RELG 221 BUDDHIST MEDITATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

MIND, MATTER, AND MEDITATION:
BUDDHIST CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES ACROSS TIME AND SPACE

Professor Daniel M. Stuart

Class Meetings: Tuesday/Thursday, 11:40–12:55, Humanities Classroom Building 103
Office: Rutledge 331
Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Overview

What is the mind? What is the body? What is freedom? This course will explore the ways in which Buddhist contemplative traditions in South, Southeast and East Asia have confronted these questions. Emphasis will be on the historical evolution, doctrinal foundations, and monastic and lay regimens associated with Buddhist meditation practices. We will also explore a number of modern meditation traditions, and the question of how traditional models of practice are transformed in a modern context. We will make use of a wide variety of primary and secondary readings as well as visual materials (including films) to attempt to place the historical practices in their cultural, institutional and soteriological contexts.

Grading Breakdown:

- **Attendance** (30%) — This includes regular attendance and participation in class discussions.
- **Two 500–600 word papers** (20%)
- **Two quizzes** (20%)
- **Final exam** (30%)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- articulate fundamental ideals of Buddhist thought from the standpoint of three major strands of Buddhism
- identify a range of contemplative practices that serve as foundational to all Buddhist traditions
- explain how these practices develop historically in different cultural contexts in India, Tibet, China, Southeast Asia, and America
- analyze the way that Buddhist ideologies and regimes of practice work with the mind and body to produce certain types of religious experiences
Course Policies

Participation — Participation forms an important part of the course. Meaningful contributions to class discussions and other in-class activities enhance everyone's learning experience. Students should feel free to discuss the quality of their class participation with the instructor at any point during the semester.

Attendance — Prompt and regular attendance is crucial for success in the course. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class. Attendance is mandatory, and if you miss more than three class sessions, you will lose 5% of your attendance grade for every additional class missed. If you miss more than ten classes, you will automatically fail the class. If you are absent for an excusable reason, be sure to present the needed documentation to the instructor immediately upon your return (e.g., if you are absent for a legitimate medical reason, bring a doctor's note as soon as you come back to class).

Grading Scale 100-90 A; 89-87 B+; 86-80 B; 79-77 C+; 76-70 C; 69-67 D+; 66-60 D; below 60 F

Electronic Devices: cellphone, smartphones, and other non-academic electronic devices are NOT permitted in class. If you use any such device during class time, you will be asked to leave and be counted as absent.

Required Course Materials:

• Gethin, Rupert. The Foundations of Buddhism (OUP 1998).
• Additional PDF readings will be uploaded to Blackboard

Films:
I ♥ Huckabees (2004)
Fearless (1993)
Never Let Me Go (2010)
Crazy Wisdom: The Life and Times of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (2011)

Important Dates:

Quiz #1: 9/18
Paper #1 due: 9/27
Quiz #2: 10/30
Paper #2 due: 11/15
Final Exam: 12/11 (due at 3:30 pm)
Schedule of Weekly Readings and Assignments

8/23 (R): Introduction and General Discussion: India and Asia, Meditation Practice, Philosophical Discourse, the Buddha

Week 1: The Foundations of Buddhism

8/28 (T): The Buddha
Gethin, pp. 1-34
R. Gimello Handout: “The Date of the Historical Buddha”

8/30 (R): Scripture, Language, and Philosophy
Gethin, pp. 35-84

Week 2: The Foundations of Buddhism cont.

9/4 (T): Cosmos and Community
Gethin, pp. 85-132
Nāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 677-691

9/6 (R): No Self and the Path of Practice
Gethin, pp. 133-201

Week 3: Early Buddhist Contemplative Practice

9/11 (T): Being Human
Film: I ♥ Huckabees (2004)

Mindfulness Outline

Week 4: Early Buddhist Contemplative Practice cont.

9/18 (T): Abhidharma and Meditation
Buswell 2005, pp. 1-7
Anuruddha 2000 (AS), pp. 329-366
Quiz #1

9/20 (R): Meditation and Death
Week 5: Cessational Possibilities and New Paths

9/25 (T): In This Very Life
Film: Fearless (1993)

9/27 (R): The Mahāyāna
Paper #1 due

Week 6: Developments in Indian Buddhist Soteriology and A Theravādin Life

10/2 (T): The Entrance to the Path of the Bodhisattva
Śāntideva 1996, pp. 75-132 (optional: pp. vii-xxvi and)

10/4 (R): An Extraordinary Life: The Biography of Ajahn Mun (1879-1949)
Mahā Boowa 2004, pp. 3-54

Week 7: A Modern Theravāda Buddhist Master

10/9 (T): A Long Story
Mahā Boowa 2004, pp. 139-179 and pp. 288-316

10/11 (R): The Buddhist Conquest of China
Wright 1971 [1959], pp. 3-64

Week 8: Culture and Practice; Buddhist Contemplative Practices in China: Tian-tai and Chan

10/16 (T): Tiantai Zhiyi’s Stopping and Seeing

FALL BREAK: 10/18–19/2018

Week 9: Dhyāna in China

10/23 (T): Chan Masters in China
Wright 1971 [1959], pp. 65-85; Mcrae 2003, pp. xix–21

10/25 (R): ‘Chan’ Tradition
Week 10: Dhyāna in China cont.

10/30 (T): Chan and the Gong-an
McRae, pp. 205-217 in Loori ed. 2002; Buswell, pp. 75-90 in Loori ed. 2005
Quiz #2

11/1 (R): Submission to the Dharma
Film: Never Let Me Go (2010)

Week 11: Buddhist Contemplative Practices in Tibet: The Tantrika’s Path

11/6 (T): GENERAL ELECTION DAY (NO CLASSES)

11/8 (R): Initiation and the Guru

Week 12: Tibetan Practice and Westward Transmission

11/13 (T): Cultivating the Natural State
Dahl trans. 2008, pp. 119–128 (Revitalization); pp. 131–143 (The Main Practices: Probing the Mind and Searching for its Hidden Flaw); 175–184 (Appendices I and II)

Trungpa 1976, pp. 19-59
Paper #2 due

Week 13: The Bodhisattva Path and the Myth of Freedom: Westward Transmission (cont.)

11/20 (T): The Mandala in the West: Shambhala
Film: Crazy Wisdom: The Life and Times of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche (2011)

THANKSGIVING RECESS: 11/21–25/2018

Week 14: Mainstreaming Mindfulness

11/27 (T): Mindfulness in the West

Kabat-Zinn 2005 [1990], pp. 75–113
**Week 15: Cowboys and Kasinas?**

12/4 (T): Cowboy Dharma
Ingram 2007, pp. iv–15 (Foreword and Warning and The Three Trainings); pp. 67–84 (Practical Meditatin Considerations); pp. 346–351 (So Who The Heck is Daniel Ingram?); optional: pp. 16–33 (The Three Characteristics)

12/6 (R): Where are we now?
Ingram 2007, pp. 87–110 (Buddhism vs. The Buddha, Content and Ultimate Reality, What Went Wrong?); pp. 127–131 (From Content to Insight); 133–137 (Concentration vs. Insight); pp. 153–158 (No-self vs. True Self); pp. 329–332 (What’s “Full Enlightenment”?)

**FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAM:** due Tuesday, December 11, at 3:00 pm (please submit electronically)

**Bibliography**


