
INTRODUCTION TO **BUDDHISM**



Taking Refuge in the Triple Gem

Buddhist Theories & Practices for Living

Synchronous Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 4:20-5:15 PM

Professor Anne Hansen, Teaching Assistant Catriona Miller

Taking Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma & Sangha is a practice that crosses the diverse times and spaces that constitutes the Buddhist world.

AN OVERVIEW. This course introduces Buddhism across Asia, from India at the time of the Buddha to 1960s US and Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. Our starting point will be the central Buddhist ritual of taking refuge in the “Triple Gem”: the Buddha, his teachings known as the Dharma, and the Sangha, communities and individuals who call themselves Buddhist. We’ll examine and discuss interpretations of the Triple Gem through a variety of primary sources, from sermons, stories and Beat poetry to Buddhist art in the Chazen Museum.

OUR APPROACH. Our course uses a “history of religion” approach, which means that we will examine actual Buddhist communities and individuals and what they have taught, said, chanted, written, practiced, painted, dreamed, built, organized, prayed, preached, and found meaningful; their assumptions about the world, what is worth knowing, what is obvious, and what is unknowable; how they have viewed and formed families and other relationships; their ethical values; their forms and genres of expression. Historians of religion want to do more than study how people in the past have lived; rather, they want to get inside their heads, see through their eyes, and

learn how they understood what it means to be human.

“To avoid all evil, to cultivate good, and to cleanse one’s mind — this is the teaching of the buddhas.”

-DHAMMAPADA

Buddhism in the T’ang Dynasty; Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan; Theravada Buddhism in nineteenth and early twentieth century Thailand; the Euro-American Beat Generation encounter with Buddhism in the 1950s; Socially Engaged Buddhism in 1960s-70s Southeast Asia; and global Buddhism in the contemporary world. Our sources will include spiritual accounts composed by the



Part I of the course examines the figure of the Buddha *through Buddhist eyes*.

In order to achieve this goal of “seeing through Buddhist eyes,” we will adopt one of the most ubiquitous Buddhist practices and categories of knowledge to organize our inquiry into Buddhism: taking refuge in the Triple Gem. Our study will consider the Triple Gem in a number of different Buddhist historical and cultural moments: early Buddhism in ancient India; the flow of Indian Mahayana Buddhist ideas and practices along the Silk Road; the development of Chinese Ch’an

first Buddhist women; inscriptions carved on rock pillars by a devout 3rd century BCE Buddhist king; devotional, ritual biographies of the Buddha from Sri Lanka and Thailand; parables and cave paintings from China. We will read reflections on daily life recorded by 18th century Zen poet-monk Ryokan and Beat poets' experiences with Buddhism in 1950s America. We will also read and

discuss Buddhist chants, prayers, ritual texts, sermons, memoirs, meditation instructions, tattoos, and poetry.



COURSE THEMES. Contemporary Americans tend to associate Buddhism with the cultivation of mindfulness through meditation practice. How and why did this late 20th century American interpretation of Buddhism develop? While mindfulness and meditation are important Buddhist ideas and practices, they are far from the only strategies Buddhists have used to construct meaningful lives. Throughout the course, our study of Buddhism will emphasize:

- tracing out the diversity of Buddhist histories and cultures by examining primary sources from a number of different historical moments, especially periods when Buddhist communities developed new interpretations and/or technologies of knowledge production;
- central ideas related to Buddhist understandings of the “Triple Gem,” which will help us see not

In the second part of the course, we'll study the Dharma both philosophically and experientially, through Buddhist writings and by trying out meditation practice with experienced teachers.

“Dharma” refers to the teachings of the buddhas as well as to the nature of reality: *what is real*.

only how Buddhist think and act in their efforts to construct meaningful and happy lives, but also how different people in different places reworked received ideas and practices to make them relevant to their own time;

- Buddhism as ever-changing and localized yet simultaneously recognizable as a trans-historical and trans-local tradition through shared theories, practices, preoccupations, images, and ideas;
- and finally, how religion *writ large* functions in peoples' lives and cultures as an attempt to find and/or construct meaningful and happy lives. While we won't make explicit comparisons to other religious traditions in this course, our study is meant to provide you with a history of religions approach that might be applied to the study of other religions besides Buddhism.

