GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Description And Purpose

This course is a general introduction to Buddhism historically and philosophically. Students will explore the main tenets, symbols, and practices of Buddhism from its time of origin until today. The course will examine the central themes of the main schools of Buddhism developed in India, Tibet, China, Japan, and Korea. These themes will be evaluated from religious, historical, and philosophical points of view.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the core principles of Buddhism
- Describe the basic Buddhist worldview
- Summarize the historical development of Buddhism
- Explain regional and national variations in Buddhist philosophy and practice
- Differentiate between the various Buddhist schools of thought
- Analyze Buddhist symbols in rituals, art, architecture, and other aspects of culture

Global Learning Course Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of key Buddhist beliefs, practices, and symbols as expressed in multiple historical and regional contexts.
- Students will be able to analyze a contemporary issue via the analytical perspectives of diverse forms of Buddhism.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to engage critically with diverse forms of Buddhism in local, regional, national and international contexts.

This is a Global Learning Discipline-Specific course that counts towards your Global Learning graduation requirement.

Course Awards
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Policies

Please review the FIU’s Policies webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

Technical Requirements & Skills

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer’s operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "What’s Required" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

This course utilizes the following tools:

1. YouTube - Select this link in order to discover more information on how to navigate this tool.

Please visit our Technical Requirements webpage for additional information.

Accessibility And Accommodation

Please visit our ADA Compliance webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit Blackboard’s Commitment Accessibility webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact the Disability Resource Center.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Academic Misconduct

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research in a rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is
Expectations Of This Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- Review the how to get started information located in the course content
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction video in the appropriate bin
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers
- Review and follow the course calendar

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course at least 5 times per week
- Respond to discussion boards, blogs and journal postings within 3 days or sooner
- Respond to [emails/messages] within 3 days or sooner
- Grade assignments within 2 weeks or sooner of the assignment deadline

Textbook

Buddhism
Kevin Trainor
Oxford University Press, 2014
ISBN-10: 0195173988
Book Info. You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

What the Buddha Taught
Walpola Rahanala
Grove Press, 1974
ISBN-10: 0802130313
Book Info. You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.

COURSE DETAIL

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via Messages.

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Blackboard to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left
Discussion Forums

There will be five discussion topics. The topics will be posted on "Discussion Topics" folder in the Course Content. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 20% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. All students are required to participate in all the five topics (at least 200 words). Discussions must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:59 pm on the Monday after the end of the lesson.

Once you have composed your original posting, take some time to carefully review other postings within your discussion group. Pick two that are most interesting to you and provide meaningful, detailed, and constructive feedback.

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Assignments

There will be one essay assigned throughout the semester, which is aimed at assisting in comprehension and retention of the ideas. This essay will be at least 1500 words long (6 pages double-spaced) and will be worth 20% of your grade. This is a formal academic essay and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies. There will be three possible types of papers: historical analysis, contemporary applied analysis, or cultural anthropology/participatory observation.

After completion of the paper, students will do a virtual presentation for the class. Class presentations may take a variety of forms, including: videos posted on to YouTube, or a PowerPoint, or a live Skype session. I am open to other possibilities, but you must obtain permission from me before proceeding. Students are expected to review their classmates’ presentations.

Submission: Students must submit their essays to Turnitin.com via the Blackboard’s Assignment Dropbox.

Detailed information and grading rubric may be found within the Turnitin Paper Guidelines folder.

Late Papers: Late papers will only be accepted for the first 3 days after the due date and will be dropped one letter grade per day. Students are responsible for reading their Blackboard messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another’s work as your own, falls into three different categories:

A written work that is entirely taken from another source:

- Copy quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
- Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

**Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course. It will be flagged for plagiarism by Turnitin.

Assessments

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the “Practice Quiz” from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer
Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services.

Quizzes

There will be ten online quizzes covering each section. Your quiz scores will be averaged together for a final quiz score worth 20% of your final grade. All quizzes consist of 10 questions (multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank questions), and each question will be worth 10 points. A quiz will be available from Monday 12:00am till Monday 11:59pm of the given week. Once you open a quiz, you will have 20 minutes to complete and submit it. You will have two attempts to take a quiz. The highest score will be counted.

Note: Quiz resets will not be granted for technical issues. You will receive two attempts to complete each quiz, you are logged offline or you have a technical failure while attempting the quiz, then you still have the second attempt to complete it. Resetting quizzes after they have passed will require a serious and verifiable reason (death in the family, hospitalization, serious accident, etc.)

