

RELI 2692 - Buddhism
Religious Studies Program
Spring 2022

Dr. Derek Maher

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday @ 11:00-12:15

Class location: Brewster D-310

Office: Brewster A-328

Best way to contact me: maherd@ecu.edu; Please always put "RELI 2692" in the subject line.

Office hours: Wednesday and Thursday @ 12:30 – 3:00

Academic Calendar: <https://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/calendar/spring2022.pdf>

East Carolina University General Education Program

ECU's motto is *Servire - To Serve*. The university prepares students by engaging the broad range of human knowledge and developing the skills that promote self-discovery and informed, responsible citizenship.

The fundamental purpose served in requiring students to take general education courses is to help them develop an understanding of aspects of the human condition that are not the primary focus of their major field of study. The number of subjects that fit this description is larger than can be required of ECU's students. Hence, the university only requires courses in the broadest and most basic areas of study along with courses in especially valuable competency areas (written communication, mathematics, health promotion, health-related physical activity, and diversity). Most professional and interdisciplinary programs of study are grounded in the following broad, basic areas of study: the fine arts, the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and mathematics.

General education exposes students to the broad range of human knowledge, while enabling them to acquire key skills and gain critical competencies that prepare them to understand societal problems and seek solutions. On that foundation, students then build expertise in one or more academic areas, developing the capacities to establish themselves in the work world and contribute to society as engaged and well-informed citizens.

Students explore and inquire in the humanities, arts, natural sciences, mathematics, and social sciences, learn to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, develop quantitative literacy, become familiar with global concerns and the diversity of the human experience, and cultivate the broad knowledge and skills that inform the mature exploration of their own majors. This foundation and its integration with specialized learning in the students' majors enable them to live broadly informed, responsible, and meaningful lives; at the same time, this preparation is essential to good citizenship in an increasingly global and culturally diverse world.

Fully developing each student's communication, computational, and critical thinking skills can only be accomplished by the student's program of study in their academic major. General education courses advance students beyond the competencies acquired in PK-12 education, but these courses are too few in number and too early in an undergraduate's career to fully prepare students in these skill areas. The full development of these skills is the responsibility of each student's major area of study.

General Education in the Humanities: Since this course satisfies three semester hours of the Humanities requirement that is part of the General Education Program, it is designed to help students develop competencies in the Humanities. Courses in the Humanities challenge students to critically examine their own and other people's beliefs, narratives, and practices in relation to what can broadly be called "human existence" or referred to as "what it is to exist as a human being." Humanities courses address a range of issues that have captured people's attention for over 3000 years. These problems include matters of value, and the courses that address them require students to critically assess diverse

understandings of aesthetic, ethical, moral, and religious dimensions. Humanities courses require students to learn one or more methods of critical analysis and to understand the value of knowledge both for its own sake and for its application. The knowledge gained by taking courses in the Humanities contributes to each student's understanding of how to create a life worth living.

The following learning outcomes define the Humanities competencies. Students who have completed the General Education Humanities requirements can:

1. Distinguish artistic, literary, philosophical, or religious creations from other types of work and describe how they address enduring human concerns and the human condition.
2. Apply discipline-specific criteria and evaluate the significance of specific literary, artistic, philosophical, or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.
3. Apply discipline-specific knowledge to contrast their own understanding with others' views of the significance of specific artistic, literary, philosophical, or religious works to enduring human concerns and the human condition.

Course description and course-specific student learning outcomes: Buddhism is the most significant unifying force in Asia and one of the most creative forces in Indian religions. Buddhism has profoundly influenced nearly every aspect of Asian cultures. We will survey this intriguing religion, focusing on the biography of the founder, its origins, meditative and visualization practices, methods for overcoming harmful emotions, and explanations of the path to enlightenment. We will examine Buddhist traditions in a variety of historical and social contexts, including lay and monastic traditions among both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists. We will also explore Buddhist art and architecture and contemporary Buddhist social movements. By way of these inquiries, the student should be able to:

- Identify Buddhist beliefs, practices, myths, rituals, traditions, history, and art
- Compare and contrast the assumptions, beliefs, and outlooks of different Buddhist traditions and the practices that result from those assumptions.
- Interpret sacred texts.
- Explain how Buddhists have made the human condition meaningful to themselves and discuss how religious and philosophical worldviews help people make sense of their own existence.
- Define the humanities and the methods of inquiry proper to the humanities.
- Describe and apply various methodologies employed in the academic study of religion.
- Cultivate critical thinking and reading comprehension skills.
- Communicate more effectively, verbally and in writing.

These objectives will be attained through lectures, classroom discussions, and assignments. Challenging readings from a variety of disciplines will supplement these strategies.