LEARNING OUTCOMES. What you gain from this course depends in part on your level of effort. Students who are engaged in the course and prepared for class can expect to:

- Learn to “see through Buddhist eyes,” a central aim of the history of religions approach or “methodology” we’ll employ in this course.
- Learn to seek out and appreciate complexity. It often turns out that our preconceptions and assumptions about Buddhism vastly over-simplify a diverse and complex religious tradition. In fact, the more we know, the muddier things may appear. Accept that not everything you learn is going to be immediately comprehensible.
- Gain insight into Buddhist ways of thinking, organizing knowledge, and navigating the inevitable realities of human existence: birth, death, sickness, aging, suffering, and constant change.
- Recognize the diversity of ideas, values and practices apparent in Buddhist history and cultures.
- Become literate in basic Buddhist concepts. Use this awareness to become an informed, religiously literate global citizen.
- Consider the relevance and applicability of Buddhist resources for the larger human project of living a good and meaningful life. Be open to the possibility of “learning *from*” not just “learning *about*” Buddhists.
- Practice and deepen your facility with critical (i.e., *analytical*) reading, thinking and writing through your study of Buddhist ideas and practices.
- Apply our analytical method of studying religion to understanding your own or other religious traditions.
- Learn to be comfortable with the unfamiliar! Gain confidence in your ability

“Better than a thousand useless words is one useful word, hearing which one attains peace.”

-DHAMMAPADA

Part III of the course examines “Sangha” — a term that refers to the monks, nuns and other practitioners who identify as “Buddhist.”



to process, interpret and use new concepts and vocabularies. While the initial learning curve in



this course will be steep for most students, midway through the semester you will notice that you have begun to feel comfortable employing Buddhist concepts and terminology. This is good practice for navigating similar challenges in almost every new academic or work environment you'll encounter for the rest of your life.

WORKLOAD. This is a 4 credit course, open to freshmen. There are no prerequisites or

expectations that you have studied history of Asian religions previously but you should enter the course with an openness to reading and analyzing a variety of Buddhist sources that may seem initially unfamiliar and hard to comprehend.

The course features guest speakers who represent different Buddhist perspectives.

Most students who are engaged in the course begin to feel comfortable using Buddhist concepts (like “Triple Gem,” “karma” and “*dukkha*”) by mid-semester.

Above, UW Buddhism students attending a festival at the Khmer Temple in Fitchburg.

This course involves an **average of 4 hours per week** of structured time including 2 hours per week for *synchronous* Zoom lecture classes, a 1 hour *synchronous* weekly discussion on Zoom and two 20-30 minute video lectures to be viewed before your M/W Zoom classes. In addition to these 4 hours of structured time, the class carries the

expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours for every hour of structured class time. In other words, in addition to 4 hours of weekly structured class time, plan to allot an **average of 8 hours per week** for reading, writing, and preparing for discussions. Altogether, the total time expectation for this class is an **average of 12 hours per week**. You can expect most weeks to be somewhat lighter than this while weeks with graded assignments will likely take up a bit more time. Honors students will have an additional assignment(s) to receive H credit.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING. Given the pressures and challenges of the pandemic, grading this

If you are shy about speaking in discussion sections and/or have trouble raising questions that you would like to ask in lectures, please contact one of the instructors by email or in office hours. We will come up with a plan to help you participate more fully.

semester will heavily emphasize Buddhist mindfulness (*sati*) practices of “being present” and “being engaged” on a daily and weekly basis to help prevent you from losing motivation and falling behind. We think that learning this practice will help you in your other classes and activities too. 50% of your grade will depend on consistent attendance, participation and weekly assignments — in other words, “being present” and “being engaged.”

We recognize that students take this class for different reasons and that you come with different academic backgrounds, skills and majors. To allow you

to do your best in this class, you will be able to choose the format of your final assignment (from two options) that works best for your learning style, skill set and purposes; both assignments will measure your cumulative learning in the course and be worth 20% of your grade. All other assignments are required. More details and instructions about assignments and grading



Martin Luther King Jr., and the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh during the Vietnam War.