The correct answers for quizzes will not be released to students. Students will be able to see their submitted answers only. Students should refer to their course materials for the correct answers, in order to study for the midterm and final exams.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the “Practice Quiz” from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services.

Exams

There will be two exams based on the readings and materials covered throughout the course. Each exam will be worth 20% of your final grade. All exams consist of multiple choice, T/F, fill in the blank, and short essay questions and each question will be worth 2 points. Exams must be taken during the available periods. If you have made arrangements with the professor before the availability period ends. Once you open an exam, you will have 60 minutes to complete and submit it. You will have one attempt on exams.

Note: Resetting exams after they have passed will require a serious and verifiable reason (death in the family, hospitalization, serious accident, etc.)

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the “Practice Quiz” from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services.

Survey Of Buddhist Library Guide

This Survey of Buddhism Library Guide is especially tailored with resources meant to benefit this course. There are links to important Buddhist journals, websites, and videos. There are pages designed for each of the main content sections covered throughout the semester. There are also important library resources that will help you to do research for your assignments and make sure that you are properly citing your sources. Please refer to this page often.

Course Requirements
In addition to the completion of weekly assignments, the most important requirement for successful completion of this course will be an open mind. Students are expected to exhibit respect to all religious traditions and peoples at all times. Thus, disrespectful or derisive commentary will not be tolerated in this course. Religion is, after all, a very personal and sensitive subject for many.

On the other hand, class participants can expect academic freedom to express their views. Although religion can be personal, this is an academic course taken for college credit and thus students are expected to examine the topics rigorously. Religion shall not be exempt from the scrutiny placed on any and all academic subjects.

### Grading

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<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Essay</td>
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<td>Discussion/Student Biography</td>
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<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C+</td>
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### WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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<tr>
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<th>Tasks</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Course Introduction</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>• Review and fully familiarize yourself with the course and site. Print and read the course syllabus and course calendar.</td>
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<td>• Obtain texts and read ahead for Part 1</td>
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<td>August 21 – August 28</td>
<td>Read:</td>
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<td>• 10 Misconceptions About Buddhism</td>
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<td><strong>Tasks:</strong></td>
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<td>1. Student Introduction due Tuesday, September 5 by 11:59 pm</td>
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Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Part 1 - Origins
August 28 – September 5

View:
- PowerPoint: Origins of Buddhism

Read:
- Chapter 1 – Ancient India
- Chapter 2 – The Career of Siddhartha
- Chapter 3 – A New Community
- New Clues May Change Buddha’s Birth Date

Videos:
- Life of the Buddha (15 mins)
- Crash Course: Indus Valley Civilization (12 mins) *Optional
- Crash Course: Buddha & Ashoka (12 mins) * Optional
- Timeline of India

Tasks:
1. Quiz 1 – Origins of Buddhism - Due: Tuesday, September 5 by 11:59 pm

Part 2 - Principles & Practice
September 4 – September 18

View:
- PowerPoint: The Four Noble Truths

Read:
- Chapter 1 – The Human Condition
- Chapter 2 – The “Four Noble Truths”
- Rahula - Chapter 1 – The Buddhist Approach to Mind
- Rahula - Chapter 2 – The First Noble Truth
- Rahula - Chapter 3 – The Second Noble Truth
- Rahula - Chapter 4 – The Third Noble Truth
- Rahula - Chapter 5 – The Doctrine of No Soul
- Enlightenment Story
- Eckhart Tolle
- Gangaji
- Suzanne Segal

Videos:
- Buddhism Principles (15 mins)
- Existential Bummer (3 mins)
- The Life of the Buddha (50 mins)

Tasks:
1. Discussion 1 – Due: Monday, September 18 by 11:59 pm.
2. Quiz 2 - Beliefs – Due: Monday, September 25 by 11:59 pm

View:
- PowerPoint: The Eightfold Path

Read:
The Eightfold Path
September 25 – October 2

- Chapter 3 - The Path of the Buddha
- Chapter 4 - Mental Cultivation
- Rahula - Chapter 5 – The Fourth Noble Truth
- Rahula - Chapter 7 – Meditation or Mental Culture
- 9 Mindfulness Rituals to Make Your Day Better

