

RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM

Religious Studies 409 Seminar in Western Buddhism Spring 2006

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Required Texts:

Charles Prebish. *Luminous Passage: The Practice and Study of Buddhism in America*.

Charles Prebish and Kenneth Tanaka (eds.). *The Faces of Buddhism in America*.

Charles Prebish and Martin Baumann (eds.). *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia*.

Course Description:

This course is a seminar for non-specialists in Buddhism. It will focus on the development of Buddhism as a Western religious phenomenon. Following an introductory period, in which we will review the basic history and doctrines of Buddhism, the course will be subdivided into three major sections. The first will present an interpretive, historical introduction to Buddhism in the West. We will explore Buddhism's earliest beginnings in the West, in cultural perspective, and conclude the section with an examination of Buddhism as part of the new religious consciousness in America. The second section of the course will focus on four specific Buddhist traditions in America: those of Japan, China, Tibet, and South Asia. We will consider specific Buddhist groups associated with each tradition, examining their individual history, rituals, practices, and the like. The third section of the course will focus on the future of Buddhism in America, with particular attention to the role of women in Western Buddhism, sexual abuse in the Buddhist community, and the conflict between Asian-immigrant and American-convert Buddhists. In this last part of the course, we will try to determine whether Buddhism will remain simply Asian Buddhism transplanted onto Western soil, or whether there are good prospects for the emergence of a truly "Western" or "American" Buddhism.

Course Organization and Requirements:

The course will be organized in the form of a seminar. Class meetings will be devoted to the discussion of readings assigned from the text (as well as ancillary reading in optional texts suggested by the professor).

Written assignments will be of two types:

1) Five short two page analysis papers based on the reading assigned for the period in question. Each of these papers must directly address both the topic being considered during the period in question and the reading assignment that accompanies that topic. The short papers count 5 points each, collectively constituting 25 points of the final grade. Submission dates for the short papers are: January 19, February 16, March 23, April 13, and April 27.

2) A research paper which focuses on some aspect of American Buddhism. The final draft of the research paper will be due on the first day of the final examination period for Spring Semester 2005: Monday, May 1st. The research paper will constitute the remaining 75 points of the grade total. The paper must typed or word-processed and be a minimum of 20 pages in length. Furthermore, it must employ a normal template with left-right and top-bottom margins no greater than one inch, and utilize a font with point size no greater than 12. The topic must focus solely on an aspect of American Buddhism. Papers comparing Buddhism with some other religious tradition are not acceptable, nor are papers on the Asian Buddhist tradition. A formal bibliography of no less than eight sources (**not** including course texts or Internet resources) must be utilized in the preparation of the paper, and formal annotation must be employed throughout the paper. A topic statement and formal abstract must be submitted by the student no later than the conclusion of the sixth week of classes (February 24, 2005). Unacceptable topics and abstracts will be returned to the student for correction, to be resubmitted for approval within one week. Any student not complying with this requirement will have 10 points deducted from the final score for the overall assignment. For the final paper, the statement of topic/introduction will count 5 points; the mechanics/format will count 5 points; the bibliography will count 5 points; the annotation will count 5 points; the conclusion will count 10 points; and the content will count 45 points.

Late assignment excuses will be granted only for medical problems or family emergencies, and must be properly documented. Medical excuses offered at the conclusion of the course are **NOT** retroactive. If you have an ongoing medical or psychological problem, you must notify the professor as soon as the problem is identified.

Notification of non-submission of any assignment must be filed prior to, or no later than one hour after, the due date and time for that assignment. Excuses such as oversleeping or failed alarm clocks are **NOT** considered valid excuses for not submitting any assignment. Unexcused non-submission of any assignment will yield a non-negotiable grade of "F" for that item.

This course will not have a Final Examination scheduled by the Registrar's Office.

Grading

The overall grading scale for Religious Studies 409 will be as follows:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	70-76
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Class Attendance

It is the policy of the University that class attendance by students be encouraged. Each student should attend every class for which the student is scheduled and should be held responsible for all work covered in the courses taken. A student whose irregular attendance causes him or her, in the judgment of the instructor, to become deficient scholastically, may run the risk of receiving a failing grade or receiving a lower grade than the student might have secured had the student been regular in attendance. As a result, unannounced attendance will be taken at least five times during the semester. Each unexcused absence will result in a two-point deduction from the student's total score for the semester. Absences on days on which attendance was taken will only be accepted upon the presentation of a valid, documented excuse.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

Any breaches of academic integrity in Religious Studies 409 will be dealt with as prescribed in Section 49-20 the University Faculty Senate Policies For Students (see: <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies>).

Disability Access

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by university policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of

accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible.

A Note about Cell Phones

All cell phones must be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Any cell phone use in class, or any cell phone that rings during class, will result in a two-point penalty for the student in question.

Course Outline

Week	Topic	Reading
1-2	A Review of Buddhism	<i>Faces</i> , 1-10 <i>Luminous</i> , 1-50
3-6	Buddhism in the West: An Interpretive Framework	<i>Faces</i> , 183-286 <i>Luminous</i> , 51-93 <i>Westward</i> , 1-81, 106-119, 191-382
7-9	Japanese Buddhist Groups: Jōdo Shin, Zen, Nichiren	<i>Faces</i> , 32-97 <i>Luminous</i> , 96-107, 114-138
10	Chinese Buddhist Groups: Ch'an & Pure Land	<i>Faces</i> , 14-30, 118-146 <i>Luminous</i> , 139-148
11	South Asian Buddhist Groups: Theravāda	<i>Faces</i> , 148-61, 165-80 <i>Luminous</i> , 148-158
12-13	Tibetan Buddhist Groups: rNying-ma-pa, bKa-rgyud-pa. dGe-lugs-pa, Sa-skyapa	<i>Faces</i> , 100-115 <i>Luminous</i> , 158-171
14	Buddhism in Other Western Countries	<i>Westward</i> , 85-105, 120-188
15	The Future of Buddhism: Course Conclusions	<i>Faces</i> , 287-298 <i>Luminous</i> , 233-273

Films and Videos:

Now I Know You
Lotus in the Fire
The Heart of Being
Buddha Realms
Becoming the Buddha in L.A.
In the Spirit of Free Inquiry
Others, as appropriate