Our course will end with a consideration of “sangha” among Socially Engaged Buddhists during the Vietnam War. We’ll read Thich Nhat Hanh’s letter to Martin Luther King, Jr., about the 1963 self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc, a venerated Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh’s *Lotus in a Sea of Fire* and Chan Kong’s memoir of Buddhist activism under fire.

will be provided as we go along but here is an overview of what you can expect and how it will be graded. There are 6 components to your grade:

1/Attendance & participation (20%). Your attendance and participation grade will include an evaluation of your attendance, participation and preparation for discussion section, as well as your responses to several in-class and on-line activities connected to lecture class. You are **required** to bring assigned reading materials to your discussion section each week since you’ll need to refer to the reading in discussions. Being “present and engaged” means that you will need to do more than simply show up with your video stream turned off. We will provide you with plenty of opportunities for active engagement including: asking questions, participating in large and small group discussions, responding to surveys, using the chat function, communicating break-out group conclusions and questions, taking part in brief in-class writing exercises.

To receive a grade of A (full credit), you must submit 10/11 Primary Source Analyses.

You are allowed to miss one discussion section and one synchronous lecture classes without penalty to your grade but please save it for the week you are sick or have other urgent personal obligations. Except in cases of documented emergencies (such as hospitalization) or other justifiable excuses (such as planned absences for religious holidays, funerals or job/medical school interviews), you can not make up missed classes. For planned absences, please consult your instructors in advance. Making up missed classes for planned absences may involve additional written assignments.

2/Weekly primary source analysis (20%). Your weekly analysis will consist of a 100-150 analysis of a quote you select from the primary source readings each week in response to reading questions provided in your syllabus.

“On hearing the Teachings, the wise become perfectly purified, like a lake deep, clear and still.”

-DHAMMAPADA

All primary source analysis assignments must be submitted each week (except on the week you elect to opt out) by Thursday noon, in advance of discussion section meetings on Thursday and Friday. Late analysis assignments will not be accepted and missing analysis assignments cannot be made up since they are intended to help you prepare for discussion class as well as help you stay up-to-date with course materials. You are

required to submit 10 primary source analysis assignments to receive an A in the class (10 out of a possible 11 primary source analysis assignments). Submitting 9 assignments results in an A/B, 8 assignments is a B (etc). You may opt out of a primary source analysis assignment throughout the semester without penalty to your grade - but you are expected to still do the reading and are welcome to attend discussion anyway.

GRADING SCALE used in this class:

92-100% A

87-91.9% AB

82-86.9% B

77-81.9% BC

72-76.9% C

67-71.9% D

0-66.9% F

3/Weekly posts (10%). Post a thoughtful short response, explanation or question related to the weekly prompt posted each week, and respond to at least one other student's post on the discussion board. Posts should be approximately 100-200 words. These prompts are intended to help us examine key concepts, questions, problems or terms we are encountering. To receive an “A” you will need to post 11 (out of a possible 13) posts. Posting 10 posts will be assessed as an “A/B” (etc).

4/Three short analyses posted on Siftr (30% - 10% each). These three assignments (approximately 2-3 paragraphs each i.e., 250-350 words, plus accompanying illustrations and photos) will ask you to bring all of your skills in close reading and critical analysis to bear on certain primary sources, both written and visual, that we will encounter this semester. You will need to download the free app Siftr, <https://siftr.org>, in order to complete these assignments

and post them. We are using Siftr in order to create a gallery of assignments to share with the class. Two of the assignments will be individual and one will be a group project with your break-out group members.

5/Final assignment: choice of a 4 page take-home essay or 5-7 minute video powerpoint lecture (20%). You will be able to choose the final assignment format that you prefer, either a take-home essay responding to a choice of prompts based on course readings or a video powerpoint lecture responding to a choice of prompts. Both projects will be cumulative and will ask you to draw on at least two to three readings from the semester and to employ the analytical skills we will be learning in the class.

EXTRA CREDIT. You may earn extra credit in this class by turning in or posting the full number of possible assignments in the categories above and/or by attending all class periods. For example, turning in 11 out of 10 required primary source analyses or attending 12 out of 11 required discussion sections will earn you extra credit.