Video:
- Virtual Tour of Borobudur Temple in Java, Indonesia

Tasks:
1. Quiz 3 – The Eightfold Path – Due: Monday, October 2 by 11:59 pm

View:
- PowerPoint: The Buddhist Community

Read:
- Chapter 5 – The Buddhist Community
- Chapter 6 – Buddhism in Practice
- Rahula - Chapter 8 – What the Buddha Taught, and the Way to Nibbana

Videos:
- Virtual Tour of Kanheri Caves in Mumbai, India
- Pilgrims at BoudhanathBoudhanath

Tasks:
1. Quiz 4 – Community – Due: Monday, October 9 by 11:59 pm

View:
- PowerPoint: Introduction to Theravada Buddhism

Read:
- Chapter 7 – Theravada Buddhism
- How to Meditate

Videos:
- Temple of the Tigers (50 mins)

Tasks:
1. Quiz 5 - Theravada – Due: Tuesday, October 16 by 11:59 pm.

View:
- PowerPoint: Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism

Read:
- Chapter 8 – Mahayana Buddhism
- What is Compassion
Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism
October 16 – October 23

- Crash Course: Silk Road (12 mins)

Tasks:

1. Discussion 2 (Venn Diagram or Infographic) – Compare and Contrast Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism – DUE: Monday, October 23 by 11:59 pm.
2. Quiz 6 – Mahayana – Due: Monday, October 23 by 11:59 pm.

Midterm
October 23 – October 30

Tasks:


View:

- PowerPoint: Introduction to Zen Buddhism

Read:

- Chapter 9 – Chan and Zen – The Way of Meditation
- Legends in Ch’an: The Northern/Southern Schools, Splitting in Two, and the Platform Sutra

Videos:

- A Day in the Life of a Zen Monk (5 mins)
- Zazen Meditation (3 mins)
- Kyudo (3:30 mins)

Tasks:

1. Discussion 3 (Zen Exercise) – Due: Monday, November 6 by 11:59 pm.
2. Quiz 7 – Zen and Zen – Due: Monday, November 6 by 11:59 pm.

View:

- PowerPoint: Introduction to Tantric Buddhism

Read:

- Chapter 10 – Tantra
- Vidyas
- The Lightning Path of Buddhism: The Power of Yidams
- The Medicine Buddha: The Meaning and Symbolism of the Healing Buddha

Video:

- Decoding the Past: Tibetan Book of the Dead (44 mins)

Tasks:

1. Paper Due: Monday, November 13 by 11:59 pm.
2. Quiz 8 – Tantra – Due: Monday, November 13 by 11:59 pm.

View:
Part 3 - Holy Writings
*November 13 - November 20*

- Chapter 1 – Assembling the Dharma
- Chapter 2 – The Three Baskets
- Chapter 3 – Mahayana Scriptures

Video:
- *Tripitaka and the First Buddhist Council* (6 mins)

Tasks:
1. **Discussion 4 (Scriptural Analysis Exercise)** - Due: Monday, *November 20* by 11:59 pm.
2. **Quiz 9** – Buddhist Scriptures - Due: Monday, *November 20* by 11:59 pm.

View:
- PowerPoint: Buddhism Today

Part 4 - Buddhism Today
*November 20 – November 27*

- Chapter 1 – The Expanding Community
- Chapter 2 – Society and the Sangha
- *In Japan, A Ritual of Mourning for Abortion*
- Liberate the Mahabodhi Temple
- *Fascists in Saffron Robes? The Case of Sri Lanka’s Buddhist Ultra-nationalists*

Videos:
- *Russian Tibet Amazing Journey: Only Buddhist state in Europe* (26 mins)
- *Burma Mantra of Peace Religious Tension Between Muslims and Buddhists* (15 mins)

Tasks:
1. **Quiz 10** – Buddhist Today - Due: Monday, *November 27* by 11:59 pm.
2. **Discussion 5 (Case Study)** - Due: Monday, *November 27* by 11:59 pm.

Presentations
*November 30 – December 4*

Tasks:
1. **Discussion 6 - Assignment (2 Parts) Presentations**
   - Due: Monday, *December 4* at 11:59 pm.
   - Comments Due by Wednesday, *December 6* at 11:59 pm.

Final Exam
*December 11 – December 11*

Tasks:
1. **Final Exam**: Monday, December 4, 2017 – Monday, December 11, 2017 by 11:59 PM
Buddhism Paper Topics & Rubric

There will be one essay assigned throughout the semester, which is aimed at assisting in the comprehension and synthesis of the concepts presented throughout the course. This assignment is specifically related to your Global Learning engagement outcome that you will demonstrate an ability to engage critically with diverse forms of Buddhism in local, regional, national and international contexts.

