RS390: BUDDHISM

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Santa Susana Hall; Office Hours: F 2-3

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This 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.

2. Think empathetically and critically about conflicting religious claims.

3. Ability to use cross-cultural methods of religious inquiry and analysis.

SLOs for RS390, 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 - APA recommended.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Two papers (30%, 3 full pages, 12-point font, double-spaced, 15 points each, 30 points.; ~750 words, excluding quotes), which is based on the analysis of Buddhist texts. See guidelines in the “Assignments” link on Moodle.

(2) Team PowerPoint (10%, 10 points). There will be one team assignment on a selected topic of interest in Buddhism, which will be chosen by the team and approved by the instructor. Teams will be formed at the end of week one and each team (5-6 members) will be required to do a brief PowerPoint presentation (~8-10 slides, ~20 mins.) according to the assigned week of the presentation. This presentation should only discuss current events/practices associated with Buddhism in the world today, and talk about some of its artistic representations (e.g., symbols, art, architecture, etc.). The team presentation is worth 10 points. Only those members who participate will receive points for the team presentation. PowerPoint slides with names of those who participated must be submitted in Moodle on the day of the presentation. Creative presentations are encouraged.

(3) An objective midterm examination (25%, 50 multiple-choice questions worth 0.5 points each; 25 points, bring a Scantron). Important\*\* Do not miss the midterm; emergency situations will be considered only with documentation. Students who missed the midterm will only be allowed to take the exam during office hours the following week with a 5-pt. penalty assessed; after the one-week “grace period,” students who missed the midterm will be given a “0” for their grade. There is no final exam.

(4) Site Visitation Assignment (20%, 20 points.): Students will attend a Buddhist temple and write a report (5 full pages, 12-pt font, double-spaced) that describes and analyzes the site/ritual observed; specific guidelines will be posted on Moodle.

(5) Final Research Paper\* (25%, 25 points., 5 full pages, 12-point font, double-spaced), which explores in some depth about some aspect of Buddhism of your interest (further guidelines are given on “Assignments” link on Moodle). Must use at least three reliable sources.

\*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 points. 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 (Moodle.csun.edu); I do not accept any assignments via email. 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. Warning: I do not accept any assignment via email - if you cannot submit your assignment via Moodle, you missed the cut off date and the assignment is no longer accepted.

Extra Credit (Optional; worth up to 4 points.): Visit and write a short report (2 full pages, ~500 words, excluding quotes) discussing Buddhist 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.

2 Papers 30 points

Team PPT 10

Midterm objective exam 25

Site visitation 10

Final research paper 25

Total = 100 points

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, D. *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience 2e*. (Oxford). 978-0-19-

531103-7; earlier editions OK.

Strong, J. *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations*, latest ed.

(Wadsworth, 2005). 0495094862; earlier editions OK.

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

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

RECOMMENDED:

Lee, K. *The Prince and the Monk* (SUNY Press). 978-0-7914-7021-3

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 – Social and Religious Context of Early Buddhism. Read Mitchell, Introduction; Strong, Introduction. Video: “Journey to India”

Week 2 – Buddha: The Life of Siddhartha Gautama. Mitchell, Chapter 1; Strong, Chapter 1; Video: “The Little Buddha”

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 - Theravada: the Monastic Movement. Mitchell, Chapter 4. Read Murcott’s *The First Buddhist Women.*

Week 6 – Women in Buddhism. Read Murcott’s First Buddhist Women. **Paper #1 Due**

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

Week 8 – Vajrayana: The Apocalyptic Vehicle. Mitchell, Ch. 6; Strong, Chapter 5. **Site Visitation Due**

Week 9 – Buddhism in Tibet. Mitchell, Chapter 6, Strong, Chapter 7. Video: “Kundun”; **Midterm Exam**

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”; **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, Ch.11. Video: “Becoming the Buddha in LA”

Week 15 – Buddhism Today. Mitchell, Chapter 11; Strong, Chapter 10. **Final** **Research Paper Due. Extra Credit Due**