

RS3900L: BUDDHISM ONLINE

Office Hours TBA on moodle/ Santa Susana 235
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This online-course will introduce students to the study of Buddhist philosophy and religious traditions, beginning with the life of Siddhartha Gautama, through the development of Buddhism in ancient India – Theravada and Mahayana – the spread of Buddhism to Tibet, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. The course concludes with an examination of the coming of Buddhism to the West.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

1. Ability to interpret religious texts and other cultural phenomena (such as rituals, myths, architecture) that have religious presuppositions or implications. [class work, weekly assignments, paper]
2. Think empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims. [class work, assignments]
3. Ability to use cross-cultural methods of religious inquiry and analysis. [class work, assignments, paper]

SLOs for RS390L, Buddhism:

1. Identify and define the major Buddhist schools and their philosophies.
2. Show an ability to analyze Buddhist texts and describe in detail the central teachings and practices of Buddhism.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the variations of Buddhism in the context of diverse Asian cultures.
4. Describe the growth of Buddhism in the West, especially in the United States.

General Education SLOs: Comparative Cultural Studies/ Gender, Race, Class, Ethnicity Studies and Foreign Languages

Goal: Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.

GE SLOs:

1. Describe and compare different cultures;
2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;
3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;
4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society;
5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

Information Competence (GE Designation IC)

Goal: Students will progressively develop information competence skills throughout their undergraduate career by developing a basic understanding of information retrieval tools and practices as well as improving their ability to evaluate and synthesize information ethically.

IC SLOs:

1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed;
2. Demonstrate effective search strategies for finding information using a variety of sources and methods;
3. Locate, retrieve, and evaluate a variety of relevant information including print and electronic formats.
4. Organize and synthesize information in order to communicate effectively;
5. Explain the legal and ethical dimensions of the use of information.

Writing Intensive (GE Designation WI)

Goal: Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.

WI SLOs:

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc) where appropriate.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Participation/Posting (60 pts. x 0.5 or 30 pts. equivalent): Your participation in the Forums (accessed via m1.csun.edu; login using your CSUN ID and password) is very important and will count towards 30% of your grade. Each student must post at least three (3) thoughtful responses per week in any two (2) or more of the Discussion Forums for that week. Each post should be about a paragraph long (~150 words) and is rated/worth up to 2 pts. You may, of course, post more than three posts per week, and I will count your three highest-rated/graded posts; but keep in mind, you must post during the week of that discussion or it will not be counted at all.

Your posts should offer insight, critique or further discussion based on my initial thread or other students' posts. Good posts ("2" rating) will demonstrate critical thinking skills and reflect assigned readings. Weak posts ("0" or "1" rating) will be those short one or two-sentence responses, which do not offer much insight or contribute to further discussion. Also, I will ask you to post a Weekly Summary of what you learned after each week - this will also count towards your

participation/posting requirement. I will monitor your participation and guide the discussions accordingly.

So, for each week of participation in Discussion Forums, you can receive up to six (6) points total (3 posts X 2 pts. = 6 pts. per week) and you will be only required to post for ten (10) weeks (so, 6 pts. per week X 10 weeks = 60 pts. total). Be sure to track your points earned per week for ten weeks. The total points earned will be multiplied by 0.5 at the conclusion of the course to figure out your participation points; so, 30 pts. total possible. You will be asked to give me this number so that I can confirm it with my calculations at the end of the course.

(2) Two papers* (3 full pages, 12-point font, double-spaced, 15 pts each, 30 pts.), which is based on the analysis of Buddhist texts. See guidelines in the "Assignments" link on moodle.

(3) An open-book midterm examination (20 pts.), which includes identification and discussion of key terms and concepts, interpretation of a Buddhist text, and short essays. Important** Do not miss the midterm since it is a timed-exam (see further guidelines on moodle); emergency situations will be considered only with documentation. Students who missed the midterm will only be allowed to take the exam within 3 days of the midterm with a 4-pt. penalty assessed; after the 3-day "grace period," students who missed the midterm will be given a "0" for their grade. There is no final exam.

(4) Research paper* (4 full pages, 12-point font, double-spaced, 20 pts.), which explores in some depth about some aspect of Buddhism of your interest (further guidelines are given on "Assignments" link on moodle).

*Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise. In Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations, plagiarism is "an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended, or given a less severe disciplinary sanction..." So when in doubt, make sure to cite (use APA or MLA style). The instructor reserves the right to request an electronic version of the paper. Also, late submission of writing assignments (two papers and the research paper) will be penalized according to the discretion of the instructor (e.g., 1-5 pts. within one week; assignments will not be accepted after one week of the due date).

Important*** You will be required to submit all assignments via moodle (m1.csun.edu). Be sure to submit your assignments using Microsoft Word .doc or .docx attachments (Note: I cannot open .wps or other obscure versions; or simply type in your text). I will give you one warning if you submit your file incorrectly; if it happens again, you will be assessed a penalty point for not following directions. If in case you receive a "0" for an assignment you submitted, that means I was not able to open your file, so you must resubmit that assignment to my email, klee@csun.edu by the date set by me (note: if you do not resubmit by the due date, you will be given a "0" for the assignment. I will do

my best to post grades/comments to your papers within one week after submission.

Extra Credit (Optional; worth up to 4 pts.): Visit and write a short report (2 full pages, ~350 words) discussing religious motifs observed at the Japanese garden at the Huntington Library Botanical Gardens in Pasadena or in paintings/sculptures seen at LACMA or the Getty Center (note: you must scan/take a photo of and attach your entrance ticket to your report to receive full credit). This report should relate what was seen to some aspect of our class; due by the last day of class, not accepted after.

Grading % (out of 100 total points): 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, 66-69 D+, 60-65 D, <60 F.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Mitchell, Donald. *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience 2e*. (Oxford). 978-0-19-531103-7

Strong, J. *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations*, latest ed. (Wadsworth, 2005). 0495094862

Murcott, Susan. *The First Buddhist Women* (Parallax Press, 2006). 188837554X

Herrigel, E. *Zen in the Art of Archery*. (Vintage Spiritual Classics). 0-375-70509-0

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 – Social and Religious Context of Early Buddhism. Read Mitchell, Introduction; Strong, Introduction. (Video Suggestion: "Journey to India"; Videos/DVDs are available from the CSUN Library, 2nd floor Media)

Week 2 – Buddha: The Life of Siddhartha Gautama. Mitchell, Chapter 1; Strong, Chapter 1; (Video: "The Little Buddha"; focus only on life of Buddha story)

Week 3 – Dharma: The Teachings of the Buddha. Mitchell, Chapter 2; Strong, Chapter 3.

Week 4 – Sangha: The Buddhist Community. Mitchell, Chapter 3; Strong, Chapter 2. (Video: "Footprint of the Buddha.")

Week 5 – Women in Buddhism. Read Murcott's *The First Buddhist Women*. Paper #1 due

Week 6 - Theravada: the Monastic Movement. Mitchell, Chapter 4.

Week 7 – Mahayana: The Bodhisattva Path. Mitchell, Chapter 5; Strong, Chapter 4.

Week 8 – Vajrayana: The Apocalyptic Vehicle. Mitchell, Chapter 6; Strong, Chapter 5. Midterm

Week 9 – Buddhism in Tibet. Mitchell, Chapter 6, Strong, Chapter 7. (Video: “Kundun” or “Tibet: The Survival of the Spirit”)

Week 10 – Buddhism in China. Mitchell, Chapter 7; Strong, Chapter 8.

Week 11 – Buddhism in Korea and Vietnam. Mitchell, Chapter 8.

Week 12 – Buddhism in Japan. Mitchell, Chapter 9; Strong, Chapter 9. (Video: “Buddhism: The Land of the Disappearing Buddha – Japan” or “The Zen Mind”).
Paper #2 due

Week 13 – Bushido: The Way of the Warrior. Mitchell, Chapter 10. (Video: “The Last Samurai” or “The Seven Samurai”)

Week 14 – Buddhism in the West. Mitchell, Chapter 11. (Video: “Becoming the Buddha in LA”)

Week 15 – Buddhism Today. Mitchell, Chapter 11; Strong, Chapter 10.
Research paper due
Extra credit due