

Buddhist Meditative Traditions

Emmanuel College, Victoria University
University of Toronto

Course Identification

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

Instructor Information

Instructor: Henry Shiu, Ph.D.
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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:

- Epstein, Mark. *Thoughts Without a Thinker: Psychotherapy from a Buddhist Perspective*. New York: Basic Books, 1995.
- Shaw, Sarah. *Buddhist Meditation: An Anthology of Texts from the Pali Canon*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Shulman, Eviatar. *Rethinking the Buddha: Early Buddhist Philosophy as Meditative Perception*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Swanson, Paul L. *Foundations of T'ien-T'ai Philosophy*. California: Asian Humanities Press, 1989.
- Yampolsky, Philip B. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch: The Text of the Tun-Huang Manuscript, Translated with Notes*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

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* (坐禪)
- 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 *Sukhāvativyūha 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

- Anderson, Carol. *Pain and Its Ending: The Four Noble Truths in the Theravada Buddhist Canon*. Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1999.
- Bu ston, trans. by E. Obermiller. *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*. New Delhi: Paljor Publications, 1999.
- Buswell, Robert E., Jr. *The Zen Monastic Experience*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Buswell, Robert E., Jr. and Robert M. Gimello, eds. *Paths to Liberation: The Marga and its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.
- Conze, Edward. *A Short History of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1993.
- Cousins, L. S. "Buddhist Jhana", *Religions*, 3 (1973): 115-31.
- Dayal, H. *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932; reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970.
- Faure, Bernard. *Chan Insights and Oversights*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Ferguson, Andy. *Zen's Chinese Heritage: The Masters and Their Teachings*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000.
- Gómez, Luis O., trans. *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996.
- Gregory, P., ed. *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.
- Griffiths, Paul J. *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.
- Gunaratana, Henepola. *The Path of Serenity and Insight: An Explanation of the Buddhist Jhanas*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1985.
- Gyatrul Rinpoche, trans. by Sangye Khandro. *The Generation Stage in Buddhist Tantra*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996.
- Harrison, Paul M. "Buddhanusmrti in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukha vasthita-samadhi-sutra", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 9 (1978): 35-57.

- Hirakawa, Akira. *A History of Indian Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990.
- Jamgön Kontrul, trans. by Sarah Harding. *Creation and Completion: Essential Points of Tantric Meditation*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1996.
- Jayatilleke, K. N. *The Message of the Buddha*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1975.
- Jigme Lingpa, Patrul Rinpoche, and Getse Mahapandita, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee. *Deity, Mantra, and Wisdom*. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2006.
- Kalupahana, David J. *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1975.
 _____, ed. *Buddhist Thought and Ritual*. New York: Paragon House, 1991.
- Kamalashila. *Meditation: The Buddhist Way of Tranquility and Insight*. Birmingham: Windhorse Publications, 1992.
- Kaneko, D. "The Meaning of Salvation in the Doctrine of Pure Land Buddhism," *Eastern Buddhist*, 1-1 (1965): 48-63.
- Kawamura, Leslie. *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhism*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1981.
- Kennan, John. "Original Purity and the Focus of Early Yogacara", *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 5 (1): 7-18.
- King, W. *Theravada Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980.
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- Lancaster, L., ed. *Prajnaparamita and Related Systems*. Berkeley: University of California, 1977.
- Mitchell, Donald W. *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Nyanaponika Thera. *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness*. New York: Samuel Weisner, 1971.

- Payutto, Phra Prayudh. *Buddhadhamma: Natural Laws and Values for Life*. Translated by Grant A. Olson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Patrul Rinpoche, translated by the Padmakara Translation Group. *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1998.
- Pye, M. *Skilful Means: A Concept in Mahayana Buddhism*. London: Duckworth, 1978.
- Silananda, U. *Four Foundations of Mindfulness*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1990.
- Snellgrove, David L. *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*. Vol. 1. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987.
- Strong, John S. *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations*. Toronto: Wadsworth, 2002.
- Tay, C. N. "Kuan-yin: the Cult of Half Asia", *History of Religions* 16-2 (1976): 147-77.
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- White, David Gordon, ed. *Tantra in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Williams, Paul. *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989.

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.governingcouncil.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.