

SD'00
Pm

RE 355 Buddhism

Description: This course will examine the historical, social, psychological and spiritual phenomena that is Buddhism. It is intended as a general survey of Buddhism, and will focus on Early Buddhism, the development of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, with particular emphasis on Thai Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism.

Required Texts:

Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*
Thich Nhat Hanh, *Being Peace*
Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*
Taitetsu Unno, *River of Fire, River of Water*

The Student will be able to:

- discuss the historical development of Buddhism as it moves from India to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, and to Tibet, China, Korea, and Japan;
- detail the teaching and implications of Early Buddhism for our times;
- discuss the lifestyle and developments in speculation on the Pali Sutras in the Theravada tradition;
- discuss the development of the Mahayana tradition;
- discuss the development of Pure Land Buddhism;
- discuss the development of the Ch'an and Zen traditions; and
- discuss the relationship of Buddhist art and teaching.

Evaluation:

Reading Assignments: The reading assignments are noted on the course syllabus and they should be completed prior to the scheduled class.

Attendance: Attendance will be taken. A variety of activities will occur during class time that demand the presence and participation of the student. Students will participate in a seminar format for the majority of the class. Up to 15% of the total grade.

Oral Presentations: Students will be assigned one (or more) presentation(s) based on material from the texts and/or other primary sources. The presentation must outline the major points of the assigned reading, and attempt a critique of the contents and/or arguments encountered. The grade is based on comprehensiveness, clarity, and conciseness of the report. A written outline of the presentation is due at the time of the presentation. Up to 45% of the total grade.

Writing: Students will be required to write a series of reflective essays based on the readings and presentations. These may be in the form of in-class test essays or take-home essays. Up to 40% of the total grade.

- February 1 Early Buddhism:**
What the Buddha Taught, ix-15
- February 3 Suffering is not enough...**
Being Peace, vii-28.
- February 8-10 Quest for the Buddha**
 film: *Little Buddha*
- February 15 Essays due on "Little Buddha" and two reviews of the movie**
- February 17 The First Noble Truth: Dukkha**
What the Buddha Taught, 16-28
- February 22 The Second and Third Noble Truths**
What the Buddha Taught, 29-44.
- February 24 The Fourth Noble Truth: the Noble Eightfold Path**
What the Buddha Taught, 45-50.

Essay on Four Noble Truths is due on Feb 29.
- February 29 The Doctrine of No-Soul**
What the Buddha Taught, 51-66.
- March 2 Meditation or "Mental Culture"**
What the Buddha Taught, 67-75.
- March 7 Film: Footprint of the Buddha**
- March 9 Film: Buddhism**
 Handout: Transformations of Myth through Time: Buddhism
- March 14 Mahayana Perspectives: Thich Nhat Hanh**
 Feelings and Perceptions (*Being Peace*, 31-44)
 The Heart of Practice (*Being Peace*, 45-60)
- March 16 Mahayana Perspectives: Thich Nhat Hanh**
 Working for Peace (*Being Peace*, 61-82)
 Interbeing (*Being Peace*, 83-104)
- March 21 Comparative Work: Walpola Rahula and Thich Nhat Hanh**
What the Buddha Taught and the World Today (Walpola Rahula, 76-90)
 Meditation in Daily Life (*Being Peace*, 105-115)
- Long Essay: Buddhism and Today: A Comparative Essay" is due on April 4.**
- March 23 Film: Dalai Lama In Exile**
 Reflective essay on this film due April 4.
- Spring Break**

April 4 Film: Chinese Buddhism

Handout: "Buddhists and the Practice of Buddhism: East Asia"
(Strong, 295-342)

April 6 Film: Buddhism with Huston Smith (from "Hinduism and Buddhism")

April 11 Zen Buddhist Perspectives

The Essential Discipline	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 1-10)
The Miracle is to Walk on Earth	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 11- 26)
A Day of Mindfulness	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 27-32)

April 13 Zen Buddhist Perspectives

The Pebble	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 33-44)
One is All, All is One ...	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 45-54)
The Almond Tree ...	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 55-68)

April 18 Zen Buddhist Perspectives

Three Wondrous Answers	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 68-78)
Exercises in Mindfulness	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 79-100)
Nhat Hanh: Seeing ...	(<i>Miracle of Mindfulness</i> , 101-108)

Long Essay: The introduction to this book details how it was written and gives us a sense of the teacher ("Thay") and his deep concern to communicate the meaning and practice of Buddhism for both the healing of self, Vietnamese society, and the world. Reflect deeply on the text and its meaning for a suffering world. What are the ways in which Thay blends the Theravada and Mahayana messages in his approach toward Buddhism? What is the significance of his message for us today?

Due: April 25

April 20 Film: Land of the Disappearing Buddha

April 25 Pure Land Perspectives

River of Fire, River of Water	vi - 45
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April 27 Pure Land Perspectives

River of Fire, River of Water	46-103
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May 2 Pure Land Perspectives

River of Fire, River of Water	104-162
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May 4 Pure Land Perspectives

River of Fire, River of Water	163-210
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Final Exam TBA

Pure Land Perspectives