

REL210 Buddhism Across Asia

Spring 2004: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3:15pm, Manly 207

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Office hour Thursday 3:15-4:00

The Course

Buddhism is the only religion originating in Asia that spread successfully to every country in Asia. From India to Japan, from Afghanistan to China, from Sri Lanka to Siberia, Buddhism is the gateway to the study of Asian history and cultures. This course introduces the basics of 2500 years of Buddhist history, practice, and belief, while at the same time introducing the rich history and culture of that two thirds of the world we call Asia.

The class is divided roughly into three sections, covering:

- 1) Life stories of the Buddha and the beginnings of Buddhism in India
- 2) The development of Buddhism in India
- 3) Buddhism across Asia

As we learn about the Buddhist tradition we will travel across Asia, from the southern tip of India to the northern islands of Japan, and through time, from the 5th century BCE to the present day. Each section of the course will combine historical and thematic introductions to the tradition with a focus on close readings of short primary Buddhist texts. Your attention will be directed toward different aspects of religious life, including ritual practice, philosophy, meditation, community, solitude, devotion, ethics, and cosmology. In studying these different ways of being religious, we will learn to look at religion in Asia as a living aspect of culture and society.

Objectives

There are no **prerequisites** for this course, although REL100 Introduction to Religious is recommended. The **objectives** of the class are: to acquire general knowledge of the history, cultures, and ideas of Buddhism; to explore important themes of Buddhist thought in primary Buddhist texts; to become familiar with the basic methods of religious studies as an academic discipline.

Examinations and Grading

Grading is based upon the cumulative points scored on three examinations and a short essay:

- 1) Vocabulary Exam 20% (40 questions). Thursday 1/29.
- 2) Midterm Exam 20% (40 questions). Thursday 2/12.
- 3) Essay 20% (40 points). Due beginning of class, Thursday 3/11.
- 4) Final Exam 40% (80 questions). Monday, May 3, 2004: 8:00-10:30am.

Your final grade will be based on a straight percentage of the point total. The **Grading Scale** is: A+ = 95-100; A = 90-94; A- = 88-89; B+ = 85-87; B = 80-84; B- = 78-79; C+ = 75-77; C = 70-74; C- = 65-69; D+ = 60-64; D = 55-59; D- = 50-54; F = 0-49.

The three multiple-choice examinations are based on material presented in: lectures, assigned readings, handouts, and films. This course emphasizes material presented in the lectures. Class readings, handouts etc., are primarily meant either to prepare students for lectures by providing the necessary background information or as complements to material being presented in the lectures.

Attendance and active **participation** in the class are both important and mandatory.

Important: There will be no **make-up work** for missed exams or assignments due to absence unless you contact the professor before the due date. Missed exams and essays will receive a grade of zero.

Accommodation of Disabilities

Students with documented physical and/or learning disabilities should contact the professor outside of class time (i.e., make an appointment to see him at his office), as soon as possible, to provide copies of their documentation and to discuss the reasonable accommodations which can be made to meet their needs. However, prior to contacting the professor, ensure that you contact the Office of Disability Services, which is located at 220 Research Drive, P.O. Box 870185 (two blocks east of the Ferguson Center, between Shelby Hall and Bryce Hospital) or call them at 348-4285.

Readings

The Buddhist Religion: A Historical Introduction. Richard H. Robinson; Willard L. Johnson. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont. 1997. 4th Edition. (Abbreviation in Syllabus: Robinson)

The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretation. John S. Strong. Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont. 2002. 2nd Edition. (Abbreviation in Syllabus: Strong)

All **readings** must be purchased at the beginning of the course, for we will read them simultaneously. Always bring the books under discussion to class; we will refer to specific passages often. We will also watch a number of **documentary films** on Buddhism in several different countries.

Plagiarism and **cheating** are a serious scholarly and academic offences. Plagiarism is defined as using the intellectual labor of another author without proper quotation, citation, and acknowledgement. If a student is caught plagiarizing the work of another author (whether that author is a peer, classmate, or published author), they will be reported to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

REL210 Buddhism Across Asia Schedule (subject to change)

I. Early Buddhism in India (Robinson Chapters 1-3; Strong Chapters 1-3)

1. (1/8): Introduction: The Syllabus
2. (1/13-1/15): Life of the Buddha.
Robinson ch. 1; Handout: Twelve Acts of the Buddha Compared
Strong ch. 1
3. (1/20-1/22): Early Buddhist Teachings.
1/20 Robinson ch. 2; Handout: The Four Noble Truths
1/22 No Class
4. (1/27-1/29): The Development of Early Buddhism.
Robinson ch. 3
Strong ch. 3
1/29 Vocabulary Exam
5. (2/3-2/5): Monks and Nuns in Early Buddhism.
Strong ch. 2
6. (2/10-2/12):
2/10 Video: *Footprint of the Buddha*; Review.
2/12 Midterm Exam