Grading (Total 500 points):

- Two exams with essays and short answers (20% each = 100 points each => 200 points) **(February 15 and March 3)**
- Six reading summaries (6% = 30 points each => 180 points) **(January 25, February 8, February 15, April 5, April 7, and April 17)**
- Map Quiz (4% = 20 points) **(February 3)**
- Final exam (20% = 100 points) **(11:00 - 1:30 @ Friday, May 4)**

A (100-93%) 500-465; A- (down to 90%) 464-450; B+ (down to 87%) 449-435; B (down to 83%) 434-415; B- (down to 80%) 414-400; C+ (down to 77%) 399-385; C (down to 73%) 384-365; C- (down to 70%) 364-350; D+ (down to 67%) 349-335; D (down to 63%) 334-315; D- (down to 60%) 314-300; F (below 60%) 299-0.

Required Readings:

- David Loy, *Money, Sex, War, Karma* (online at Joyner Library)
- Donald Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* (must be purchased)

Additional readings will be available on the course Blackboard website. <https://blackboard.ecu.edu/> Students are responsible for checking their email address linked to Blackboard system so that they are assured of remaining up-to-date with reading assignments, exam dates, and any other information relating to the course.

Exams: Exams will consist of essays and short questions. Generally, I will provide several essay questions from which the student may select two to answer. Short questions may be multiple choice, true and false, and simple identification.

Quiz: The quiz will be on mapping the Buddhist world. There is a study guide with the names of a range of places that are significant to Buddhist history on the Blackboard webpage. **Students are expected to become familiar with these places on their own time. They will not be discussed in class unless students ask questions.**

Reading Summaries: At specified points in the semester, students will submit a 2-page paper with a summary of the reading and a reaction to the reading that connects it to other readings.

Classroom Participation and Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all classes, read all assignments prior to class, and demonstrate that they are capable of being fully involved in all class discussions.

An absence for a legitimate university-sanctioned reason will be excused, and students will be able to make up the work. Quizzes, exams, and other assignments may be made-up only if the absence is officially excused by the University's Office of the Dean of Students. Students should consult the following site to become familiar with the relevant ECU policies: http://www.ecu.edu/deanofstudents/excused_absences.cfm

Students who must be absent—excused or not—are responsible for obtaining notes from a peer. After they have done so, they may ask me for further clarification, but they should not ask me first.

Unexcused absences will result in grade reduction. After the 3rd unexcused absence, 2% will be deducted from the final grade. Each additional absence will result in a deduction of a further 2%. Please plan to attend our class regularly. Poor attendance correlates very highly with terrible final class grades.

Academic Integrity and Classroom Decorum: Academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education and East Carolina University; therefore, we will not tolerate acts of cheating, plagiarism, falsification or attempts to cheat, plagiarize, or falsify. All students are expected to comply with the principles of Academic Integrity embodied in the ECU Honor Code. Since violations can result in expulsion from the University, suspension, or a grade of "F" for the course, students should become familiar with what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, falsification, and other violations. Note also that according to ECU policy **mere attempts to plagiarize, cheat, or falsify qualify as violations**. Consult the ECU Clue Book for details: <http://core.ecu.edu/econ/zinng/Academic%20Integrity.htm>

All university classrooms ought to be environments in which the free exchange of information and viewpoints is undertaken in an open, respectful, and civil atmosphere. This is particularly important in classes that touch on religion, since discussions of religion can raise controversial issues or concern deeply held personal beliefs. It is natural and appropriate that people can disagree on various topics of

discussion, and it is fine to explore these differences in a civil tone. Disruptive students will be asked to leave class and appropriate disciplinary measures will be pursued.

To minimize distractions in class, **students may not consult, display, or use cell phones, iPods, or other such devices in class.** Especially, during exams all such devices will be confiscated, to be returned at the end of the semester. Computers can be powerful classroom tools, enabling students to take notes, look up information relevant to class discussions, and the like. However, they should not be used to check email, instant message friends, shop, or goof around while others are trying to get the most out of the learning environment. I reserve the right to rescind permission to use computers in my class if it becomes disruptive to me or others.

Please do not come to class late or leave early. Students may be counted absent if they are not in class during any part of the class period.

University Resources:

The Writing Center offers students in-person and on-line assistance in learning writing skills. Contact the Writing Center for hours and locations at Bate (GCB) 2026 (328-2820). <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/writing/writingcenter/index.cfm>

In addition to providing students with personal counseling, the Counseling and Student Development Center in Wright Building 316 (328-6661) offers various resources to assist students in their academic development. These include training in time management, test taking, overcoming test anxiety, and academic motivation. <http://www.ecu.edu/counselingcenter/>

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 (252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY).

