

Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Contexts

Section 1

Instructor/Title	OBUSE Kieko
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Office Hours	
Contacts (E-mail)	

【Course Outline / Description】

This course discusses diverse ways in which Buddhism is practiced in contemporary contexts. It covers Buddhist stances on ethical issues such as meat-eating, abortion, and gender equality, as well as how Buddhism is practiced outside its traditional home of Asia, especially in the UK and the US. The course includes an examination of basic teachings and practices of Buddhism, with a focus on early/Theravada Buddhism.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

By the end of the course, students will be able 1) to explain basic teachings of Buddhism, 2) to discuss Buddhist stances on major ethical issues, and 3) discuss how Buddhism is practiced outside Asia, citing concrete examples.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

	Schedule of Instruction	Work outside of Classroom Activities
Lesson 1	Course introduction	Read the syllabus and prepare your thoughts and questions on the course.
Lesson 2	Is Buddhism a religion?	Prepare your views on what Buddhism is, and on what religion is.
Lesson 3	The Buddha	Read Harvey 2013, Chapter 1
Lesson 4	What did the Buddha teach?	Read Harvey 2013, Chapters 2 and 3
Lesson 5	Mahayana holy beings	Read Harvey 2013, Chapter 6
Lesson 6	What do Buddhists do? (documentary)	Revise the lessons so far
Lesson 7	Devotional practice	Read Harvey 2013, Chapter 8
Lesson 8	Ethics	Read Harvey 2013, Chapter 9
Lesson 9	The Sangha	Read Harvey 2013, Chapter 10
Lesson 10	Meditation	Read Harvey 2013, Chapter 11

Lesson 11	The popular tradition (merit-making)	Read Swearer 2010, Part 1 (sections 1-2)
Lesson 12	The popular tradition (festivals and rites of passage)	Read Swearer 2010, Part 1 (sections 3-4)
Lesson 13	Quiz and introduction to Buddhist ethics	Prepare for the quiz
Lesson 14	Attitude to and treatment of the natural world	Read Harvey 2000, Chapter 4
Lesson 15	Presentations on meat-eating/vegetarianism	Prepare presentations
Lesson 16	War and peace	Read Harvey 2000, Chapter 6
Lesson 17	Presentations on war	Prepare presentations
Lesson 18	Suicide/euthanasia abortion/contraception	Read Harvey 2000, Chapters 7 and 8
Lesson 19	Presentations on suicide	Prepare presentations
Lesson 20	Presentations on abortion	Prepare presentations
Lesson 21	Sexual equality	Read Harvey 2000, 9
Lesson 22	Presentations on sexual equality	Prepare presentations
Lesson 23	Who is a Buddhist?	Read Nattier 1998 and Tweed 2002 (handouts)
Lesson 24	Protestant Buddhism	Read Gombrich 2006, Chapter 7 (handout)
Lesson 25	Buddhism in the US	Read Seager 2012, Chapter 4
Lesson 26	Buddhism in the UK	Read Bluck 2006, Chapters 2 and 3
Lesson 27	Presentations on Buddhism in the UK/Europe	Prepare presentations (read Bluck, etc)
Lesson 28	Presentations on Buddhism in the US	Prepare presentations (Read Seager, etc)
Lesson 29	Characteristics of Buddhism in Europe and North America	Read Seager 2012, Part 3
Lesson 30	Course conclusion and instructions on the exam	Revise the lessons on Buddhist ethics and Buddhism in the West

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

Textbooks①

An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices, second edition
Peter Harvey
Cambridge University Press

Textbooks②

An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics
Peter Harvey
Cambridge University Press

Textbooks③

Buddhism in America, revised and expanded edition
Richard Hughes Seager
Columbia University Press

Other readings will be provided by the instructor.

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Final Exam	…20%
Quizzes or Midterm Exam	…10%
Class participation	…55%
Presentations	…15%

Subject to change depending on the class size

Section 5

【Additional Information】

Class participation is very important on this course.

Reference Books①

The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia, second edition
Donald K. Swearer
Columbia University Press

Reference Books②

British Buddhism: Teaching, Practice and Development
Robert Bluck
Routledge