Buddhist Traditions (Rel 6346/4309)

Prof. Mario Poceski (Religion Department, University of Florida)

Class Time & Location
Tuesday 6:15-9:00 pm, CBD 310.

Office Hours & Contact Information
Tue & Thu 3:10–4:00 pm, and by appointment, 132 Anderson Hall.
(352) 392-1625x242; mpoceski@ufl.edu; ww.clas.ufl.edu/users/mpoceski.

Course Description
The graduate seminar serves as a comprehensive survey of Buddhism, covering the principal texts, doctrines, traditions, and historical developments, with a focus on South and East Asia. Students will become acquainted with recent scholarship on Buddhism, read representative works from the canonical collections, and reflect on the scope and nature of Buddhist studies as an academic discipline. This is one of the core courses in the Asian religions track of the graduate program in religion.

Prerequisites
There are no formal prerequisites, although prior knowledge of Buddhism will be very helpful. No knowledge of Asian languages is required, but students are encouraged to do extra readings in the classical languages they use in their research.

Format
The seminar is organized around class discussions based on the assigned weekly readings. Each week, the students will rotate the responsibility of doing presentations and leading discussions of the assigned readings. Students are required to come to each class prepared to engage in critical analysis and discussion of the relevant materials.

Requirements
• Class attendance, participation, and reading of assigned materials (20% of the final grade).
• Class presentations, reading summaries, and leading of discussions (10%).
• Bibliography of academic works on Buddhism, due 11/27 (10%).
• Research paper, due 12/7 (50%).

Required Texts
Lopez, Donald S., ed. Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism.
Course Reader (hereafter referred to as CR; see below for contents).
Encyclopedia of Buddhism (EB) articles (see below); available as an e-Book from the UF library.
## Course Schedule (Tentative)

### Week 1, 8/28
Introduction to the Course and its Subject Matter  
[EB] “India,” “Buddha,” “Sangha”

#### Part One: South Asia

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Texts/Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W 2</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>Early Buddhist History</td>
<td>[CR] Lamotte; Bodhi: 43–78</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 5</td>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>Mahāyāna Teachings</td>
<td>Williams: 141–256; [CR] Thurman</td>
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#### Part Two: East Asia

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Texts/Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>W 7</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Transmission and Growth of Buddhism in China</td>
<td>[CR] Zurcher, Poceski (both chapters)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 10</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Chan/Zen Records of Sayings</td>
<td>[CR] Poceski (both articles), Cleary &amp; Cleary, Cheng Chien</td>
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<td>W 11</td>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Buddhism in Korea and Japan</td>
<td>[CR] Lee, de Bary; [EB] “Korea,” “Japan”</td>
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#### Part Three: The West

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Texts/Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>W 13</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>No class (Prof Poceski at AAR conference in San Diego)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W 15</td>
<td>12/4</td>
<td>Student presentations of research projects</td>
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Course Reader
Lamotte, Etienne. *History of Indian Buddhism*: 1–84.
Bhikkhu Bodhi, ed. *In the Buddha’s Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*: 1–78.

Encyclopedia Articles
Bechert, “Buddha, Life of the”: 82–88
Silk, “Buddhist Studies”: 94–101
Harrison, “Canon”: 111–15
Lachman, “Chan Art”: 125–30
Rhie, “China, Buddhist Art in”: 145–54
Whitfield, “Dunhuang”: 240–41
Anderson, “Four Noble Truths”: 295–98
Poceski, “Huayan jing”: 340–41
Poceski, “Huayan School”: 341–47

Further Readings
In the seminar we will not be going over basic Buddhist concepts and doctrines. Depending on their level of preparation in the field of Buddhist studies, students might need to do additional reading on their own. The
following list contains sample works that provide basic information about Buddhist terms, doctrines, historical developments, and the like, in addition to the aforementioned *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*.

Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices*.
Jones, Lindsay, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion*.
Mizuno, Kogen. *Basic Buddhist Concepts*.

**Written Assignments**

- All written assignments must be typewritten and follow a standard academic format.
- The length of the final research paper should be 14–16 pages (1.5 spacing). The bibliography should contain at least 30 titles of academic publications pertinent to the student’s research topic. More information about the paper will be given in class.
- When a student is responsible for leading a weekly discussion, he/she will also have to prepare a 2–3 page summary of the assigned reading(s) and distribute copies of it to everybody in class.
- A hard copy of each written assignment must be submitted in class on the due date, at the latest. Students can also leave their papers in the instructor’s mailbox at the Dept. of Religion office any time prior to the deadline. No late submissions will be accepted under any circumstances, and no other form of submission, such as emailing a paper, is acceptable.
- Students are welcome to bring early drafts of their papers and ask for feedback/advice during the office hours.

**Attendance**

- Attendance is mandatory for all students. Valid excuses for missed classes must be submitted in writing, along with pertinent documentation (such as a note from a doctor). Written excuses for planned absences (such as participation in a religious observance, for example) must be submitted in advance.
- In case of excessive absences or disruptive behavior, after a warning I will prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade. Coming late or leaving early, or being inattentive in class can also be counted as absences.

**Extracurricular**

- The assigned readings and other seminar requirements, as described in this syllabus, are a basic minimum. Students are encouraged to take personal initiative to further broaden their knowledge and improve their academic skills by doing additional readings, including materials written in Asian languages pertinent to their area of research, and by initiating further discussions with other graduate students and Asian religions faculty.

**Other Notices**

- A student who has a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements should consult the instructor so that appropriate arrangements may be made. Note that the student is responsible for communicating his/her needs to the instructor.
- Plagiarism and cheating will result in a failing grade and other serious penalties. For more information, see the “Academic Honesty—Student Guide” brochure, posted online by the Dean of Students Office at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/Academic_Honesty.html.
- Registration in this course implies that each student enters a contractual agreement with the instructor, whereas he/she is accountable for fulfilling all course requirements and adhering to the course policies. Students are responsible for knowing and following all schedules and instructions contained in this syllabus, as well as any other instructions given in class (remember, attendance is required, not optional). Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor.