

Buddhism, RLGs 369
Alfred University Spring 2012

Class meetings: Tue., Thu. 3:20 - 5:10 p.m., 104 Kanakadea Hall
Professor: Dr. Wakoh Shannon Hickey
Office hours: 2nd floor, Kanakadea Hall
Drop-in: Tue., 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.; Wed., 3-4 p.m.;
Thu. and Fri. 9: 30 – 10:30 a.m.

Please note: The worst time to catch me is immediately before class, *especially* if you have significant questions or concerns, because I will be focused on getting ready to leave for class. Please visit me during office hours and/or make an appointment, so I will be able to give you the undivided attention you deserve!

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OVERVIEW

This course will introduce Buddhist history, teachings, and practices, in both Asia and the modern West. We will cover basic doctrines such as the legendary biography of the Buddha, the Three Marks of existence, the Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Path; Buddhist scriptures; the Three Vehicles; and basic Mahayana concepts such as emptiness and the Bodhisattva Path. We will survey the rise and spread of Buddhism in India, and developments in Southeast Asia, China, Tibet, Korea, Japan, and the United States. We will also consider how race and gender dynamics have influenced the development of Buddhism, and the academic discipline of Buddhist Studies.

Why This Class Matters

Understanding Buddhism in all its diversity will help you to understand better the relationships between religion and culture; the role of religion in public life; your own worldview and assumptions; and the worldviews of some people in your family and/or communities. It will help you to understand more sympathetically people who differ from you, and to work with others more effectively. The learning skills you develop here will serve you throughout your academic life, help you to get a job, and make you more valuable as a professional.

Methods

The course will draw upon a textbook and primary texts, and will employ a variety of methods: lecture, discussion, video, audio, reading and writing assignments, at least one creative project, teamwork, and exams.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Describe the following basic Buddhist doctrines: the legendary biography of the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path, the Three Marks of Existence (or Three Dharma Seals), karma, and the Six realms. (Level 2)
- Describe the general contents of the Tripitaka, and the specific content of selected texts (e.g., the Therigatha and the Heart Sutra). (Level 2)
- Explain basic differences among the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions, and among some of the major Mahayana sub-groups (e.g., Ch’an, Zen, Pure Land, Nichiren) (Level 2)
- Explain the role of moral conduct and virtue in Buddhist practice, and apply Buddhist ethical principles to particular cases; (Level 3)
- Analyze how various factors have shaped Buddhist traditions over time: e.g., geographic spread, political power, persecution, race and gender dynamics, encounters with Christianity, the rise of modern science, etc. (Level 4)
- Draw inferences and interpret the meanings of brief passages of scripture. (Level 4, 5)
- Assess and evaluate your own learning (Level 5)
- Synthesize what you have learned in one or two creative projects (Level 6).

CRITERIA FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING LETTER GRADES

- A midterm exam, worth 20 percent of the final grade.
- A creative project, worth 15 percent of final grade
- A final exam or project, worth 25 percent of final grade
- Responses to study questions for each chapter of the primary textbook, collectively worth 30 percent of final grade.
- Preparation and participation in class meetings, 10 percent of final grade. This includes both attendance (see policy below) and how actively you participate in class discussions. If you are shy about speaking in a large group, you can participate by asking questions or making comments over e-mail, or by bringing to class news or other items related to the topics we study.

Excellent		Good			Acceptable			Poor	
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D
96-100	91-95	86-90	81-85	76-80	71-75	66-70	61-65	56-60	51-55
10	9.5	9	8.5	8	7.5	7	6.5	6	5.5
5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	.5

COURSE POLICIES

Academic or Other Difficulties:

If you are having academic or personal difficulties that affect your ability to do your work, and/or need information about support services available on campus, please see the professor right away. She will help you find appropriate resources on campus.

Disability:

If you have a disability and need an accommodation to help you succeed in class, please let the professor know right away. All such information will be treated as confidential.

A Note from Special Academic Services re: Students with Disabilities:

Alfred University is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact Dr. Aubrey Elmore at the Office of Special Academic Services located in Crandall Hall, or call (607) 871-2148. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Many accommodations require early planning; therefore requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any requests for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

Tutor Services/Requests:

The office of Special Academic Services offers personalized help in the form of individual and group tutoring. Please contact Beth Niles at (607) 871-2148 for more information. Also, contact your instructor for additional support.

