Introduction to Buddhism (Rel 2341)

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

Class Time & Location
Lectures: Tue & Thu 4:05-4:55 pm, LIT 121.
Fri discussion sessions: 1) [4049] 9:35-10:25 am, AND 21; 2) [4220] 10:40-11:30 am, MAT 16; 3) [4225] 12:15-1:40 pm, TUR 2349.

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

Teaching Assistants
Phillip Green and Chungwhan Sung. Office hours: Thu and Fri 2:00–3:00 pm, and by appointment, 017 Anderson Hall. Tel: (352) 392-1625x224; Email: psgreen@religion.ufl.edu and cwsung@ufl.edu.

Use of the Online Vista System
The syllabus and other course information will be posted online via UF’s Vista system. To access it, go to the Learning Support Systems homepage [http://lss.at.ufl.edu/]. Students must have an active GatorLink ID to access Vista, which can be obtained at the GatorLink website [http://gatorlink.ufl.edu]

Course Description
The course is a historical survey of the beliefs, doctrines, and practices that shaped the identity of Buddhism as a pan-Asian religion that transcended ethnic, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. The course covers the historical development of Buddhism in South Asia, including the formulation of key doctrinal tenets and religious practices, the growth of the monastic order, and the formulation of new religious ideals and doctrines by the Mahāyāna tradition. We will also explore the spread of Buddhism outside of India, including the Western world.

Course Format and Prerequisites
This is primarily a lecture course, but students are encouraged (and expected) to engage in class discussions and critical analysis of the course materials, especially during the Friday discussion sessions. There are no formal prerequisites and no knowledge of Asian languages is required.

Requirements
• Class attendance, participation, and reading of assigned materials (in advance to lectures).
• Five quizzes (20% of the final grade).
• Two exams (each 35% of the final grade).
• Report on public lecture (10% of the final grade), due 9/27.

Required Texts
Lopez, Donald, ed. Buddhist Scriptures.
Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices.

Recommended Text
Rahula, Walpola. What the Buddha Taught.
## Lecture Topics and Course Schedule

(Tentative and subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading Material</th>
<th>Additional Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/23</td>
<td>Introduction to the Course</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/28 &amp; 8/30</td>
<td>1. Indian Contexts and the Buddha’s Life</td>
<td>Harvey 1–31; Lopez 105–28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/4 &amp; 9/6</td>
<td>2. The Early Buddhist Community</td>
<td>Harvey 73–89, 322–24; Lopez 223–29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/18 &amp; 9/20</td>
<td>4. The Four Noble Truths</td>
<td>Harvey 47–72</td>
<td>Buddhism and Violence, special lecture by Prof. M. Zimmermann (U Hamburg)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/2 &amp; 10/4</td>
<td>Exam 1 (Thu), preceded by exam review (Tue)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/9 &amp; 10/11</td>
<td>6. Interpretations of Buddhahood and Emergence of Tantra</td>
<td>Harvey 125–38, 260–70; Lopez 478–87, 495–503</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/16 &amp; 10/18</td>
<td>7. Popular Beliefs and Devotional Practices</td>
<td>Harvey 170–95; Lopez 60–68, 394–401</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10/30 &amp; 11/1</td>
<td>9. Monastic and Lay Paradigms</td>
<td>Harvey 196–243; Lopez 269–84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>No lectures this week (Prof. Poceski at a conference in San Diego)</td>
<td>Video: Land of the Disappearing Buddha (Tue); Thanksgiving is on 11/22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>11/27 &amp; 11/29</td>
<td>12. Western Encounters with Buddhism</td>
<td>Harvey 300–321; Lopez 540–48; video: Buddhism Comes to America</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12/4</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Grading**

- The final grade will be primarily based on the course requirements, but note that poor attendance or inappropriate behavior can lead to a failing grade (see below).
- Grades will be computed on this scale: A = 100–92%; B+ = 91.5–88%; B = 87.5–82%; C+ = 81.5–78%; C = 77.5–72%; D+ = 71.5–68%; D = 67.5–60.5%; E = 60% or less.
- At the instructor’s discretion, the final grades may be adjusted according to a curve (with maximum 2 point deviation from the above scale).

