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 distinctive from the Mahayana and the Tibetan ones. Despite Westernization and secularization since the nineteenth century, this religious tradition remains strong among nearly 150 million people today. We cannot understand the peoples and cultures of the region 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 Theravada Buddhism as a “civic” religion and its dynamism in the cultures of those countries. The main subjects of the course are: 1) a history of Theravada Buddhism and its coming to Southeast Asia; 2) basic tenets of Buddhism, and Theravada Buddhism as a civic religion in popular culture; 3) Buddhist political culture in history; 4) the transition during the colonial and “modernizing” period in the 19th century; 5) Buddhism in the age of modern nations and economies. The focus is on Thailand and Burma, the major parts of the region’s history and religious developments.

Class: Two 75-min lectures weekly
Office Hours: Wed 1:30-3:30, or by appointment. 5211 Humanities, 263-8931
				<ttwinicha@wisc.edu>

Exams: Three take-home exams (30-30-40). See exam schedule in this syllabus.

Required Textbooks: (available at the University Book Store)

All weekly readings are either in the required books or in the E-Reserves for this class (accessible via “My UW”). All textbooks are also available in the Reserves. (Some readings can also be found in the Readers of History 438 of previous years – check in the Reserves as well.) Many journal articles (marked @) are accessible on-line via the library journal databases. If students do not know how to access the databases, please notify the instructor ASAP.
INTRODUCTIONS

WEEK 1  (Jan 17)  The course: objectives, exams, assignments, etc.
    (Jan 19)  Intro to Buddhism (video: “Buddhism: Footprint of the Buddha”)

THE BUDDHA AND EARLY HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

WEEK 2  (Jan 24)  The Buddha: his biography or the mythical story of his life
- Armstrong, Karen. Buddha. (The whole book should be finished by this week)
    (Jan 26)  Two major “orders” (nikaya): Mahayana & Hinayana (Theravada)
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 59-72.

BUDDHISM: BASIC TENETS AND IDEAS

WEEK 3  (Jan 31)  The Four Noble Truth, Nirvana
- Armstrong, Karen. Buddha. 98-121, and in various places about Nibbana
    (Feb 2)  Karma and merit
- Keown, Damien. Buddhism. 31-34, 39-45, 102-115

THE SANGHA (MONASTIC ORDER)

WEEK 4  (Feb 7)  Monks and monastic life, the sangha organization
- 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.
    (Feb 9)  Female monks and Buddhist “nuns”

BUDDHISM AS A CIVIC RELIGION IN POPULAR CULTURE

WEEK 5  (Feb 14)  Cosmology and social hierarchy

First take-home exam questions. Due in one week.****
    (Feb 16)  “Syncretic Buddhism”, monks and magic
              (video: Cambodians in America)
- Keyes, Charles. Golden Peninsula.113-123
- Swearer, Donald. Buddhist World of Southeast Asia. (Chapter 1). 5-61.
BUDDHISM COMING TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEEK 6 (Feb 21) Intro to Southeast Asia, and its history in brief

****First take-home exam due Feb 21, deadline, 12:30 p.m.****

(Feb 23) Mahayana and Theravada to Southeast Asia

WEEK 7 (Feb 28) Theravada Buddhism to Southeast Asia (cont.)

SACRED SOCIETY, MORALIST POLITY

(Mar 2) Human World in Cosmographic Context
- Donald Swearer, “The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center” in *City as Sacred Center*, ed. Diana L. Eck, 88-113.

WEEK 8 (Mar 7) Buddhist Polity (1): the ideology -- merit and power
- Swearer, Donald. *Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*. pp. 64-95
- Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, 113-118.

WEEK 9 (Mar 14, 16) Spring Recess

WEEK 10 (Mar 21) Buddhism and legitimation of power
****Second take-home exam questions given. Due Mar 30.****

**COLONIAL TRANSITION (19th to early 20th c.)**

**WEEK 11**  
(Mar 28) Colonialism and politicized Buddhism in the 19th c. Burma  
(Mar 30) Buddhist anti-colonial movement in Burma (late 19th -early 20th c.)  
- Sarkisyanz, E. *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution*. 110-179  

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

**WEEK 12**  
(Apr 4) 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 6) The *sangha* and nation-building in Siam (late 19th to early 20th c.)  

**BUDDHISM AND MODERN NATIONS**

**WEEK 13**  
(Apr 11) Modernization and the changing roles of monks  
(Apr 13) Modernization and the changing roles of monks  
- Swearer, Donald. *Buddhist World of Southeast Asia*, 107-146.  

**WEEK 14**  
(Apr 18) Bourgeoisie and new sects in Thailand  
(Apr 20) The radical Buddhists  

**WEEK 15**  
(Apr 25, 27) Buddhism and tragic revolution in Cambodia  
Buddhism in Burma under the military regimes  
Buddhism in Laos after revolution  
- Keyes, Charles F. “Communist Revolution and the Buddhist Past in Cambodia” in *Asian*
Visions of Authority: Religion and Modern States of East and Southeast Asia, 43-73.

**WEEK 16**

(May 2) Final remarks and *Final take-home exam questions.*
(May 4) (If necessary).

*Final take-home exam: instructions to be given in the May 2 class. Due May 12, 2:30 p.m.*
(There is NO sit-in exam as scheduled in the Timetable.)
MATERIALS IN THE E-RESERVES FOR HISTORY 438/ SPRING 2006  
(Cross-listed with Langasia 438 and Relig St 438)

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Week 6

Week 7
- Than Tun, “Religion in Burma 1000-1300” in Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma, ed. Paul Strachan. 23-45
- Donald Swearer, “The Northern Thai City as a Sacred Center” in City as Sacred Center, ed. Diana L. Eck, 88-113.

Week 8

Week 10
Week 11

Week 12

Week 13

Week 14

Week 15

A Document for exam
- City Slave (pseu.) “The Spirits of the Yellow Leaves.” Unpublished translated paper.