HONORS CREDIT. Please identify yourself to Prof. Hansen after class or in office hours. Students taking the course for Honors credit will produce 2 short (2-3 page) close readings of imagery and ideas in primary sources and/or produce 2 short (2 minute) videos that explain images and concepts. Assignments and topics should be chosen in coordination with the instructor. All of these papers or videos will be uploaded to share with other students in the class, so should be written/produced with an eye toward serving as explanatory material. In addition, Honors students will choose one community-building job in the course: reading and responding to posts (beyond your required response posts) or working on close reading/writing skills with another student in the class who would like extra help. Other Honors students may elect to research and write a short (5 page) paper connected with their major/disciplinary interests. Examples might include topics such as the neuroscience of meditation, Buddhist prison reform, the historical origins of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, an analysis or history of a Buddhist art image at the Chazen Museum, Buddhism in Korean or American film, or an exploratory essay on a specialized topic in Buddhist scriptures or sources such as the treatment of sexuality in the *Buddhacarita* or Indian Buddhist cosmology in 19th century Burmese manuscript paintings. The topic and format of the paper must be coordinated with Prof. Hansen during the first 3 weeks of the semester. Plan to attend office hours at least twice during the semester to confer about your projects, paper topics and progress. Prof. Hansen will grade Honors assignments.

MEDICAL SCHOOL HUMANITIES PAPERS. Please identify yourself to Prof. Hansen before or after class during one of the initial class periods or in office hours. Students who are using this course to meet requirements for a Humanities writing intensive course appropriate for medical school admissions requirements should plan to attend office hours more than once. Your final assignment will consist of a 10-15 page research paper in lieu of a final assignment, including the requirement that you submit a first draft version of the paper two weeks prior to the final due date. Even though this is your final assignment, it is essential that you meet with Prof. Hansen

within the first three weeks of class (or sooner!) to get started on your paper. Writing a successful research paper of this length requires a good deal of organization and coordination so we need to get started as soon as possible. Plan to meet with Prof. Hansen several times during the semester to review your progress; she will be grading your final paper, which is worth 20% of your grade.

GRADUATE CREDIT. If you are a graduate student, please contact the instructor. Prof. Hansen is *not* offering a designated graduate section this spring. Graduate students will have the option of completing the assignments and exams listed above (but will be expected to write 5-7 page rather than 3-4 page paper(s)) OR pursue alternative assignments related to their programs of study and individual research interests. Please arrange to see Prof. Hansen in office hours during the first three weeks of class to plan your assignments and other arrangements.

TEXTS & SOFTWARE. Required course books and software:

***One Robe, One Bowl: the Zen Poetry of Ryokan*, John Stevens, trans.**

You will also need to purchase and download the following secondary source textbook from the url provided below:

***Buddhism – the eBook*, 4th edition, Damien Keown and Charles Prebish**

Instructions for purchasing and downloading the on-line textbook can be found at: <http://www.jbeonlinebooks.org/eBooks/buddhism/>

If you prefer to buy or rent a printed version of this text (but without some of the helpful links and supplementary material) a close version by the same authors is: ***Introducing Buddhism*, 2nd edition** by Charles S. Prebish and Damien Keown. The text is almost identical but the pagination is slightly different. Most students decide to use the e-version of the text (which is less expensive and includes links to more resources).

Your other course readings will be posted as PDFs on your course Canvas site. We encourage you to print out the primary source readings posted on Canvas, mark them up and have your notated texts available during synchronous classes and discussions. If you don't want to print them, you can download them and annotate them with an editing or note-taking app (such as Adobe Reader or Good

You can earn EXTRA CREDIT by attending course-related lectures, events or optional field trips and submit a one-page (12 point font typed) report of the event within one week of the date you attended. Events will be announced in class. Each event report will be worth 1 point.

Alternatively, you can earn 1 point of extra credit by designing and submitting a learning exercise or activity that effectively teaches a Buddhist concept or idea that we are examining, preferably through active learning techniques.

You may earn up to 4 points of extra credit in this class.

Reader) but you still need to bring them to class. In our experience, paper texts work best for discussion sections but we'll let you make that call.

Please remember to have your readings available during discussion section, either in paper or electronic form. This is a requirement for active participation and it will adversely impact your participation grade if you consistently do not have access to your reading materials. You'll need them to reference exact quotes in discussions.

You will also need to set up an account on the free software site <https://siftr.org> for this class. We will be using Siftr three times during the semester for assignments. As part of these assignments, you will need to take photos and upload them to designated Siftr sites that we'll be using in class. Be aware that uploading assignments and photos to Siftr works best on a laptop rather than your phone! We'll go into Siftr use and instructions in detail.