Meeting with Me:

I have 5 hours of scheduled office hours a week. Aside from those hours, I can often be found in my office. If the times I have indicated are not practical, students are encouraged to see me before or after class. If students need to meet at another time, I am sure I can be accommodating. I encourage all students to come and see me as they begin to formulate their research papers or projects. This will ensure that the selected paper topic is appropriate and relevant. It is always best to contact me by email prior to meeting with me.

Library: All students at ECU should become proficient in using library resources. The Joyner Library at ECU (accessible on-line at <http://www.lib.ecu.edu/>) has many valuable resources on Buddhism. There are hundreds of books on religion in the stacks of Joyner Library. See the following website for help in navigating your way around the Library. Books on Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion have call numbers beginning with the letter B. Books on Buddhism have call numbers beginning with BQ. Navigate your way around the library with the following source: <http://geography.miningco.com/library/congress/blb.htm>)

Additionally, you can find information on religious traditions in books in other sections of the library, including anthropology, art, geography, history, literature, philosophy, and psychology. You may also explore the film and music resources the library collects. One of the best resources available is the library's collection of journals. Not only does the library have numerous religion journals in paper and bound forms, but it is also possible to access a very large number of journals on-line. (<http://media.lib.ecu.edu/erdb/>) The library staff can be extremely helpful in learning to use all of these resources. Don't be shy about asking for their help.

As a student of East Carolina University, you also have free use of the Library system at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (www.lib.unc.edu). Moreover, you can access just about any book, journal or other resource in the world through the Inter-Library Loan. Many resources can be obtained within a matter of days. Often, journal articles can be delivered electronically within a day or two. The Joyner Library has a special office for Inter-Library Loan services, located to the left of the front desk. You can access these resources on-line at: <http://jill.lib.ecu.edu/illiad/logon.html>

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

January 11 – Introduction to class and syllabus

- “Humanities,” on Canvas

January 13 and 18 – Pre-Buddhist context

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, “Introduction”

January 17 – State Holiday

January 20 and 25 – Buddha’s Biography and Early Buddhism

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, Chapter 1
- “Introduction” And “Suffering of Self” from Loy, *Money, Sex, War, Karma*

January 25 - Summary #1 on Loy

January 27 and February 3 – Buddhist Religious Life and the Path to Liberation

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, Chapter 3
- “Lack of Money,” “The Great Seduction,” “Trapped in Time,” “The Second Buddha,” “How to Drive Your Karma,” “What’s Wrong with Sex?” from Loy, *Money, Sex, War, Karma*
- **MAP QUIZ (February 3)**

February 8 – Ethics and Cosmology

- Bhikkhu Bodhi, *In the Buddha’s Words*, Chapter 4 and 5, on Canvas
- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* Chapter 2

February 8 - Summary #2 on Cosmology

February 10 – EXAM I

February 15 – Meditation

- “What Would the Buddha Do?” “The Three Poisons, Institutionalized,” and “Consciousness Commodified” from Loy, *Money, Sex, War, Karma*
- “How to Meditate,” On Canvas
- **February 15 - Summary #3 on How to Meditate**

February 17 and 22 – Monastic Life and Theravada

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, Chapter 3
- “Buddhist Vows,” on Canvas
- “Life as a Buddhist Nun,” on Canvas

February 24 and March 1 – Wisdom and Awakening

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, Chapter 4
- “Diamond Slivers,” on Canvas
- “Wisdom,” on Canvas

March 3 – EXAM II

March 6-13 – Spring Break!

March 15 and 17 – Buddhism in India and Thailand

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience*, Chapter 5

March 22 and 24 – Buddhism in East Asia

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* Chapter 7 and 9
- “Pure Land,” on Canvas

March 29 and 31 – Buddhism in Tibet

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* Chapter 6

April 5 – Socially Engaged Buddhism

- “Environmental Ethics,” On Canvas
- “Healing Ecology” and “The Karma of Food” from Loy, *Money, Sex, War, Karma*
- April 5 - Summary #4 Loy

April 7 – Buddhism in the Modern World

- Mitchell, *Buddhism: Introducing the Buddhist Experience* Chapter 10
- “Why We Love War” and “Notes for a Buddhist Revolution” from Loy, *Money, Sex, War, Karma*
- April 7 - Summary #5 Loy

April 15 – State Holiday!

April 12 and 19 – Śantideva’s *Guide*

- Santideva, *Guide to the Bodhisattva’s Way of Life*
- April 19 - Summary #6 Patience Chapter SLOs #2 and 3

April 21 and 26 – Tantra

- “Tantra,” on Canvas

April 27 – READING DAY

May 4 – FINAL EXAM 11:00 - 1:30