gain a working knowledge of core Shin Buddhist ideas and values, which will form the foundation of their ministerial and pastoral work in multi-cultural and multi-religious community.

Classroom Meetings - Thursday, 2:10 to 5:00 PM, Room 130 Jodo Shinshu Center

Note: Students not in the vicinity of the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA will be able to participate in class sessions in real time via GoToMeeting.com.

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*.

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 all assigned works of Shinran carefully in English translation and identify the doctrinal issues discussed in them.
2. Participate fully in discussions and presentations.
3. Maintain a record of their readings by completing the form "Points for Consideration" for each text. Those records will be reviewed periodically by the instructor during the semester.
4. Complete a semester-long research project, which will involve the following:
 - a. Students will choose at least one and no more than three of the following topics:
 - Shinran's perspective on the nature of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land
 - Shinran's response to doctrinal controversies of his time, including once-calling vs many-calling, and single practice vs. sundry practices
 - Characterization, role, significance of practice in Shinran's thought
 - Significance of shinjin in Shinran's thought
 - Shinran's understanding of realization and birth in the Pure Land
 - Shinran's concern for heretical views and practices
 - Shinran's reverence for his teachers
 - b. Trace the manner in which Shinran raises and treats each of those issues within his shorter writings.
5. Write a research paper that will reflect the semester-long research project.
 - a. No more than ten (10) pages, not including bibliography.
 - b. A summary of the paper will be given during the last class session of the semester.
 - c. 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, completion of written assignments and final paper.

Office Hours

Please call 510-809-1448 (office) or (510) 384-3818 (cell), or email at 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

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha. *Collected Works of Shinran*, 2 vols. Shin Buddhism Translation Series. Kyoto: Hongwanji International Center, 1997.

(The text is also available on-line at: <http://www.shinranworks.com/majorexpositions.htm>)

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)

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