Writing Help:

Whether you are having trouble getting started on a writing assignment or need a little help with editing along the way, the Writing Center offers individual assistance to meet your needs. To make an appointment, go to my.alfred.edu/writing and click on the link "sign up here."

Religious Concerns:

Students who need to miss class in order to participate in the religious observances of their own traditions may do so, but they must make arrangements with the professor *in advance* to make up any required work.

Athletes:

Students who must miss class to participate in athletic events must notify the professor at the beginning of the semester *and* by e-mail at least one week before each class to be missed, and must make arrangements to get notes from class, contribute to class teamwork, and submit assignments timely. The one-week requirement will be waived in case of unscheduled playoff, but you should let the professor know as soon as possible of an expected absence.

Lateness and Absences:

You are expected to arrive in class on time and attend all class meetings. If unforeseen circumstances will make you late, please make every effort to notify the professor before class, or ask a fellow student to do so.

If you are more than 5 minutes late to class, you may be asked to sing to the class. ☺ If you are late repeatedly, your midterm and or final grade will be affected negatively.

After the first week of class, you will be allowed **two** unexcused absences. After that, each unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by one increment, e.g., from a B+ to a B. *It is possible to do all the work and still fail the course because of unexcused absences.* Even if you have straight As on all assignments, if you accumulate 12 unexcused absences, you will fail the course automatically. If you have lower grades on assignments, a lower number of unexcused absences could produce a failing grade. If you know in advance that you must miss a class because of a schedule conflict, notify the professor by phone or e-mail at least 48 hours in advance. Prearranged absences will not affect your grade (but you should get notes from a classmate, and complete assignments timely). If you are too ill to attend class, notify the professor no later than 9 a.m. the same day. If you miss more than three consecutive days of class because of illness, you will be asked to provide medical documentation.

Mobile Phones:

Turn them off before class begins. If use your phone during class, the professor will collect and hold it until the end of class. If this occurs more than once you will be asked to leave class and will receive an unexcused absence for the day.

Reading Schedule:

Complete the assigned readings and answer any questions about them *before* we begin discussing them in class. Additional course materials will be available on BlackBoard.

Conduct/Misconduct:

The classroom must be a productive environment for everyone present. Participants hold a wide variety of religious, moral, and political beliefs. In college, as in society, the ability to create a functioning community depends upon our ability to talk about such differences respectfully. You are encouraged to question or disagree with one another, but you are expected to do so politely. Insulting remarks about other's religious/moral/political beliefs or practices are not acceptable.

Because personal integrity is fundamental to both good scholarship and to good citizenship, you are also expected to uphold the university's standards for academic and personal integrity, as expressed in the Honor Code, the Student Code of Conduct, and the Academic Dishonesty policy. Cheating, plagiarism, or harassment will not be tolerated.

A violation of the Academic Dishonesty policy will result in a failing grade on the assignment and will be reported formally, in writing, to your dean and the University Provost. This will become part of your permanent academic record (unless you appeal

and are exonerated by a Judicial Council). Two violations *in this course* will result in automatic failure of the course. If your dean and the provost receive two formal, written reports of academic dishonesty (from one or more instructors), you will be dismissed from the university. *You are expected to inform yourself about and abide by school policies regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and harassment.* If you have questions about these policies, ask the professor right away.

Alfred's Student Code of Conduct may be viewed here:

http://my.alfred.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/student_policies.code_of_conduct_0708.cfm

Alfred's policy on Academic Dishonesty may be viewed here:

http://my.alfred.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/academic_policies.academic_regulation_u_g.cfm#700

Other campus policies and resources can be found here:

<http://my.alfred.edu/index.cfm/fuseaction/policies.menu.cfm>

REQUIRED TEXTS

The instructor will make every effort to provide reserve copies of the required texts to Herrick Library, for students who cannot afford them or whose copies are delayed in shipping.

The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching

Thich Nhat Hanh (Broadway, 1999)

ISBN-10: 0767903692

Introducing Buddhism 2nd Ed.

Damien Keown & Charles Prebish (Routledge 2009)

ISBN: 978-0-415-55001-7

Dreaming Me

Jan Willis (Wisdom, 2008)

ISBN-10: 0861715489

READING QUESTIONS

For Prebish & Keown, go online to the Companion Website Student Resources:

<http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415550017/student-resources.asp>

and briefly answer the Self Test questions for each chapter. These are Level 1 questions.

Then go to General Resources and briefly answer the Essay Questions for the relevant chapter(s).

<http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415550017/essay-questions.asp>