**Attendance**

- **Attendance is mandatory** for all students. Students who have problems with class attendance and/or punctuality should think twice before enrolling in this course.
- Valid excuses for missed classes must be submitted in writing and in a timely manner, along with pertinent documentation (such as note from a doctor). Written excuses for planned absences (such as participation in athletic meetings or religious observances, for example) must be submitted in advance.
- In case of excessive absences from class, students will be prohibited from further attendance and given failing grades. After the first three (3) missed hours (regardless of whether they are excusable or not), each subsequent unexcused hour will lead to a 3% reduction of the final grade. Students who miss more than a total of seven (7) hours of class instruction will automatically receive a failing grade. Coming late, leaving early, being inattentive, and other forms of disruptive behavior can be counted as unexcused absences. (For more on the university’s attendance policies, see http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html).

**Exams**

- No make-up exams will be given, except in documented instances of illness or other emergency, in which case the student must directly contact the instructor before the exam, if feasible, or as soon as possible.
- If any student has a valid reason to request rescheduling of an exam—such as observance of a religious holiday—he/she must contact the instructor in person and make suitable arrangements one week before the examination. Failure to act in accord with these instructions will lead to a failing grade.
- The quizzes will not have a regular schedule and will be given without an advance warning. They will include the readings for that week, so students should come to class prepared to be examined on them. Remember, the readings are not optional.
- Students who are late will not be able to take the quiz and will have to wait outside until it has ended. Be considerate of your fellow students and the professor.
- The quiz with the worst grade will not be counted for the final grade.
- Students should take all exams seriously and bear in mind that they should not count on having an opportunity to do additional work for an extra credit or a better grade.

**Guidelines for the Written Assignment**

- The summary and critical response on the visiting lecture should be 2–3 typed pages (1.5 spacing) and should follow standard academic format. Additional guidelines for the writing assignment will be distributed in class.
- A hard copy of the written assignment must be submitted in class on the due date, at the latest. You can also leave a copy of your paper 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 the paper, is acceptable.
- Students are welcome to bring early drafts of their paper and ask for feedback/advice during the office hours.

**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, and that all arrangements for changes pertaining to the exams must be made one week in advance.

- 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).
- Any form of disruptive and uncivil behavior in the classroom that adversely affects others and is contrary to the pursuit of knowledge will not be tolerated. Examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to: monopolizing class discussion, talking with someone, making late entrances or early exits from the classroom, displaying active disinterest in the class (e.g. sleeping), exhibiting challenging or insolent manner, putting down other students, and trying to undermine instructor’s authority in class. At instructor’s discretion, offending students will be prohibited further attendance and given failing grades.
- Registration in the 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 not optional). Any questions about the course requirements or any aspect of the coursework should be resolved by consulting the instructor.

“There is nowhere where the wisdom of the Buddha does not reach. Why? There is not a single sentient being that is not fully possessed of the wisdom of the Buddha. It is only due to their false thinking, fallacies, and attachments that beings fail to realize this. If they could only abandon their false thoughts, then the all-encompassing wisdom, the spontaneous wisdom, and the unobstructed wisdom will clearly manifest themselves.”

— Huayan Scripture 華嚴經

“The Way needs no cultivation, just preclude defilement. What is defilement? When with a mind of birth and death one acts in a contrived manner, then everything is defilement. If one wants to know the Way directly: Ordinary Mind is the Way! What is the meaning of Ordinary Mind? [It is mind] that is devoid of activity, [notions of] right or wrong, grasping or rejecting, terminable or permanent, worldly or holy.... whether walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, responding to situations and dealing with people as they come: everything is the Way.”

— Record of Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709–788)