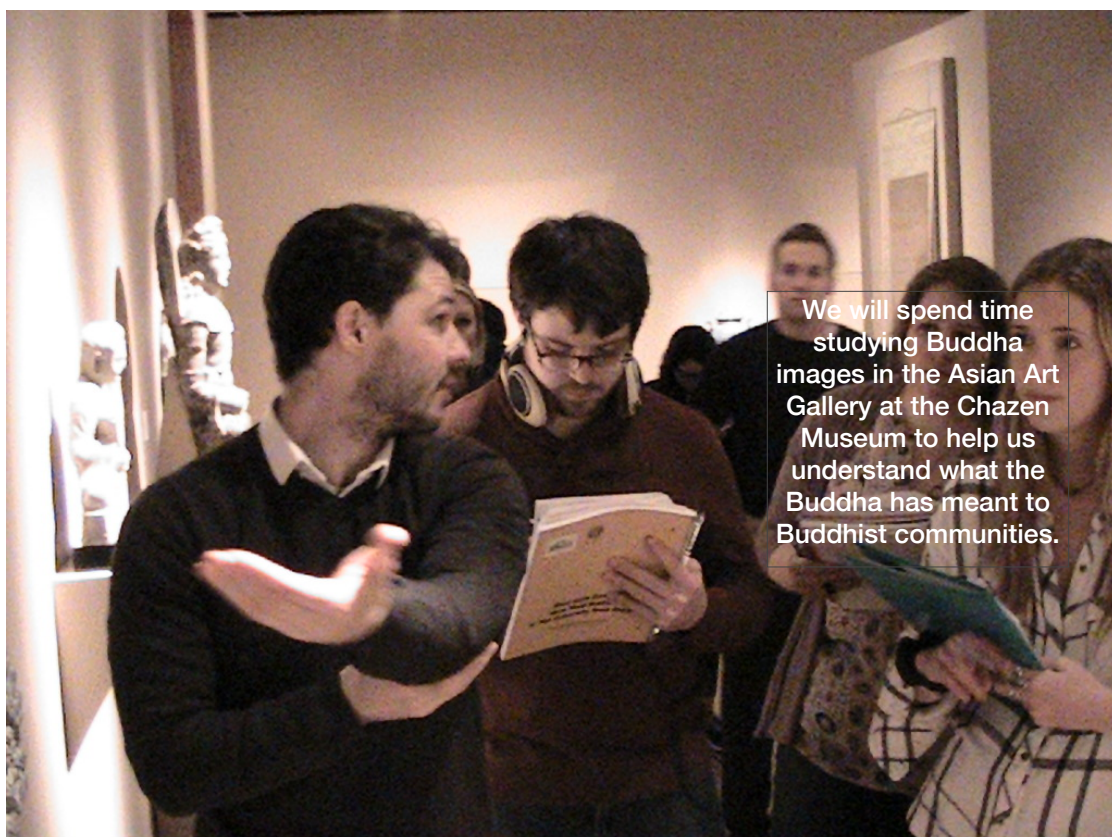
Finally, you will need to sign up (also free) to use the Dunhuang caves site: <https://www.e-dunhuang.com>.

Abilities/Diversity/Inclusion. We are welcoming of all identities, abilities and special learning needs in this course. Please notify your TA as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodations needed. Please don't hesitate to remind us prior to due dates about your accommodations.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES. Please notify your TA in advance if you need to miss class or reschedule assignments due to participation in religious holidays.

LATE WORK AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT.

Late work will normally be accepted only by prior arrangement or documented emergency situations. Any student not making prior arrangement will automatically be given a failing grade on the



We will spend time studying Buddha images in the Asian Art Gallery at the Chazen Museum to help us understand what the Buddha has meant to Buddhist communities.

missed assignment. Failure to submit the final assignment for this course may result in a grade penalty for the course.

That said, we understand that things sometimes come up (for many different reasons) that can impede your academic progress; please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you are falling behind or having trouble making it to class (for whatever reason). We'll try to help you figure it out. **We are committed to doing everything we can to help you succeed in this class.**

Academic misconduct, including plagiarism and sexual harassment, will not be tolerated. If instances of academic misconduct are detected, action will be taken in accordance with university policies.

