368-02 Buddhism

Karen Enriquez
COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is a survey of Buddhist traditions tracing them through their historical development and seeing how historical, social and cultural circumstances have influenced the theological interpretation of sacred texts as well as religious beliefs and practices. We will also look at some of the ways that each tradition gives expression to ethical action in daily life and its relation to spiritual practices and central Buddhist teachings. This will be done through a combination of readings (primary sources as well as contemporary ones), class discussions, as well as other media such as art, music/chanting, and documentaries.

We will also look at the transmission of Buddhism both to the East and the West and how doctrines and practices developed in new ways through these encounters, and pay particular attention to the development of some of the Buddhist traditions: Tibetan, Pure Land, and Zen Buddhism. In the end, we will look at the significance of various Buddhist teachings and practices for contemporary social issues today such as poverty, gender, war/violence, and the environment. The goals and student learning outcomes of the course include:

1. Students will be critical thinkers.
   a. Students will learn the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism and the various Buddhist traditions, and be able to trace how historical, social and cultural circumstances have influenced the theological interpretation of sacred texts as well as religious beliefs and practices.
   b. Students will learn how to be how to be open to the religious other and to critically engage those worldviews.
   c. Students will discuss fundamental questions about what it means to be human, including the various aspects that shape oneself (social, historical, cultural location as well as one’s gender, and religion)

2. Students will be integrated individuals who articulate a coherent, ethical perspective on the world.
   a. Students will learn the religious and ethical worldview of Buddhism, and will relate their knowledge of this religion in a reflective and constructive way to their own life experiences and the challenges of confronting today’s world.
   b. Students will discuss the fundamental question of what it means to be human in the face of so much inhumanity (suffering and injustice) in the world today, and how religions among them can respond and offer resources to such suffering today.

3. Students will be aware global citizens. They will be introduced to various Buddhist doctrines and practices and how it has developed and influenced both the East and the West, and will engage various Buddhist perspectives in reflecting upon contemporary issues of significance.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Other readings will be available on e-reserve (password: buddhism).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Luis Gomez, “Buddhism in India” (see Blackboard for link)
CLASS REQUIREMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

1. Worksheets and Quizzes (25%): Worksheet questions based on the readings will be posted under the “Worksheet Assignments” folder on Blackboard. Worksheets must be typewritten and submitted during class on the day that each worksheet is due. Late worksheets as well as email submissions will not be accepted and will receive a “0”. Worksheets will be assessed based on the following scale:
   ✓+ (100% / 10 points): ranging from good to excellent, illustrating a careful reading of the text (such as good choice of quotations from the text) and some critical reflection (ex. good examples to illustrate a concept, etc.)
   ✓□ (75% / 7.5points): ranging from poor to satisfactory, showing a shallow, inaccurate, or incomplete reading of the text.
   0 (0% / 0 points): not completed on time, not completed at all, or undeserving of any credit

10-point quizzes based on the readings and guide questions will be given regularly. Since most quizzes will be given at the beginning of class, please make sure that you arrive on time for each class. If you are late and the quiz has already begun, you will not be given extra time for the quiz. If you are absent on the day of a quiz, you will not be allowed to make up for that quiz, unless you provide documentation for your absence.

2. Three (3) papers (20% each): Students will be required to write three papers throughout the semester. The instructions for each can be found on Blackboard under “Paper Guidelines”. All papers must be typewritten and handed in to the professor during class and an electronic copy submitted to Turnitin on the day that they are due. Email submissions will not be accepted. You will be evaluated based on the quality of your paper (clean copy, proofreading, following directions) and on the clarity and thoroughness of your descriptions and arguments, and the degree of self-reflection and insight.
   Paper #1: Ethical Teachings in Buddhism (Due: Feb. 6)
   Paper #2: Buddhist Meditations (Due: April 10)
   Paper #3: Final Reflections (Due: May 6)

3. Group Presentation (15%): Students in groups of three will take responsibility for leading the discussion on specific readings on socially engaged Buddhism for 15-20 minutes, saving the last 5 minutes for group discussion. To do this, each group must:
   a) Introduce the reading and its themes and objectives
   b) Identify the key arguments of the text including the main Buddhist teachings that are used to support the author’s arguments. What you think are the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments?
   c) Explain what insights you have gained and questions you still have on this topic.
   d) Prepare a PowerPoint presentation or handout for the class
   e) Make sure that your presentation includes room for the class to share their own insights and questions about the reading, and that you have questions or activities in the end that can serve as a spring board for more discussion with the rest of the class.

Topics/Dates
- April 8: Women/Gender
- April 22: Wealth/Poverty
- April 24: War and Peace
- April 29: Ecology

4. Class Attendance (0 to -6). This class depends heavily on student participation so each student’s attendance is essential. Two unexcused absences will be allowed. Further absences will lower the student’s grade by 1.5 points for every additional class missed, up to a total of six (6) points off the final grade. Absences are excused only with a doctor’s note, an athletic schedule from your XU coach, an
email/letter from the Dean, or some form of documentation. Just emailing me that you will be absent does not make an absence excused. If you arrive after attendance has been taken, there is a good chance that you will be counted absent unless you check in with me at the end of class so I can change your record from absent to late.

As part of your attendance, you are expected to come on time with the readings and ready for discussion. All readings and guide questions will be posted on Blackboard under “Guide Questions” so make sure to check Blackboard for all your assignments. Absences do not excuse a student from knowledge about the material discussed or about any announcements or syllabus changes.

In the unlikely event that class will be cancelled, a notice will be posted on Blackboard the night before and an email will be sent to all the students.

5. Late work. Papers that are handed in late will be automatically graded down 2 points for the first day and an additional 2 points for each day after that, up to one week. After one week, overdue papers will not be accepted for credit. If you are running into difficulties with the papers, please do not hesitate to contact me about them.

In exceptional circumstances, late submission will be allowed without lowering the grade but only if I have been notified ahead of time (at least 48 hours) and have given my permission, including an agreed upon submission date.

6. Extra Credit Paper. Throughout the semester there will be events at Xavier that may be pertinent to our class. Students are highly encouraged to attend them. You may write a 2-3 page paper summarizing the content of the talk and how it relates back to our topics in class. Extra credit papers will replace the lowest worksheet or quiz grade. They are due on the last day of class, May 1 though I would highly recommend handing them in soon after the event itself. See “Extra Credit Guidelines and Events” on Blackboard for instructions and events.

7. On writing assignments
Theology is a reading and writing-intensive discipline. As you’ve noticed, most of the requirements of this class are written assignments. Please see me if you ever have questions or concerns about your writing for this course, or guidelines provided for a particular assignment. The main thing is to communicate with me openly and often, particularly in person. All papers must be submitted to Turnitin.

Good theological writing combines both objective (“scientific”) analysis with more personal, experiential, and imaginative elements. Careful presentation is also very important. Sloppy papers or work with errors in grammar, spelling, and content will be downgraded. Use of the Writing Center (CLC 400) is strongly encouraged, especially in writing your research papers. I am also happy to work directly with students who show a sincere and concerted effort to improve their critical writing skills.

Xavier’s policy for academic honesty

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests....All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student’s own. Certainly, the activities of others scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another’s efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one’s own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include a zero for that assignment or test, an “F” in the course and expulsion from the university.
8. Grades

Grade Computation:

**Midterm Grade:** Worksheets/Quizzes (55%)
Paper 1 (45%)

**Final Grade:**
- Worksheets/Quizzes (25%)
- Three Papers – 20% each (60%)
- Group Presentation (15%)

Grade Equivalents (see http://www.xavier.edu/theology/Grading-Policy.cfm)

- **A** = 94-100
- **A-** = 92-93
- **B+** = 90-91
- **B** = 87-89
- **B-** = 84-86
- **C+** = 82-83
- **C** = 79-81
- **C-** = 76-78
- **D+** = 74-75
- **D** = 71-73
- **D-** = 68-70
- **F** = 0-67

According to Theology Department standards, the grade of “A” does not mean “average” or “good” work or “strong effort”, but is reserved for **exceptional** academic performance. Students who seriously engage this class - the readings, discussions, papers, exams - should do well, and of course will get the most form the experience. Students who do not stay on top of the reading assignments, take poor notes, or regularly drift from discussions will do poorly in this class. The kinds of questions raised here will necessitate close attention to the reading material.

9. Other matters

**Classroom Protocol.** Do not forget to turn off all cellular phones and other electronic communication devices in class since they can be very distracting for others. Furthermore, **laptops may NOT be used in the classroom.** Make sure you have the readings for the class printed and bring them to class with your notes. Also, please refrain from leaving the classroom or eating in the classroom.

**Disabilities.** If you have a documented physical or learning disability requiring academic adjustments for this course, please contact the Learning Assistance Program and see me to discuss any necessary arrangements or ways I can be of assistance.

**Athletic or academic team commitments.** It is your responsibility to ensure that I am aware ahead of time of any scheduling conflicts or absences you may incur due to university sponsored athletic events. Please provide a letter from your coach or adviser with the team schedule and dates highlighted that will necessitate absence from this class. If the number of projected absences is excessive, it may be recommended that the course be taken at another time.
Note: This is a tentative schedule of readings. Please check Blackboard under "Guide Questions" to know the assigned readings for each class day. I will also announce in class what the readings will be for the next meeting.

