

# BUDDHISM IN EAST ASIA

## Fall 2022

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**Lecture:** Tuesdays and Fridays 12:30–1:20; BSB B156.

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## **Course Description**

This course is an introduction to the historical and contemporary Buddhist world of East Asia (i.e., the cultural sphere of China, Korea, and Japan). The course emphasizes an understanding and appreciation of East Asian Buddhist world views through the close reading of texts and attention to the beliefs and practices of monks, nuns and laypeople. The transmission of Buddhism from India to East Asia was one of the most significant cultural events in human history. The subsequent evolution of the religion in East Asia left no area of human life untouched. Buddhist ideas and practices profoundly affected culture (art, music, poetry, architecture), society (politics, social structures, family life, burial practices, etc.), economics (money-lending, land-holdings, taxation) and so on. Since medieval times Buddhism has been one of the most important avenues for cultural exchange between sometimes quite distinct societies in East Asia. Thanks to the *lingua franca* of literary Chinese, Japanese, Chinese and Korean Buddhists have been able to work on the same vast cultural project. Thus, a familiarity with East Asian Buddhism will give students a unique perspective on a considerable expanse of human civilisation.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Identify and appreciate the most important aspects of the East Asian Buddhist tradition.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Wright, Dale. *Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lopez, Donald S. 2004. *Buddhist Scriptures*. London: Penguin.

### *Recommended*

- Lopez, Donald S. 2009. *The Story of Buddhism: a Concise Guide to its History and Teachings*. San Francisco: HarperOne.
- **NB. If you have no background in Buddhism, I strongly urge you to acquire and read this book as soon as possible.**

## **Class Format**

There are no formal prerequisites. No knowledge of Asian languages is required.

NB. We will practice our writing in class regularly. Please bring something to write with (pen, paper, laptop, tablet, phone, etc.) to the Lecture and Tutorial meetings.
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## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

**Attendance & participation in Tutorials and online discussion (10%)**

**Reflection (15%)**

**Tests (15%)**

**Essay (30%)**

**Final Examination (30%)**

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Attendance & participation in Tutorials and online discussion (10%) Weekly**

Regular preparation, attendance and participation are essential to understanding new material and acquiring knowledge. Your TA will determine this portion of your mark. Specific activities in tutorials (e.g., presentations, brief reports, leading discussion) may be required. In addition, we will ask you to post materials in online discussions on Avenue. Online participation will also be part of your mark.

Make sure to read the assigned passages prior to attending Lectures and Tutorials and bring the relevant books to both!

### **Reflection (15%) Weekly**

Every week, you will respond to a poem by an East Asian Buddhist author. There are no wrong answers. If you respond to all poems you will receive full marks.

### **Tests (15%) Every three weeks or so**

Three online tests, 5% each. You will take three tests on Avenue. The tests are designed to ensure that you are attending lectures and completing assigned readings. You are encouraged to consult your notes and books.

### **Essay (30%) Due November 18**

Details of the essay (6-8 pages) will be circulated separately via Avenue. Work submitted late will not be accepted

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 September 6 and 9**

#### **September 6 – Introduction and Overview**

Readings:

Notes: \*\*No Tutorial this week\*\* Please complete the “Introduce Yourself” quiz on Avenue. It should take about 20 minutes or less

#### **September 8 – Buddhist Basics 1 Causality, karma and no self**

Readings: Wright, 71–93

Notes: \*\*No Tutorial this week\*\* Please complete the “Introduce Yourself” quiz on Avenue.

### **Week 2 September 13 and 16 Buddhist Basics 2**

#### **September 13 – The Four Noble Truths.**

Readings: Wright, 93–119

Notes: Tutorials meet. Read “A Call to Practice,” *Buddhist Scriptures*, 19–23.

#### **September 16 – The Buddha**

Readings: Wright, 1–14

Notes:

### **Week 3 September 20 and 23 Buddhist Basics 3**

#### **September 20 – The Buddha, continued**

Readings: Wright, 14–34

Notes: Tutorials meet. Read “A King Gives Away his Head” *Buddhist Scriptures*, 142–158

#### **September 23 – The Saṃgha.**

Readings: Wright, 120–164

Notes:

### **Week 4 September 27 Buddhist Basics 4**

#### **September 27 – The Saṃgha, continued**

Readings: Yü, Chün-fang. “The Monastic Order.” In *Chinese Buddhism: A Thematic History*, 120–43. University of Hawai’i Press, 2020.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv105b9zz.9>.

Notes: Online Test 1 this week. Tutorials meet. Read “A Chinese Pilgrim in India,” *Buddhist Scriptures*, 78–83.

**September 30 – No class meeting. National Day of Truth and Reconciliation**

Readings: Catch up on reading so far.