This essay will be at least 1500 words long (6 pages double-spaced) and will be worth 20% of your grade. This is a formal academic essay and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies. There will be three possible paper options: historical analysis, contemporary applied analysis, or cultural anthropology/participant observation. After completion of the paper, students will do a virtual presentation for the class.

Submission: Students must submit their essays to Turnitin.com via Blackboard’s Assignment dropbox.

Late Papers: Late papers will only be accepted for the first 3 days after the due date and will be dropped one letter grade per day. Students are responsible for reading their blackboard messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without proper attribution;
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/aboutfacultystaff.html if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment and possibly the course.

If you have questions regarding how to cite or what to cite, ask me BEFORE you submit your essay. If you turn in your paper and you "accidentally" plagiarize parts of your essay, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Better safe than sorry! To reiterate, ask me before the due date if you are unsure about how to cite your sources.

**Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course. It will be flagged for plagiarism by Turnitin.

Choose one of the following options for your paper.

Option 1: "Historical Analysis:

In this option, you will choose one Buddhist sect or denomination, or a New Religion heavily based in Buddhism, and write a historical analysis tracing the group’s development. This analysis should clearly illustrate the theological and philosophical changes that occurred due to split. Students must clearly address the relationship between the new group, the parent group, and the local society out of which it developed. In other words, what factors, both external and internal, caused the need for the development of the new form of Buddhism, and what is distinct about their teachings.

Option 2: Contemporary Applied Analysis:

In this option, you will choose a specific Buddhist tradition and apply it to a contemporary moral or philosophical issue. For example, a paper may explore the response of Theravada Buddhism to prostitution in Thailand. Another example may be to explore abortion through the lens of Japanese Mahayana Buddhism.
Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

Option 3 - Cultural Anthropology / Participant Observation:

In this option, students will choose a local Buddhist temple or similar religious site and will visit the site to observe their typical rituals and practices. Your paper will include background information about the particular group, as well as description and analysis from your experience.

Class presentations may take a variety of forms, including: videos posted on to YouTube, or a PowerPoint, or a live Adobe Skype session. I am open to other possibilities, but you must obtain permission from me before proceeding. Students are expected to review their classmates' presentations.

### ESSAY RUBRIC

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<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>NEEDS HELP</th>
<th>NOVICE</th>
<th>COMPETENT</th>
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<th>MASTER</th>
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<td><strong>Global Perspectives - 20%</strong></td>
<td>0 to 4 points</td>
<td>5 to 8 points</td>
<td>9 to 12 points</td>
<td>13 to 16 points</td>
<td>17 to 20 points</td>
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<td>Does not recognize or does not acknowledge the legitimacy of differences in perspectives pertaining to the problem.</td>
<td>Student accomplishes the following:</td>
<td>- identifies a limited number of perspectives pertaining to the problem</td>
<td>identifies multiple perspectives pertaining to the problem however, does not analyze the influences on differing perspectives</td>
<td>Assembles an analysis of a multifaceted interpretation of the problem and/or solution(s)</td>
<td>Student accomplishes previous and one or more of the following:</td>
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**Argument (Clear, Strong Thesis) - 10%**

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<th>6 to 7 points</th>
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<td>Paper does not present a thesis. Either there is no obvious thesis, or thesis is too simple to form the basis of a good paper.</td>
<td>Thesis requires some work for a better paper.</td>
<td>Presents a good thesis.</td>
<td>Presents a very good thesis.</td>
<td>Presents a clear, strong thesis.</td>
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**Content (Support, Development) - 10%**

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<th>4 to 5 points</th>
<th>6 to 7 points</th>
<th>8 to 10 points</th>
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<td>The paper’s key ideas are not supported or developed in a logical fashion.</td>
<td>Paper attempts to present a well-developed argument, but many points must be inferred by the reader.</td>
<td>Paper generally presents a well-developed argument, but some points must be inferred by the reader.</td>
<td>Paper presents a well-developed argument. Each paragraph provides a good amount of relevant support.</td>
<td>Paper has a well-developed argument. Each paragraph provides relevant support and flows easily to the next idea.</td>
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**Critical Analysis - 10%**