II. Later Buddhism in India (Robinson Chapters 4-6; Strong Chapters 4-5)

7. (2/17-2/19): Mahayana Buddhism I.
Robinson ch. 4
Strong ch. 4
8. (2/24-2/26): Mahayana Buddhism II.
Robinson ch. 5
Strong ch. 5.1-5.4
9. (3/2-3/4): Vajrayana Buddhism.
Robinson ch. 6
Strong ch. 5.5.
10. (3/9-3/11):
3/9 Video on Vajrayana Buddhism
3/11 Essay Due

III. Buddhism Across Asia (Robinson Chapters 7-8, 10-11; Strong Chapters 6-9)

11. (3/16-3/18): Buddhism in Southeast Asia.
Robinson ch. 7
Strong ch. 6
12. (3/23-3/25): No Class
Spring Break
13. (4/6-4/8): Tibetan Buddhism.
Robinson ch. 11
Strong ch. 7.
Video on Tibetan Buddhism
14. (4/13-4/15): Chinese Buddhism.
Robinson ch. 8
Strong ch. 8
Video: *To the Land of Bliss*
15. (4/20-4/22): Japanese Buddhism I.
Robinson ch. 10
Strong ch. 9
16. (4/27-4/29) Preparation for Final Exam.
Final Exam: Monday, May 3, 2004: 8:00-10:30am

Essay Topic: Who and What is the Buddha? A Comparative Essay on Early and Later Buddhism

Due

It is often said that the early Buddhist texts portray the Buddha as a human, historical figure, while later texts describe a celestial Buddha. Based on the primary texts translated in Strong's *The Experience of Buddhism*, do you think this is an accurate account? Use the following points as guidelines for your discussion:

- *What are central features of the Buddha of early Buddhism?
- *What are central features of the Buddha of later Indian Buddhism?
- *What distinguishes the Buddha depicted in the early life stories of Siddhartha Gautama from the Buddha of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism?
- *How would you explain this difference?

As your sources for this essay, use Chapter 1 of *The Experience of Buddhism* for early Buddhism and Chapters 4.4-5 for later Buddhism. Use at least six specific references and quotations from the Buddhist texts themselves in *The Experience of Buddhism* (not Strong's introductions to these texts) to illustrate and support your discussion.

This fixed topic will allow you to use your general knowledge of the religious tradition to analyze a particular problem. Refer to the primary sources in Strong for different purposes: to support your thesis in general, to provide a contrast between one period or region of the tradition and another, or to highlight conflicting viewpoints within the tradition. You should also refer to *The Buddhist Religion*.

All essays must follow the conventions of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Use the following book for reference: Papers must conform to the following conventions: typed; double-spaced in a standard 12pt font; 1-inch margins on white paper; page numbers; your name and the name of the class on the top of the first page; stapled. All quoted material must be clearly referenced according to MLA style.

The **essay** must follow the conventions of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Use the following book for reference: *A Pocket Style Manual: Third Edition*. Diana Hacker. Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston. 2000. This is the style manual used in English Composition (ENG101). You should own a copy of this manual. Essays must conform to the following conventions: typed; double-spaced in a standard 12pt font; 1-inch margins on white paper; page numbers; your name and the name of the class on the top of the first page; stapled. (see *A Pocket Style Manual*, pp. 138-140). All quoted material must be clearly referenced according to MLA style (see *A Pocket Style Manual*, p. 123).

The **Writing Center** (125 Morgan Hall. Ph.: 348-5049. M-F 8:30am-5pm; T/TH/SU 6pm-9pm; W 5:30pm-9pm) offers free, friendly one-on-one assistance to help students brainstorm, organize, develop ideas, compose a these statement, use quotations and paraphrase, use secondary sources, correct grammar on their own, and improve editing and proofreading skills. Staffed by English Department instructors and graduate students, the Writing Center works with students at all levels of classes in all fields. It also provides assistance for those who speak and write English as a second language.

You are free to schedule an appointment with me to discuss your essay, though this is not required.

REL210 Buddhism Across Asia Vocabulary Examination: Basic Buddhist Terms in Sanskrit

Memorize each term according to the short definitions beginning each glossary entry at the end both Robinson and Strong. There is a multiple choice vocabulary examination on these forty words on Thursday 1/29.

1. Abhidharma
2. Anatman
3. Anitya
4. Avidya
5. Bhikshu
6. Bhikshuni
7. Bodhi
8. Bodhisattva
9. Buddha
10. Dana
11. Dharma
12. Dhyana
13. Duhkha
14. Guru
15. Hinayana
16. Jataka
17. Karma
18. Mahayana
19. Mandala
20. Mantra
21. Mara
22. Mudra
23. Nirvana
24. Prajna
25. Prajna-paramita
26. Samsara
27. Sangha
28. Stupa
29. Sutra
30. Tantra
31. Tara
32. Tathagata
33. Tathagata-garbha
34. Theravada
35. Tripitaka
36. Trishna
37. Vajrayana
38. Vinaya
39. Yama
40. Yogin