Notes: Online test 1 closes Thursday

**Week 5 October 4 and 7 Meditation**

**October 4 – Buddhist Meditation in East Asia**

Readings: Eifring. (2017). What Is Meditation? In Asian Traditions of Meditation (pp. 1–26). University of Hawaii Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824855710-003>

[https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL\\_MU/6thkva/cdi\\_walderdegruyter\\_books\\_10\\_21313\\_9780824855710\\_003](https://mcmaster.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_MU/6thkva/cdi_walderdegruyter_books_10_21313_9780824855710_003)

Notes: No tutorials this week

**October 7 – \*\*No class meeting\*\* Instructor at conference**

Readings: None

Notes:

**Week 6 October 11 and 14**

**Midterm Recess**

**Week 7 October 18 and 21 The Lotus Sutra**

**October 18 – What is the Lotus Sutra?**

Readings: Listen to a podcast

[https://soundcloud.com/tricyclemag/how-to-read-the-lotus-sutra?utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_campaign=wtshare&utm\\_medium=widget&utm\\_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Ftricyclemag%252Fhow-to-read-the-lotus-sutra](https://soundcloud.com/tricyclemag/how-to-read-the-lotus-sutra?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Ftricyclemag%252Fhow-to-read-the-lotus-sutra)

Notes: Tutorial. Read “Two Buddhas Seated Side by Side” *Buddhist Scriptures*, 51-59.

**October 21 – Why is the Lotus Sutra important?**

Readings: Teiser and Stone, “Interpreting the Lotus Sutra,” in Teiser, Stephen F., and Jacqueline Ilyse Stone. *Readings of the Lotus Sutra*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, 1-69

Notes:

## **Week 8 October 25 and 28 How can we become Buddhas?**

### **October 25 – Origins of Chan**

Readings: Yü, Chün-fang. "The Meditation Tradition: Chan Buddhism." In *Chinese Buddhism: A Thematic History*, 172–97. University of Hawai'i Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv105b9zz.11>.

Notes: Online Test 2 this week. Tutorial reading: "The Practice of No Thought," *Buddhist Scriptures*, 504–512.

### **October 28 – Regional flavours: Sŏn in Korea, Zen in Japan.**

Readings: Buswell, "Zen Monasticism and the Context of Belief" in Buswell, Robert E. *The Zen Monastic Experience: Buddhist Practice in Contemporary Korea*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992, 1–20.

Notes: Online Test 2 closes Friday

## **Week 9 November 1 and 4 Can women become awakened? Can they teach?**

### **November 1 – Sex/gender change**

Readings: Balkwill, Stephanie. "Why Does a Woman Need to Become a Man in order to Become a Buddha?: Past Investigations, New Leads." *Religion Compass* 12, no. 8 (2018): e12270. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec3.12270>.

Notes: Tutorial Reading: "How a Monk Freed his Mother From Hell," *Buddhist Scriptures*, 329–334.

### **November 4 – Female communities**

Readings: Yü, Chün-fang. "Buddhism and Gender." In *Chinese Buddhism: A Thematic History*, 218–39. University of Hawai'i Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv105b9zz.13>.

Notes:

## **Week 10 November 8 and 11, Animals, Food**

### **November 8 – Animals in East Asian Buddhism.**

Readings:

Notes: Tutorial Reading: "Freeing Birds and Fish From Bondage," *Buddhist Scriptures*, 394–401

### **November 11 – Food as Buddhist Practice in East Asia**

Readings: Buddhist Nun Jeong Kwan's Korean Temple Food and Life (10 minute YouTube video) <https://youtu.be/LU76fi3Rduw>

Notes:

## **Week 11 November 15 and 18, What is Buddhist Poetry?**

### **November 15 – Buddhism and verse**

Readings: Jason Protass, "Returning Empty-Handed: Reading the Yifanfeng Corpus as Buddhist Parting Poetry" *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* (2017) 4 (2): 383-419.

<https://doi.org/10.1215/23290048-4179541>

Notes: No Tutorials this week.

### **November 18 – Instructor away at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. No class meeting—catch up on reading**

Readings:

Notes: Essay Due.

## **Week 12 November 22 and 25 Can Buddhism remove the fear of death?**

### **November 22 – The Pure Land**

Readings: Yü, Chün-fang. "The Devotional Tradition: Pure Land Buddhism." In *Chinese Buddhism: A Thematic History*, 198–217. University of Hawai'i Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv105b9zz.12>.

Notes: Tutorial Readings: "Karma Tales," *Buddhist Scriptures*, 24–33; "Avoiding Hell, Gaining Heaven," *Buddhist Scriptures*, 69–77

### **November 25 – Buddhist Death**

Readings: Cuevas and Stone, "Introduction," In Cuevas, Bryan J., and Jacqueline Ilyse Stone. *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, 1-31

Notes:

## **Week 13 November 29 and December 2 Can we change our reality?**

### **November 29 – Esoteric Buddhism in East Asia**

Readings: Ronald S. Green, "Kūkai in China, What He Studied and Brought Back to Japan," <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/kukai-in-china-what-he-studied-and-brought-back-to-japan/>

Notes: Tutorial Reading, "Buddhahood in this Lifetime," *Buddhist Scriptures*, 495-503

### **December 2 – Mantras, mandalas, mudras**

Readings: Sinéad Vilbar, "Kings of Brightness in Japanese Esoteric Buddhist Art," [https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/kibr/hd\\_kibr.htm](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/kibr/hd_kibr.htm)

Notes:



## **Week 14 December 6 Review**

### **December 6 – Review**

Readings:

Notes: No tutorial this week

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

Assignments are submitted on Avenue.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

I do not accept late assignments.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Courses with an On-line Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this

disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Online Proctoring**

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work**

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

## **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.