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<td>Paper does not show thoughtful analysis of several critical religious</td>
<td>Paper does not express the level of critical analysis expected at this</td>
<td>Paper shows very little analysis of relevant</td>
<td>Paper shows some analysis of relevant religious studies</td>
<td>Paper shows thoughtful analysis of critical religious</td>
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<td>Organization (Structure)</td>
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<td>Paper is redundant, unclear, choppy, or otherwise confusing for the reader.</td>
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<td>2-3</td>
<td>Paper has some structure, but is somewhat fragmentary or confusing to the reader.</td>
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<td>4-5</td>
<td>Paper has good structure, but needs support with transitions.</td>
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<td>6-7</td>
<td>Paper is well-organized and generally clearly written.</td>
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<td>8-10</td>
<td>Paper is very well-organized and clearly written.</td>
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<td>Formatting &amp; Citations</td>
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<td>Paper does not cite resources correctly, or paper is not formatted.</td>
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<td>3-5</td>
<td>Paper attempts to cite resources, or is not formatted appropriately.</td>
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<td>6-8</td>
<td>Paper is properly formatted and mostly cites resources.</td>
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<td>Paper is properly formatted and consistently cites resources.</td>
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<td>12-15</td>
<td>Paper is properly formatted and consistently cites resources correctly.</td>
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<td>Grammar &amp; Spelling</td>
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<td>Paper has serious grammatical problems and contains many typos or spelling errors.</td>
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<td>3-5</td>
<td>Paper has some grammatical problems, or contains many typos or spelling errors.</td>
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<td>6-8</td>
<td>Paper uses proper grammar and contains almost no typos or spelling errors.</td>
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<td>Complete</td>
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<td>Paper does not answer the questions posed and is off-topic.</td>
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<td>2-3</td>
<td>Paper answers SOME of the questions posed; however, the essay is incomplete.</td>
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<td>4-5</td>
<td>Paper answers SOME of the questions posed.</td>
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<td>6-7</td>
<td>Paper answers MOST of the questions posed and crafts them into a good essay.</td>
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<td>8-10</td>
<td>Paper answers ALL of the questions posed and crafts them into an excellent essay.</td>
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Do not copy without the express written consent of the instructor.

BUDDHISM DISCUSSION TOPICS

Initial posts will be due by Mondays at noon and comments will be due by Wednesday at midnight.

Biography & Introduction

Discussion #1 – Beliefs & Practices

According to the First Noble Truth, Dukkha, life is full of various forms of suffering. Do you agree with Buddhism’s assertion that life is suffering? Additionally, explain whether or not you agree that Dukkha is one of the main causes of suffering. Your post should explore these concepts using examples from your own life.

Discussion #2 – Venn Diagram or Infographic

Create a Venn Diagram, an Infographic, or some type of visual aid to compare and contrast Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism. Students will share their illustrations to help collaborate with their classmates and to prepare for the midterm exam.

Discussion #3 – Zen Exercise

The Zen tradition highlights being fully present in the moment, as well as connecting with nature and transcending dualism. In that spirit, this assignment is an “experiential” assignment, meaning that you need to DO SOMETHING ZEN, and then share your experience with your classmates.

Step 1: Choose something to do and do it for 15-20 minutes.
Practice putting all of your focus and attention on what you are doing. Become one with what you are doing. Really connect to your body, your breath, your mind, and all your attention to whatever you are doing.

Possible examples include:
• Walk in nature
• Wash the dishes
• Draw a circle
• Stay in one yoga position, focusing on your breath and physical alignment.
• Do some martial arts movements
• Zazen – sitting meditation

Step 2: Write and post about your experience.
What did you experience? Could you focus all of yourself? For how long? Was your mind restless? Or were you calm? Describe what you experienced both mentally and physically. What did you learn? How did you feel afterward?

Discussion # 4 – Student Presentations

Students will present their various presentations and classmates will provide feedback. (When critiquing your classmates’ work, please remember to try to focus your comments and critiques on the ideas and do not personalize them.)

Discussion # 5 – Scriptural Analysis ***(Scriptures will be provided)

Choose a passage from The Dhammapada and analyze what you think it means. Is this teaching still applicable today? Give an example from your life of how these teachings from the Buddha are or are not, useful in today’s world.

Discussion # 6 – Case Study

Choose a controversial contemporary issue, such as euthanasia, abortion, gun control, etc. and look at it from at least three different forms of Buddhism. Compare and contrast how these different Buddhist groups would respond to the given topic. After weighing each different perspective, draw a conclusion as to which perspective you agree with the most and why.