

# Religion 340: Buddhism (Spring 2019)

Professor Luke Whitmore

Office Hours: Tues 3:20-3:45, Wed. 1:30-3:00, Thurs. 3:20-3:45 and by appointment. (CCC 417 and, by arrangement, Zest).

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## Description

The worlds of Buddhism stretches in space and time from approximately the fifth century BCE in north India and western Nepal to the numerous Buddhist communities in Wisconsin today. This course will orient you to the diverse set of ideas, cultures, beliefs, and practices that make up the Buddhist world, and give you the tools to understand the diversity of Buddhism today. In this course you will be asked, in many different ways, to view the world from perspectives radically different from your own, a skill essential for our times. What we do in class and what you do to prepare for class are both designed to facilitate this goal.

## Learning Outcomes

*(These outcomes are designed to work with the General Education Program goals for the Humanities and Global Awareness designations.)* This course gives you the tools to accomplish the following:

- 1) Explain core Buddhist practices and ideas
- 2) Describe the diversity of Buddhism in different times and places
- 3) Analyze different kinds of Buddhism as they are lived in the world today
- 4) Obtain reliable information on specific Buddhism-related topics

### **Required Texts: For Rental**

We are NOT reading these text rental books in their entirety.

*The Experience of Buddhism* (Strong)

*The Life of Buddhism* (ed. Reynolds and Carbine)

### **Required Texts: For Purchase**

*Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* by Damien Keown **(2nd edition)**.

ISBN-10: 0199663831 ISBN-13: 978-0199663835. **Note: Please be sure that you are purchasing the 2013 version of this book.**

*Monkey: A Journey to the West*, trans by David Kherdian (Shambhala, 2005)  
ISBN: 978-1590302583

*Dreaming Me: Black, Baptist, and Buddhist: One Woman's Spiritual Journey*  
by Jan Willis (Wisdom Publications, 2008). ISBN-13: 978-0861715480

### **Assessments and Requirements**

**Physical Class Journal Entries:** 10%

**Class Participation and Preparation:** 5%

**Physical Class Attendance:** 5%

**Unit 1 Take-Home Test:** 15%

**Graded Online Discussion Posts:** 15%

**Unit 2 Essay:** 20%

**Book Review:** 20% (approximately 1000 of your own words)

**Final Short Essay:** 10% (due during finals, minimum 750 of your own words)

### **Percentage to Letter Grade Conversion**

A: 94-100, A-: 90-93, B+: 87-89, B: 83-86, B-: 80-82, C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72, D+: 67-69, D: 65-66, F: 64 or lower

## **Notes and Policies**

### **Learning Accommodations**

UWSP is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities and temporary impairments. If you have a disability or acquire a condition during the semester where you need assistance, please contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of Albertson Hall (library) as soon as possible. DATC can be reached at 715-346-3365 or DATC@uwsp.edu. <https://www.uwsp.edu/disability/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Written Assignments**

If you are not able to turn in on time due to particularly extenuating circumstances, some flexibility may be possible. If this is the case, you must have asked and received permission from me no later than the day before the assignment is due. Without permission, a grade penalty will be assigned at my discretion or I may not allow you to submit.

### **Required Readings**

If I do not provide photocopies of an assigned reading not in one of our books for one of our in-class meetings, you must print out the reading (you will find PDF versions on our D2L site) and bring to class. Bring Keown, Strong, and *Life of Buddhism* to every in-class meeting.

### **Smart Phones**

Tablets or laptops for the purposes of note-taking are fine, with permission. If your smart phone use is causing our collective energy to decrease I will let you know. If it continues to be an issue it will impact your grade.

## **Attendance**

Everyone is automatically entitled to one unexcused in-class absence. If you miss more than two physical classes or if you are not involved on D2L for more than three weeks we will need to meet in person to discuss how class is going. Please place a copy of any absence-related information (including emails to me) in the Absence-Related Info Assignment on Canvas.

- 1 or fewer unexcused absences (Excellent) = 90-100%
- 2 unexcused absences (Good) = 80-90%
- 3-5 unexcused absences (Poor) = 66-79%
- More than 5 in-class absences of any kind = failure of class as a whole **unless** you and I meet in person and agree that it is possible for you to continue and succeed in the class. This option may require the completion of extra work.