Worksheets can be found under the “Worksheet Assignments” tab on Blackboard and must be type-written and submitted in class on the days they are due. Email submissions will not be accepted. Some have to be submitted to Turnitin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Strong, “Remembering Past Lives” (link on Blackboard)  
Watch: The Life of the Buddha (link on Blackboard)  
Recommended: *Buddhacarita* (see link on Blackboard) | See Guide Questions |
| Jan. 16 | First Noble Truth: Life is Dukkha         | “Four Noble Truths”, “Impermanence”, “Dukkha” and “No-Self” in *Radiant Mind*  
“The Three Basic Characteristics” in *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* | Worksheet #1        |
“Understanding Karma: Cause and Effect” in *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom* | Worksheet #2        |
| Jan. 28 | Nirvana and the 8-fold path                | “Nirvana” in *Radiant Mind*  
“The Noble Eightfold Path” in *Radiant Mind*  
“Theravada/Vipassana Practice” in *Radiant Mind* | See Guide Questions |
“Right Speech”, “Right Action,” and “Right Livelihood” in *Hanh, The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching* | Worksheet #3        |
| Feb. 4  | Meditation Practices: Vipassana and Metta | Rahula. “Ch. 7: Meditation or Mental Cultivation” in *What the Buddha Taught* (see link on Blackboard)  
“Vipassana Meditation” in *Radiant Mind*  
“Metta Practice” in *Radiant Mind* | See Guide Questions |
| Feb. 6  | Sangha/Theravada Buddhism                  |                                                                        | Paper #1 (Turnitin) |

**Mahayana Buddhism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Feb. 11 | Introduction                               | Keown, “Ch. 5 The Mahayana” in *Buddhism: a very short introduction* (e-book)  
The Parable of the Burning House in the *Lotus Sutra* (see Blackboard) | See Guide Questions |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Feb. 13  | Key Mahayana Doctrines              | “Buddha Nature” in *Radiant Mind*, The Story of Angulimala (see Blackboard)  
“Pure Perception” and “The Human Need to Realize our Intimate Connection” in *Makransky, Awakening through Love*, 133-137 and 77-93.  
The Way of the Bodhisattva, 8:90-129. (see “Exchanging Self and Other” on Blackboard) | See Guide Questions |
“The Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds” in *The Lotus Sutra*  
“Bodhisattvas” in *Radiant Mind* | Worksheet #4 |
| Feb. 20  | Buddhism in Asia                    | Keown. “Ch. 6: The Spread of Buddhism” in *Buddhism: a very short introduction* (e-book)  
Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapters 2-3  
“Vimalakirti and Gentry Buddhism” by Richard Mather | See Guide Questions |
| Feb. 25  | Tibetan Buddhism                    | Tibetan Buddhism” in *Habito, Experiencing Buddhism*, 136-147  
| Feb. 27  | Tibetan Meditations                 | “Exchanging Self and Other” (see Blackboard)  
“Discover the Benefactors in Your Life” in *Makransky, Awakening through Love*, 21-30. | Worksheet # 5 |
| Mar. 4/6 | SPRING BREAK                        |                                                                         |                      |
Watch: *Kundun* (see Blackboard) | See Guide Questions |
“Amida Sutra” (see Blackboard)  
“Contemplation Sutra” (see Blackboard)  
“The Parable of the White Path” (see Blackboard) | See Guide Questions |
| Mar. 20  | Zen Buddhism: Meditation Practices   | Zen Meditation” in *Harvey, Introduction to Buddhism*  
270-279.  
Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness*, Chapters 1-4 | Worksheet #6 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Apr. 1 | Buddhism in the West                       | Keown, “Ch. 9: Buddhism in the West” in *Buddhism: a very short introduction* (e-book)  
American Zenophilia (see Blackboard)  
“Six Simple Guidelines for Mindful Eating” and  
| Apr. 3 | Buddhism and Health                        | Olendzki, “Meditation, Healing, and Stress Reduction” in *Engaged Buddhism in the West*, 307-327. | Worksheet #8     |
| Apr. 8 | Engaged Buddhism in the West: Women/Gender | Sponberg, “Attitudes toward Women and the Feminine in early Buddhism” in *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, 3-29.  
“Why (Engaged) Buddhists Should Care about Gender Issues”, “The Dharma of Gender” and  
| Apr. 10|                                            |                                                                         |                  |
| Apr. 15/17|                                      |                                                                         |                  |
Batchelor, “The Sands of the Ganges: Notes toward a Buddhist Ecological Philosophy” in *Buddhism and Ecology* |                  |
| May 1  |                                            |                                                                         | Discussion of Final Papers |
| May 6  |                                            |                                                                         | Deadline for Papers  |