INSTRUCTORS. Professor Anne Hansen, Department of History & Religious Studies Program

email: arhansen@wisc.edu

office hours: Friday afternoons 2pm-4pm. I will also stick around on Zoom to answer individual questions for 15 minutes after each synchronous Monday and Wednesday class.

Teaching Assistant Catriona Miller, PhD Candidate, Department of History

email: camiller25@wisc.edu

office hours: Wednesdays 3pm-4pm and Fridays 11am - 12pm.

DISCUSSIONS.

Disc 301 Th 2:25-3:15pm

Disc 304 Th 3:30-4:20pm

Disc 307 Fr 8:50-9:40pm

Disc 308 Fr 9:55-10:45pm

SCHEDULE

of Topics, Assignments & Readings*

**This schedule may be altered slightly due to the needs of the class.
Schedule or assignment revisions will be announced in class in advance of the due date.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE TRIPLE GEM

WEEK 1 Jan 25/27 INTRODUCTION TO COURSE & HISTORY OF RELIGIONS APPROACH

Video lectures: Course Overview /Introduction to the Triple Gem

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15. Synchronous lecture class periods will be used for Q&A, additional material to help you understand the lecture, thought exercises, meditations, guest speakers, and break-out group activities and discussions.

This week will experiment with large group discussion and using the White Board on Monday.

On Wednesday, we will break you into your assigned semester-long break-out groups. Please bring your favorite meaningful “pandemic song” to class on Wednesday (the song that is helping you get through). We’ll use some reflections on the songs to help introduce ourselves in break-out groups. Come prepared with your song and a one or two line quote that illustrates why you like this song or find it meaningful.

Reading assignment:

- “The Background to Buddhism,” pp. 1-24, in *Buddhism – the eBook, 4th edition*, by Damien Keown & Charles Prebish
- Read through the entire syllabus and mark up your calendars with assignment due dates. Bring your questions about assignments to class.
- Read through the Canvas site and notice that some assignments and instructions only appear on Canvas. We will be adding content throughout the semester - please check your Canvas site often for updates.

DISCUSSION SECTIONS WILL BEGIN TO MEET WEEK 1

WEEK 2 Feb 1/3 BACKGROUND TO BUDDHISM

Video lectures: Taking Refuge/Film: “The Buddha”

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class.

Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we will have a break-out group activity related to the ritual of Taking Refuge.

There is **no synchronous lecture class on Wednesday Feb 3**. Instead, you will watch a film on your own time (link provided on your course site) and complete a brief assignment. Please follow the instructions on your course site.

Reading assignment:

- “*Aradana and Saranasila*: Invitation, Refuges and Precepts,” excerpted from a Thai chanting manual
- “*Saranattayam*” [The Three Refuges], trans. Bhikkhu Nanamoli, pp. 101-104 in *Buddhist Scriptures*, ed., Donald S. Lopez
- “The Buddha,” pp. 25-41, in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading & primary source analysis suggestions: How does this brief excerpt from the *Saranattayam* explain the 3 Gems? What images are used? Can you identify a “formula” for the relationship between Buddha, Dharma and Sangha? What is the imagery trying to convey about taking refuge in the Triple Gem?

Critical thinking hints. Remember, your task in preparing for discussion section is not to focus on *your own* reactions to the text {i.e., “Buddhism is so fascinating” or “growing up Lutheran has made me...”} but to concentrate on and critically analyze how Buddhist sources understand and convey these concepts {i.e., “According to the text, “Buddha” means...” or “Taking refuge seems to have three inter-related meanings, depending on...”}.

Primary source analysis: upload prior to discussion section. Detailed instructions will be handed out (and posted on the course site) during week 1.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT IS TO BE REPEATED EVERY WEEK UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT 10 out of 11 POSSIBLE WEEKLY PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES.

THE BUDDHA

WEEK 3 Feb 8/10 THE FIRST GEM: THE BUDDHA

Video lectures: The Life of the Buddha: History & Cosmology/Cosmic Biography of the Buddha

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class.

Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

Our synchronous lecture periods this week on Monday and Wednesday will be devoted to two “close reading” skill-building sessions.