Absences will be excused only when the excuse is provided (via email or in person) in advance of the class that will be missed. You should also be sure to upload a note/relevant information (including a copy of emails to me) into the "Absence-Related Info" Assignment on Canvas. Acceptable reasons for an excused absence are illness, family emergency, or school (not club) sponsored trip or athletic competition. If you miss class (excused or unexcused) you should complete the assignments, request and review notes from a colleague, and **then** ask me any questions you have about the material. ***It is not the professor's responsibility to fill you in on what you missed if you were absent.***

***Note: If you miss more than 3 physical classes I strongly suggest that we meet in person to discuss how things are going. I have found that repeated absence usually means you are struggling with something.***

## **In-Class Journal Entries:**

Before each **in-class** meeting you must upload a brief journal entry to D2L that contains the following for **EACH** assigned piece of reading: a 2-sentence general summary, several specific details that you felt were important, and a brief mention of points that you either want me to discuss in class and/or about which you had a question. As long as it is clear that you have thoughtfully prepared the material your entry will be scored 100%. These assignments need to be uploaded **BEFORE** class. If you want me to be sure to incorporate what you have written into our time together then you should submit them several hours before class begins. **There will be a model assignment on Canvas.**

## **Assignments**

Assignments will change. Be sure to check D2L before each assignment.

Mutual Respect (avoid bad *karmas*)

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Student-Conduct.aspx>

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CH17-UWSP-Updated2018.pdf>

Academic Misconduct (avoid bad *karmas*)

<http://library.uwsp.edu/guides/vrd/plagiarism.htm>

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/UWS%2014-1.pdf>

## Netiquette Guidelines

Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. We all want to foster a safe online learning environment. All opinions and experiences, no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived, must be respected in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course community. *Because this is a course about religion, we can assume that there will be a number of different views and reactions and that is fine. Everyone will be surprised or challenged by something but it may well be different for everyone. We will, therefore, discuss with this awareness in mind.*

The following netiquette tips will enhance the learning experience for everyone in the course:

- Do not dominate any discussion.
- Give other students the opportunity to join in the discussion.
- Do not use offensive language. Present ideas appropriately.
- Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, do not capitalize all letters since this suggests shouting.
- Popular emoticons such as ☺ or / can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them.
- Avoid using vernacular and/or slang language. This could possibly lead to misinterpretation.
- Never make fun of someone's ability to read or write.
- Share tips with other students.
- Keep an "open-mind" and be willing to express even your minority opinion. Minority opinions have to be respected.
- Think and edit before you push the "Send" button.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- Using humor is acceptable

Adapted from:

Mintu-Wimsatt, A., Kernek, C., & Lozada, H. R. (2010). *Netiquette: Make it part of your syllabus*. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 6(1). Retrieved from [http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt\\_0310.htm](http://jolt.merlot.org/vol6no1/mintu-wimsatt_0310.htm)

Shea, V. (1994). *Netiquette*. Albion.com. Retrieved from: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/book/>

## Emergency Response Guidance:

- In the event of a medical emergency call 9-1-1 or use the nearest Red Emergency Phone. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim.
- In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure. CCC 233 is one of these rooms.
- In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner. Meet in the middle of Parking Lot E (the parking lot between CCC and NFAC).
- Active Shooter/Code React – Run/Escape, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Call 9-1-1 when it is safe to do so. Follow instructions of emergency responders. See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Procedures at [www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures](http://www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures) for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.”

## Schedule of Assignments

### Unit 1: Foundations

#### Week 1:

##### Wednesday, January 23, 2019: *Physical Class*

- Introduction to Course
- Life Story of Buddha

#### Week 2

##### Wednesday, January 30, 2019: *Physical Class*

- Fill out and upload the About Me Assignment (found in the Unit 1 module on Canvas) as a .docx document
- Submit first journal entry to Canvas.
- KEOWN: 17-31 (The Buddha). *Note that this chapter essentially reviews the content in the lecture from Week 1.*
- KEOWN: 32-47 (Chapter 3: Karma and Rebirth)
- KEOWN: 48-56 (First Two-Thirds of Chapter 4: Four Noble Truths)
- STRONG: 3.2.1., 3.2.2 (Milinda and the Chariot)
- THROUGHOUT UNIT 1: Watch the PBS documentary *The Buddha: A Film* by David Grubin (available through Films on Demand on UWSP library site) at whatever pace works for you.

