

Religion 131

Buddhism

Prof. Timothy Lubin
Washington and Lee University
Winter 2009
208 Baker Hall



This course introduces the religion oriented around the Buddha and his teachings, following its origin and development in India, its transmission to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, across the Himalayas to Tibet, and along the Silk Road to China, Korea, and Japan. We explore the biography of the Buddha, the spiritual teachings attributed to him, the life of monks and nuns (both meditation and devotion), the veneration of saintly ascetics and mystics, Buddhist philosophy, and the practices of lay Buddhists today. The class will visit the Bodhi Path Buddhist meditation center and *stūpa* (a devotional shrine to the Buddha), and the W&L Japanese Tea Room.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance at all class meetings and careful completion of readings;
2. Participation in class discussion (cumulatively, 20% of grade);
3. Two 5–6 page essays, due February 6 and April 3 (each, 20% of grade);
4. A two-hour midterm exam given in class (February 15) (20% of grade);
5. A two-hour final exam (20% of grade).

Course Books:

Donald W. MITCHELL, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* (Oxford, 2002).

Donald S. LOPEZ, *Buddhist Scriptures* (Penguin, 2004).

Francesca FREMANTLE & Chögyam TRUNGPA, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo = Bardo Thodol* (Shambhala, 1987).

* Other readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Schedule of Classes and Readings (subject to revision)

I. Birth and Growth in India

- Week 1 The Buddha's Life and Times
1/5 introduction to the course
1/11 MITCHELL, ch. 1; LOPEZ, ch. 14.
- Week 2 The Buddha's Teachings
1/12 MITCHELL, ch. 2; LOPEZ, chs. 25–28.
1/14 LOPEZ, chs. 16–19, 37, 50.
- Week 3 The Early Councils and the 'Way of the Elders' (Theravāda)
1/19 MITCHELL, ch. 3; * "Edicts of Asoka."
1/21 * Excerpts from the *Mahāvamsa*; LOPEZ, chs. 12, 36.
- Week 4 The 'Great Vehicle' (Mahāyāna)
1/26 MITCHELL, ch. 4; WILLIAMS, pp. 1–54; LOPEZ, ch. 43.
1/28 * WILLIAMS, pp. 215–236; LOPEZ, chs. 8, 29, 38, 51, 60.
- Week 5 Schools of the Buddhist Thought
2/2 * WILLIAMS, pp. 55–95; LOPEZ, ch. 21.
2/4 * WILLIAMS, pp. 96–102; LOPEZ, ch. 39.
2/6 **First paper due FRIDAY at 9 am in Baker mailbox**
- Week 6 *The Distinction Between the Two Truths*
2/9 * M.D. Eckel, pp. 15–23, 35–65, 69–103.
2/11 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

2/16–18 **No Classes: Washington Break**

II. Buddhism's New Worlds

- Week 7 The End of Buddhism in India, and Transmission to Tibet
2/23 MITCHELL, chs. 5–6.
2/25 LOPEZ, chs. 53, 23, 48, 54.
- Week 8 Buddhism in Tibet and Buddhist Tantra
3/2 MITCHELL, ch. 6; *Bardo Thodol*, pp. 33–56.
3/4 *Bardo Thodol*, pp. 57–105.
- Week 9 Buddhism in China
3/9 MITCHELL, ch. 7; LOPEZ, chs. 10, 11, 22, 30.
3/11 LOPEZ, chs. 31, 32, 35, 40, 46.

- Week 10 Buddhism in Korea and early Japan
3/16 MITCHELL, ch. 8 and pp. 241–254 of ch. 9.
3/18 LOPEZ, chs. 2, 3, 33.
- Week 11 Zen and Pure Land Buddhism
3/23 MITCHELL, rest of ch. 9 (pp. 254–281); LOPEZ, chs. 55–56, 41, 34, 59.
3/25 LOPEZ, chs. 42, 57–58.
- Week 12 Modern Developments
3/30 MITCHELL, ch. 10.
4/1 MITCHELL, ch. 11.
4/3 **Second paper due FRIDAY at 9 am in Baker mailbox**

FINAL EXAMINATION