**Course Identification**

Course Number: EMP 2671 H  
Course Name: Buddhist Meditation Traditions  
Contact hours: 24

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Henry Shiu, Ph.D.  
E-mail: henry.shiu@utoronto.ca

**Course Prerequisites or Requisites**

EMT 2631H – Foundational Tenets and Practices of Buddhism, or permission of the instructor

**Course Description**

Built upon the foundations established from the Fundamental Tenets and Practices of Buddhism course, this course provides students with further understanding of how the Buddhist traditions make use of various meditative techniques as the means to help practitioners realize the transcendental experiences explicated in the Buddhist doctrines. Five major Buddhist meditative traditions will be explored, namely, the fundamental meditative techniques found in the Theravada tradition, the two forms of Chan/Zen meditation in China and Japan, the Pure Land tradition in China, the unique system of meditation developed in the Tiantai school in China, and the visualization practices in the Tibetan tantric style of cultivation. Students will develop an in-depth understanding of the Buddha’s teachings in association with the principles behind the meditative practices, the modern adaptations of these practices, as well as the relationship with the Buddhist teachings on well-being and spiritual happiness. Students are encouraged to adapt these meditative techniques and integrate the insights on spiritual development of self and others into their psychotherapy practices.

**Methodology:**

The course examines both research literature and the instructions of Dharma teachers to introduce to the students a good understanding of the styles and principles of Buddhist meditative practices. The first four weeks are grounded on the principal techniques used in all Buddhist meditative traditions and the theories behind them. Once these theoretical and practical aspects are familiarized, the course will spend two weeks on each major Buddhist traditions developed outside of India. Each student is expected to come prepared to participate in discussion about the given reading or assignment, and are encouraged to engage their own unique experiences and perspectives to the class discussions. The course organized in such a seminar format is also intended to serve as a space for collaborative and shared learning.
Course Outcomes:

- Religious Heritage: Ability to articulate a critical understanding of Buddhist meditative traditions in relation to spiritual care services and psychotherapy practices

- Cultural context: Ability to describe the cultural relevance within the Buddhist meditative traditions

- Depth and Breadth of Knowledge: Ability to demonstrate a systematic understanding of the development of the various forms of Buddhist meditative practice

- Level of Application of Knowledge: Ability to demonstrate knowledge in relation to Buddhist pastoral leadership.

Required Texts:


Course Evaluation:

**Term Essay:** 30%
Students will be guided to work on an 8-to-10 pages term research paper on the intricate relationship between the Buddhist doctrines and the various kinds of meditative techniques. Electronic submission on the portal.

**Weekly Reflection:** 30%
A weekly exercise that integrates knowledge and techniques of Buddhist meditation into psychotherapeutic application.
Electronic submission on the portal.

**Class Participation:** 10%
Based on Group Discussions on the Adaptation of Buddhist Meditative Techniques in Modern Lives.

**Weekly Journal Writing:** 30%
Keeping a log on personal growth and experience in meditative practices.
Electronic submission on the portal.

Course Policies:

Policies for courses are contained in the TST Basic Degree/Advanced Degree Handbooks:

1) Late Policy: 5% penalty per day of lateness.

2) Completion of Course Work: All course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term, the last day of exams. Only in the case of illness (with a note from a doctor), bereavement or other unusual circumstances will an extension be considered and this must be authorized by the Basic Degree Committee and the Faculty.

3) Assignments: Essays and assignments can be submitted on Blackboard.

4) Consultation: Please do not hesitate to consult with me about any questions you may have.

5) Attendance: A minimum attendance of 80% is required for a passing grade. Habitual lateness for class will be counted as absence.
**Lecture Schedule:**

Weekend 1 (May 20)

**Introduction:**
· Joining the Theory and Practice

**Foundations of Indian Buddhist Meditations I:**
· Contemplating on the Three Marks of Existence

**Foundations of Indian Buddhist Meditations II:**
· Tranquility (śamatha) and Insight (vipaśyanā)
· The Vipassanā Movement in the 20th Century

Weekend 2 (May 27)

**Integrating Mindfulness Practice in Psychotherapy**

**Chinese and Japanese Chan/Zen Meditation I:**
· The Contemplation on Kōan (公案)

**Chinese and Japanese Chan/Zen Meditation II:**
· The Practice of Sitting Meditation or Zazen (坐禅)
· From Zazen to ‘Street Retreats’ of the Zen Peacemaker in New York

Weekend 3 (June 3)

**Chinese and Japanese Pure Land/Jodo Buddhism I:**
The Practice According to the Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra

**Chinese and Japanese Pure Land/Jodo Buddhism II:**
· The Practice Based on the Long and Short Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra
· Support-Chanting for the Dying
· Understanding the Spiritual Needs of the Dying Buddhists

**Chinese Tiantai Contemplative Practice I:**
· Six Wondrous Gateways of Meditation (六妙法門)

**Chinese Tiantai Contemplative Practice II:**
· The Contemplation of Mind as the Three Thousand (一念三千)
· Integrating the Practice into Psychosomatic Forms of Breath Therapy

Weekend 4 (June 10)

**Tibetan Buddhist Visualization Practice I:**
· The Practice of Lojong (blo sbyong)
· The Contemplations of Impermanence and Death in Psychotherapy

**Tibetan Buddhist Visualization Practice II:**
· The Generation Stage and the Completion Stage
· The Power of Visualization and Carl Jung’s Active Imagination
Bibliography


**Academic Integrity:**

Students should read carefully the academic discipline policy on, and severe penalties for, plagiarism and cheating. These are set out in the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters available through the Office of the TST Director (cf. TST Basic Degree Handbook, p. 45) and on the web (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm).

**Grading Scheme:**

The grading scheme for this course, as with all TST courses, is as follows:

- A+ 90-100  profound and creative
- A 85-89  outstanding
- A- 80-84  excellent: clear evidence of original thinking, of analytic and synthetic ability; sound critical evaluations, broad knowledge base
- B+ 75-79  very good
- B 73-76  good: good critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues, good familiarity with the literature
- B- 70-72  satisfactory: adequate critical capacity and analytic ability; some understanding of relevant issues and with the literature
- FZ 0-69  failure: failure to meet the above criteria

**Course grades**

Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (http://www.soverningcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm) or college grading policy.
**Policies:**

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices (information is available at http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca). The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks (if small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still-counts as a direct quotation.)

Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST Basic Degree Handbook and the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.