#### Week 3

##### Wednesday, February 6, 2019: *Physical Class*

- KEOWN: 53-60 (i.e. the rest of Chapter 4: Four Noble Truths. Am I suggesting that you reread pages 53-56? *You betcha.*)
- KEOWN: 96-111, emphasis on 96-108 (Chapter 7: Meditation)
- STRONG: 3.5.5 (Mindfulness)
- Submit second journal entry to Canvas.



## Week 4

### Wednesday, February 13, 2019: **Virtual Class**

- Take Home Test handed out (virtually).
- Part 1: Society and Ethics
  - KEOWN: 112-118 (parts of Chapter 8: Ethics).
  - STRONG: 2.1.4 (The Acceptance of Women into the Order); STRONG 2.4 (Sangha Situations); STRONG 2.4.1 (Nagasena Disobeys His Master and Preaches to a Layman)
  - STRONG 2.3, 2.3.1 (The Regulation of the Sangha, the Recitation of the Rules, 2.3.2, The Ongoing Development of the Rules)
- Discussion Post 1 (see on Canvas under Important Course Documents) for an explanation of how to write this assignment):
  - The Keown reading for this week talks about Buddhist ethics, specifically as they are understood in the context of Buddhist precepts, the idea of ahimsa, and the idea of virtue. As we know, however, ethical ideas and practices do not exist in a vacuum but rather are part of life as humans live it, life that is messy and full of unpredictable situations that always arise as humans are always figuring out how to live with other humans as part of a community. In the lifetime of the Buddha and in the several centuries after the death of the Buddha, the monastic sangha (sometimes with the Buddha's help, sometimes without) had to work out the rules of their communities. In an ideal sense, the rules of a Buddhist monastic community would directly conform to the ideals of Buddhist ethics. In reality, however, things got messy, and each of the assigned readings in Strong is an example of that in one way or another. So, here is the discussion question:
    - *How do each of the FOUR Strong readings function as an example of early Buddhists trying to figure out the best way to live their values as part of a community? Your answer should mention, discuss, and cite at least one specific example from each reading. By specific example I mean something like "On page x where it said \_\_\_\_\_." You should also make specific reference to important details from Keown. Finally, please note specific questions or confusions that arose as you were answering this question.*

## Week 5

Wednesday, February 20, 2019: **Physical Class**

- The Early Spread of Buddhism
  - KEOWN: 19 ("Early Scriptures" text box), 30-31, 61-62, 76-81. (Beginning of Chapter 5 - Mahayana and Chapter 7 -The Spread of Buddhism).
  - Life of Buddhism (LOB): 1-14 (a very useful overall review and summary that puts things a little differently than Keown)
  - STRONG: 1.10 (Death and Parinirvana of the Buddha); 1.12 (A Story of a Buddha Image); 2.5.3 (Some Edicts of Ashoka); 3.6 and 3.6.1 (Doctrinal Issues, A Theravadin Claim to Orthodoxy)

## Week 6

Wednesday, February 27, 2019: **Virtual Class.**

**Take home test due to Canvas by 11:00, 2/27. Stay tuned for additional details.**

## Week 7: Physical Class

Wednesday, March 6, 2019: **IN CLASS**

## Week 8

Wednesday, March 13, 2019: **VIRTUAL CLASS**

Wednesday, March 20, 2019: **SPRING BREAK**

## Week 9

Wednesday, March 27, 2019: **IN CLASS**

**Week 10**

Wednesday, April 3, 2019: VIRTUAL CLASS

**Week 11**

Wednesday, April 10, 2019: IN CLASS

**Week 12**

Wednesday, April 17, 2019: VIRTUAL CLASS

**Week 13**

Wednesday, April 24, 2019: IN CLASS

**Week 14**

Wednesday, May 1, 2019: IN-CLASS

## **Week 15**

**Wednesday, May 8, 2019: IN CLASS**