Religious Studies 440/540 Buddhist Scriptures, CRN 16740/16741, Fall 2020  Wed 2:15- 5:15 p.m. by Zoom  
Instructor: Mark T. Unno  Office hours by Zoom: Mon 1:30-2:30 p.m., Tues 1:30-2:30 p.m., also by appointment  
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Buddhist Scriptures: Zen, Pure Land, and Related Developments in East Asian Buddhism

What is Buddhist scripture? We will explore three main ideas: 1) Canonical scripture, such as the sutras, which are said to contain the teachings of the Buddha, 2) Scripture as evolving story, such as that of the monk Devadatta, the “evil” cousin of the Buddha, which is interwoven through several canonical scriptures, and 3) Scripture as the linguistic expression of religious truth, which in East Asian Buddhism is the “emptiness” or “oneness” of all reality.

In terms of the history of Buddhist scriptures, we will begin with Early Indian scripture, sample canonical scriptures of the Mahayana, the Buddhism of the “Great Vehicle,” and then focus on the teachings of great masters of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism, two of the largest developments of East Asian Buddhism. We will also examine examples of modern Zen and Pure Land literature as possible extensions of “scripture.”

Thematically, we will examine Buddhist scriptures and their relation to religious practice, sectarian traditions, gender, and ethnic and cultural identity. The seminar format includes lecture, student presentations, and discussion.

Requirements

1. Attendance: Attendance at the live remote class meetings is required unless there are extenuating circumstances. We will work with you if you are not able to connect live remotely.
2. Short exams: There will be two short, in-class exams, based on materials from the readings, lectures, and course web site.
3. Medium papers: There will be two medium-length papers (3-4 pages) based on topics that will be provided by the instructor.
4. Presentation: Students will make a presentation on the readings for one of the section meetings. The presenter should not summarize the reading but should use the presentation to discuss why the selected ideas/passages in question are important for understanding the reading and proceed to explain as well as raise questions about these ideas/passages. The primary purpose of these presentations is to launch the discussion, not to demonstrate breadth of knowledge or to lead the discussion. Each presenter will prepare a handout with 2-3 questions and brief, corresponding quotations from the readings. More detailed instructions are provided on the course web site.
5. Final paper: Each student will hand in a final paper of 10-12 pages double-spaced (A longer final paper of 12-15 pages will be required for those who have registered for REL540). Suggested topics will be provided. Students may choose to create their own topics with the consent of the instructor. In the case of the latter, a one-paragraph description of the topic must be submitted by email to the instructor one week prior to the due date.
6. Late policy on written assignments: Three grace days total will be allotted excluding the final paper and summaries for which no extensions will be given. For all other written assignments, a cumulative total of three late days will be allowed without penalty. Thereafter, each late day will result in a two-point deduction from the course grade. Weekends are not counted against the grace days.

Grades

- Short exam A 5%  
- Short exam B 5%  
- Presentation 10%  
- Discussion 10%

- Short paper I 15%  
- Short paper II 20%  
- Final paper 35%

Required Texts (Additional texts will be assigned for those taking REL540.)

5. Course Pack, Religious Studies 440/540 Buddhist Scriptures, Fall 2020, in Canvas site for this course.
Course Reader - REL440/540 Buddhist Scriptures, Fall 2020

Click on selected titles for summaries.

**Weekly Schedule - REL440/540 Buddhist Scriptures**

(CR = Course Reader. Thus, CR3 = Course Reader Article 3; RT = Required Text. Focus readings/pages in asterisks*)

**Week 1, 9/30: Background of Buddhism: Indian Sutras I**
- Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism*, 9-26 (CR1).*
- Mark Unno, "Key Ideas - Nagarjuna and the Thought of Emptiness," 1 (CR2).*
- Donald Lopez, Jr., *The Heart Sutra Explained*, 3-9, 19-20 (CR3).

**Week 2, 10/7: Indian Sutras II**
- Mark Unno, "The Karma of Bodhisattva Devadatta" (pdf) (CR7).*
- Richard Hayes, "A Buddha and His Cousin" (CR8).
- Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*, ix-xv: 49-64, 195-201 (CR10).*
- Kate Wheeler, *Bowing, Not Scraping,* 57-67 (CR11).*

**Week 3, 10/14: Indian Sutras III: Chinese Philosophical Adaptations** Short Exam A on Canvas by 2:00 p.m.
- Taitetsu Unno, "Philosophical Schools-San-lun, T'ien-t'ai, and Hua-yen" in *Buddhist Spirituality*, ed. by Takeuchi Yoshinori 343-365 (CR13).*focus: 350-356
- Mark Unno, "Key Ideas: Taitetsu Unno, 'Philosophical Schools: San-lun, T'ien-t'ai, and Hua-yen'" 1-3 (CR2)*

**Week 4, 10/21: The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti: Early Chinese Chan/Zen** Paper I due on Canvas by 2:00 p.m.
- Robert A. F. Thurman, trans., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti*, (RT, focus: xi-x, 1-5, 24-33, 56-63, 73-77).*

**Week 5, 10/28: Medieval Japan I: Zen Master Dogen**
- Barbara Ruch, "The Other Side of Culture in Medieval Japan," 500-511 (CR19).*

**Week 6, 11/4: Medieval Japan II: Pure Land Buddhism of Shinran**
- Mark Unno, "The Original Buddhist Rebel: Shinran" 1-16 (CR20).*
- Mark Unno, "Key Terms: Pure Land Buddhism of Honen and Shinran" 1-2 (CR21).*

**Week 7, 11/11: Contemporary Zen, an Irish American Woman: Maura O’Halloran** Paper II due on Canvas by 2 p.m.
- Maura Soshin O’Halloran, *Pure Heart: Enlightened Mind* (RT).*

**Week 8, 11/18: Contemporary Pure Land: Coffinman** Exam B due on Canvas by 2 p.m.
- Shinmon Aoki, *Coffinman* (RT)*
- Mark Unno, “Oneness and Narrativity: A Comparative Case Study,” 1-18 (CR27).*

**Week 9, 11/25: Research Assignments**

**Week 10, 12/02: Concluding Lecture/Discussion** Final Paper due on Canvas by 2 p.m.
- Student presentations and concluding discussion.
Additional Bibliography for REL540 Graduate-Level Credit