

Chaminade University of Honolulu  
Spring Day 2002  
Jan 14 - May 9, 2002  
Henry Hall 223

**COURSE:** RE 38001 ST: **Buddhist Ethics**

**TIME:** T R 12:30 - 1:50 p.m.

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Poranee Natadecha-Sponsel

**OFFICE HOURS:** TR 2-3:30 p.m. Appointments are welcome,  
Kieffer Hall # 6  
Telephone: 735-4822  
Email: psponsel@chaminade.edu

**TEXTBOOKS:** Renard, John, 1999, **RESPONSES TO 101 QUESTIONS ON BUDDHISM**, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

Dalai Lama, 1999, **ETHICS FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM**, New York, NY: Riverhead Books (Penguin Putnam Inc).

Saddhatissa, Hammalawa, 1997, **BUDDHIST ETHICS**, Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications.

**INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION:**

Most people claim that their decision and actions are based on religious and/or ethical values. This course will explore the concept of morality from the perspective of Buddhist history, ideas and practice in the contexts of multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies. Students will survey and analyze the application of Buddhist ethics to various social problems and issues.

Students will reflect on Buddhist ethics in relation to their own faith to grasp the differences and/or similarities. The discussion will cover the meaning of ethical living and right livelihood.

**CLASS OBJECTIVES:**

\*to survey universal and particular aspects of ethical theories and actions.

\*to critically review the affect of religious beliefs on human behaviors.

\*to understand Buddhist history, ethics and practices cross-culturally.

\*to review and compare the main Buddhist and Christian ethical theories.

\*to analyze factors related to the application of Buddhist ethical values to one's faith and actions.

\*to develop skills in students to be able to deal better with their own personal involvement in different situations of moral decision-making

\*to encourage students to have a better understanding of the need to think critically about ethical and moral issues as active members of various institutions in the local community and as active citizens of a state, country, and the world.

#### CLASS FORMAT:

This class will be an interactive, cooperative learning experience for the students and the instructor. The format integrates lectures, small group discussions, student presentations, role plays, and debates. Students are encouraged and expected to actively participate in class activities. They are required to come to class with intensive reading to contribute to extensive discussion of the basic textbooks and relevant videos.

Controversial issues identified by the students and the instructor will be critically analyzed from all points of view through student debates. In all of this the instructor will apply perspectives from philosophy (critical thinking), comparative religion, social psychology, feminism, cultural anthropology, and ecology to help students gain a better understanding of the Buddhist ethical theories and practices.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Students are required to be open minded and courteous in class discussion and to participate regularly in all class activities. Each student is expected to carefully read the assigned chapters in the textbooks and be prepared to discuss it for the class period of the assignment.

All students will be graded on the following requirements:

- \*come to class on time and stay for the whole period.
- \*be courteous and professional in class discussions, i.e. take turns in speaking, allowing others to express their ideas without interruption, communicate with positive, constructive verbal and non-verbal language.
- \*show respect and an open mind to different ideas and opinions from class members.
- \*turn in assignments on time.
- \*be responsible to cooperate and complete class/team projects on time.

**GRADING:**

The grading will be based on

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Class attendance and participation                                 | 10 pts.  |
| 2. Reflection paper   | 10 pts.  |
| 3. Book chapter reports   | 20 pts.  |
| 4. Group projects   | 10 pts.  |
| 5. Mid-term research project or Service Learning (SHINE Project)      | 25 pts.  |
| 6. Research project<br>(written report 20 pts.<br>oral report 5 pts.) | 25 pts.  |
| <Extra Credit (March 6 Women Program)                                 | 10 pts.> |

90-100 =A, 80-89 =B, 70-79 =C, 60-69 =D, 59 AND BELOW=F

**BOOK CHAPTER REPORTS:**

Students will be assigned to read chapter(s) from the textbooks and to turn in the following on the day when they take a leading role in class discussion:

- 1) a 1-2 page (typed double-spaced) insightful summary of

- the chapter(s) including
- 2) 3 main points from the reading clearly stated in bullet or number format, and
  - 3) 3 analytical questions for class discussion.

