



REL 3340: BUDDHISM spring 2018

Instructor Contact

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Course Information

Course Name	Buddhist Thought
Course ID & Section	REL 3340-AW61

Credit Hours	3
Semester/Year	spring 2018
Location	Virtual Pure Lands

Course Description

This course is an introduction to Buddhist thought, practices, cultures and history. Beginning in 6th BCE India, we will trace the development of Buddhism through South-East Asia, East Asia, Tibet and its recent flourishing in North America examining a diversity of Buddhist traditions such as Theravada, Mahayana, and American Buddhism. Focusing on a variety of Buddhist ideas and practices within their particular socio-historic context we will explore how Buddhism has interacted with local cultures and discover the new forms of Buddhism that have arisen from this interaction.

Catalogue Description: Teachings of Buddhism and their contemporary applications.

PR: HUM 2230 or REL 2300 or C.I.

Course Objectives

- The primary aim of this course is to facilitate a solid grasp of Buddhist thought and practices aided by a familiarity with the socio-historic context in which they developed.
- To be able to identify commonalities and differences between three major forms of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana and Western Buddhism
- To understand how Buddhism has interacted with, shaped and been shaped by the different cultures and religions it has come into contact with during its historic development.

Course Structure

The course will be split into five modules:

- (i) The Foundations of Buddhism is a four week module that will introduce the core beliefs and practices of the historic Buddha
- (ii) Theravada Buddhism is a two week module that will focus on Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia

- (iii) Mahayana Buddhism is a two week module that will examine the core features of Mahayana Buddhism
- (iv) Vajrayana / Tantric Buddhism is a two week module that examines the emergence of Tantric Buddhism and its expression in Tibetan Buddhism
- (v) Buddhism in the West is a three week module that will explore how traditional Buddhism has been shaped by the encounter with Western modernity.

The course is structured on the model of a face-to-face 15 week semester class meeting 2 days a week. So each week you will have two classes that will typically consist of the following: a powerpoint lecture, the class reading(s), the class assignment, ungraded review terms and optional activities.

Required Text

Charles Prebish and Damien Keown, *Introducing Buddhism 2nd Edition*

Supplemental Texts

- I will provide a number of additional texts, most as email links, which must be read.

Course Requirements

There are two types of course requirements: graded and ungraded.

Graded Assignments: There are four main categories of graded assignments: (i) Exams (five multi-choice module exams) (ii) Mid-term paper assignment on Buddhist meditation (iii) Final Powerpoint Site Presentation (which should be done in groups of up to 4 unless of extenuating circumstances) (iv) "What the Buddha Didn't Say: Types of Source Material and Why they Matter:" an informal writing assignment to prepare you for the writing components of your mid-term and final exams.

Module Exams: There will be an exam (15% each) at the end of each of the five modules. These are worth 15% each so a total of 75% Each exam will be a timed multi choice exam.

Mid-Term Paper Assignment on Buddhist Meditation: This is a set question on Buddhist meditation that will involve academic research and an optional experiential component. It is worth 10%

Powerpoint Site Visit Presentation: Instead of a final paper, you will be required to complete a powerpoint of a visit to a local Buddhist center. This project can be done in groups of up to 4. If you live away from campus or have another accentuating circumstance you can do it alone after getting my permission. It will involve three aspects: academic research, a description of your site visit, and a reflection on the difference between the textual analysis and lived experience of a religion. Specific instructions and an example are provided in the Assignment Module (15%)

What the Buddha Didn't Say: This is an informal writing assignment that will prepare you for the formal writing components of your mid-term and final projects (3%)

Ungraded Assignments: At the end of each class, you will find a list of review terms from that day. These will make-up your review posts at the end of each unit so I highly recommend you do them weekly instead of waiting until the end of the unit. If you do wait to the end of the unit, you will have a lot to cover for the exams. These will not be graded, but will be essential to exam success.

Missed Assignments/Make-Ups/Extra Credit

The exams will be timed and available only over a two day period (see under exam rubric for specific dates) If you foresee an issue or if an emergency occurs, you must provide documentation or no accommodation will be made.

There will be no extra credit assignment in this class but " What the Buddha Taught," will essentially function as a 3% extra credit buffer on your final grade.

Evaluation and Grading

Letter Grade	Points
A	94 – 100 points
A-	90 – 92 points
B+	87 – 89 points
B	83 – 86 points
B-	80 – 82 points
C+	77 – 79 points
C	70 – 76 points
C	70 – 76 points

D+	67 – 69 points
D	63 – 66 points
D-	60 – 62 points
F	59 and below



COURSE CALENDER

All course dates are in webcourse and class topics and readings are given on the Content Page of the class PowerPoint.

Some important dates:

Classes Begin: Monday 8th January

Spring Break: Monday 12-17th March

Withdrawal Date: Wednesday March 21st

Last Class: Monday April 23rd

Last Exam: Friday April 27th

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be determined through exam/discussion posts. See specific instructions under assignment posts.

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be subject to appropriate referral to the [Office of Student Conduct](#) for further action. See the [UCF Golden Rule](#) for further information. I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask me to

change (or expect me to change) your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Student Accessibility Services

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accessibility for all persons. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu> Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

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Third-Party Software and FERPA

During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need **not** make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.