For more than a thousand years, the mainland Southeast Asia (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand today) have been the homeland of Theravada Buddhism, an “order” of Buddhism different from the Mahayana and the Tibetan ones. Despite Westernization and secularization since the nineteenth century, this religious tradition remains strong among nearly 200 million people today. To learn and understand the people and culture of the mainland Southeast Asia, we cannot do without understanding their strong religious tradition.

The course is NOT for a study of the philosophy or tenets of Theravada Buddhism. Rather, it is a cultural history focusing on the significance of Theravada Buddhism in the cultures of those countries, and its modern dynamism. The main subjects of the course are: 1) a history of Theravada Buddhism and its coming to Southeast Asia; 2) basic tenets, popular beliefs, and the monastic order; 3) the historical significance of Buddhism in political culture; 4) the transition during the colonial period in the 19th century; 5) modern nations and economies and their effects on Buddhism. The focus is on Thailand and Burma, the major parts of the region’s history and religious development.

Class: Two 75-min lectures weekly. Credits 3
Office Hours: Tue 1:00-3:00 p.m. or by appointment.
5211 Humanities Ph. 263-8931 Email: twinicha@facstaff.wisc.edu
Exams: Two mid-term take-home exams, and one final (30-30-40). Schedules in this syllabus.

Required Textbooks: (available at University Book Store)
- The History 438 Reader - available at the Humanities Copy Center, Rm. 1650 Humanities.

Recommended Books: (available at University Book Store)

All weekly readings are in the required books or in the History 438 Reader. They are also available in the Reserves Collections. (Some materials in the Reader this year can also be found in the Readers of History 438 of previous years – check in the Reseves as well.)
INTRODUCTIONS to the course, Southeast Asia, and Buddhism,

WEEK 1  
(Jan 22) The course: objectives, exams, assignments, etc.
(Jan 24) Southeast Asia: introduction

WEEK 2  
(Jan 29) Intro to Buddhism (video: “Buddhism: Footprint of the Buddha”) 
(Jan 31) The Buddha: biography or the myth of his life
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 16-30.

EARLY HISTORY OF BUDDHISM COMING TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEEK 3  (Feb 5) Two major “orders” (nikaya): Mahayana & Hinayana (Theravada)
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 59-72.
(Feb 7) Theravada Buddhism to Southeast Asia (6th - 12th c.)
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 73-87.
- Swearer, Donald. “Buddhism in Southeast Asia” in Buddhism and Asian History. 107-120.

BASIC TENETS AND IDEAS

WEEK 4  (Feb 12) The Four Noble Truth, Nirvana
(Feb 14) Karma and merit
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 31-34, 39-45, 102-115

POPULAR BUDDHISM

WEEK 5  (Feb 19) Cosmology and social hierarchy
(Feb 21) “Syncretic Buddhism”
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 113-125
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. (Chapter 1). 5-61.

WEEK 6  (Feb 26) Rituals, magic, festivals (video: Cambodians in America)
- Terwiel, B.J. Monks and Magic. 72-96.

THE SANGHA (MONASTIC ORDER)

(Feb 28) Monks, monastic life, organization, and network
- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics. 88-97, 203-206.
- Tambiah, S.J. The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets. 53-77.

****First take-home exam questions. Due in one week.****
WEEK 7 (Mar 5) The sangha organization and network (cont.)
(Mar 7) Female monks and Buddhist “nuns”
- Sponberg, Alan. “Attitudes Toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism”, in Cobezon, Jose Ignacio, ed. Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender. 3-36.

****First take-home exam deadline, 12:30 p.m.****

WEEK 8 (Mar 12) Merit and power
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. pp. 64-95.
(Mar 14) Buddhist kingship and state (13th-18th c.)
- Harvey, Peter. An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics, 113-118.

WEEK 9 (Mar 19) Buddhism and legitimation of power
- Schober, Juliane “A Tooth Relic and the Legitimation of Power” in The Life of Buddhism. 45-59
(Mar 21) Buddhist millenialism and peasant rebellion

WEEK 10 (Mar 26, 27) Spring Recess

WEEK 11 (Apr 2) Colonialism and politicized Buddhism in the 19th c. Burma
(Apr 4) Buddhist anti-colonial movement in Burma (late 19th-early 20th c.)
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula. 259-299
- Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution. 110-179

WEEK 12 (Apr 9) Modern Buddhism in the 19th c. Siam
- Excerpts from Alabaster, Henry. The Modern Buddhist, Being the Views of a Siamese Minister of State on His Own and Other Religions (c. 1870).

(Apr 11) The sangha and nation-building in Siam (late 19th to early 20th c.)
- Kirsch, A. Thomas. “Modernizing Implications of Nineteenth Century Reforms in Thai Sangha,” in Religion and Legitimation of Power. 52-65

****Second take-home exam questions. Due in one week.****

**BUDDHISM AND MODERN NATIONS**

WEEK 13 (Apr 16) Southeast Asia today(video: “Thailand: Minidragon”)
(Apr 18) Modernization and the changing roles of monks
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia, 107-146.

****Second take-home exam deadline, 12:30 p.m.****

WEEK 14 (Apr 23) The bourgeoisie and new sects in Thailand
(Apr 25) Buddhism, gender and sex trade: a debate

WEEK 15 (Apr 30) “Radical Conservatives” or the Buddhist radicalism
(May 2) Buddhism after revolutions

WEEK 16 (May 7) Final remarks.

****Final take-home exam questions. Due May 14, 4:45 p.m.****
(There is NO sit-in exam as scheduled on May 14. The instruction for the return of your final exam answers will be given in the class on May 7.)