The report should have at least 5 paragraphs stating:

1. a short summary of the chapter
2. the three main points of the chapter as stated by the author
3. your own insight into the chapter
4. your own personal view of applications to current social issues
5. three questions that require discussion in depth without yes or no answers.

#### **RESEARCH PROJECT:**

The purpose of the project is for students to creatively apply knowledge from classroom to real life experience. Students may choose a research topic relating to the problems and issues of ethical practices and society. The research should identify how Buddhist ethics and practice may contribute to peaceful alternatives. The research methodology includes survey, interviews, and a literature review.

The written report of the research should be within the range of 12-15 double-spaced typed pages. It will be due on the scheduled final exam day of the class when the oral report is given.

**Plagiarized work will lead to failure of the course. Also, it will be reported to the university for disciplinary action.**

#### **ORAL REPORT ON RESEARCH PROJECT:**

Each student will have 5 minutes to share his or her project with the class. The oral report should be a brief summary of the student's written report. Reading from the written report is discouraged and points will be taken off. The grade will be based on the style of presentation, the ability to deliver information succinctly, and being conscientious about the 5 minutes time slot by not going over the time limit for each student.

**REFLECTION PAPER:**

Each student is required to write a 1-2 page reflection paper at the end of the first class and turn it in on the second-class meeting. Each paper should reflect the student's general understanding of Buddhism and the ethical issues in multi-ethnic societies. The contents of this paper should include:

- 1) general knowledge of Buddhism;
- 2) insightful comment on ethical issues; and
- 3) 3 analytical questions about the topic.

**LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENT:**

All of students' work will be evaluated for:

- \*knowledge of the subject matter from textbooks, class lectures, discussion, videos, resources from research, outside class activities.
- \*ability to provide relevant examples to support viewpoints.
- \*ability to apply the knowledge to understand current issues in society.
- \*clarity and logical presentation.
- \*demonstration of having an understanding of the subject matter objectively and from opposing viewpoints.
- \*demonstration of achieving the objectives of this class.
- \*ability to analyze, critically review, and compare the issues cross-culturally.

Students must turn in all class assignments and the exam in class on time. Points will be taken off for late assignments. All work turned in must be typed double-spaced.

**ONLY HARD COPY WILL BE ACCEPTED. EXAM AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED VIA EMAIL OR FAX.**

**SCHEDULE:**

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READING (Chapter)</u>
<b>JAN</b>		
15	Introduction	
17	Dalai Lama	Chapter 1-2
22	Renard	Chapter 1
<b>REFLECTION PAPER DUE</b>		
24	Dalai Lama	Chapter 3-4
29	Renard	Chapter 2
31	Dalai Lama	Chapter 5-6
<b>FEB</b>		
5	Renard	Chapter 3
7	Dalai Lama	Chapter 7-8
12	Renard	Chapter 4
14	Dalai Lama	Chapter 9-10
19	Renard	Chapter 5
21	Dalai Lama	Chapter 11-12
26	Renard	Chapter 6
28	Dalai Lama	Chapter 13

MAR

5	Renard	Chapter 7
7	Dalai Lama Group Project	Chapter 14
12	Renard	Chapter 8, 9
14	Dalai Lama Group Project	Chapter 15
19	Renard	Chapter 9
21	Dalai Lama Group Project	Chapter 16

APRIL

2	Saddhatissa	Chapter 1
4	Saddhatissa	Chapter 2
9	Saddhatissa	Chapter 3
11	Saddhatissa	Chapter 4
16	Saddhatissa	Chapter 5
18	Saddhatissa	Chapter 6
23	Saddhatissa	Chapter 7
25	Saddhatissa	Chapter 8
30	Review	

MAY

2	Review	
7	Final Oral and Written Report Due	12:45-2:45 p.m.