Reading assignment:

- *Nidāna-kathā* excerpt: *The Story of Gotama Buddha: The Nidāna-kathā* [stories of the antecedents or causes], “Intermediate Epoch,” pp. 63-101.
- *Jātaka* excerpts: “The Tigress,” pp. 5-9; “The Hare,” pp. 32-38; “The King of the Geese,” pp. 140-152. From: *Once the Buddha was a Monkey: Ārya Śūra’s Jātakamālā* [garland of birth stories], Arya Sura (translated by Peter Khoroché)

Reading suggestions: *The Story of Gotama Buddha: Nidāna-kathā* [“Story of the Antecedents or Causes”] represents an early commentarial effort to piece together the life story of the Buddha from different scriptural passages and accounts. The “intermediate epoch” referred to in the text traces the life of Siddhartha Gotama from his birth in Tusita heaven to his enlightenment. The *Jātaka* [“birth stories”] stories are concerned with previous lives of the Buddha, long before he was born as Prince Siddhartha Gautama who became enlightened. In these stories, the Buddha is referred to as a “bodhisatta” or “bodhisattva,” someone on the path to becoming an enlightened buddha. How do the *Nidāna-kathā* and *Jātaka* stories present the life of the Buddha? What are the main concerns of these two ancient forms of buddha “biography”? What qualities of the Buddha are valued and emphasized in each? How are their concerns different from/the same as the contemporary biographies of the Buddha you encountered in your textbook last week and the film we watched about the life of the Buddha?

WEEK 4 Feb 15/17 THE BUDDHA AND HIS SANGHA

Video lectures: The Order of Bhikkhunī/Kings in the Life of the Buddha and Buddhism

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class.

Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we'll have a session on "learning from Buddhist narrative" in which we discuss "learning from" Buddhists and consider how and why the stories of the early bhikkhunī seem to reach across time. What makes certain texts powerful and persistent? On Wednesday, we'll consider the special problems involved in being a Buddhist king.

Reading assignment:

- Excerpts from the *Therīgāthā* (read only the English translations on every other page): "Paṭācārā," pp. 55-59; "Kisā-Gotamī," pp. 88-91. From: *Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns* (Therigatha), trans., C.A.F. Rhys Davids and K.R. Norman
- Excerpts from the *Therīgāthā*: "Patachara," pp. 66-67; "Kisagotami," pp. 110-115. From: *Therigatha: Poems of the First Buddhist Women*, translated by Charles Hallisey
- Excerpt from *Amāvatura* [Flood of the Ambrosia] by Guruḷugōmī, pp. 44-57. From: *An Anthology of Sinhalese Literature up to 1815*, ed., C.H.B. Ryeolds
- "The Precepts" (see buddhanet link on Canvas site)
- "The Buddhist Sangha," pp. 60-76 and "The Mauryan Dynasty and Aśoka," pp. 84-86 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading suggestions:

This week you'll be reading about some of the people around the Buddha: women in the early community of followers ("sangha") and several lay kings, Bimbisāra and his son Ajātasattu, who lived at the time of the Buddha. We'll also read about a king who lived a century or so after the death of the Buddha, Aśoka, whose dramatic conversion to Buddhism marked a turn in the expansion and institutionalization of Buddhism. The Aśokan period is the period in which we begin to have clearer historical records about Buddhism.

The *Therīgāthā* ["Stories of the Buddhist nuns"] records the words and lives of early *bhikkhuni* (fully ordained women or "nuns") who joined the early sangha. We have given you two versions of the readings from the *Therīgāthā*, a recent translation of the scriptural verses by Charles Hallisey, and

an older translation by Rhys Davids that gives the scriptural verses surrounded by commentarial stories. We'll talk more about Buddhist understandings of "scripture" and "commentary" in class.

What insights can you gain into the lives of the early disciples through the stories and verses of **Kisā-Gōtamī** and **Patachara** (a.w. Paṭācārā)? What drew them to the early sangha? What were their lives like before and after they became *bhikkhunī*? How did the sangha offer them refuge? Taken together, what do these stories of and from early Buddhists suggest about the Buddha's influence and the impact of his teachings?

What are the moral concerns in these texts? What early Buddhist conceptions become evident, such as the definition of a "good life," i.e., a worthwhile life and one that creates well-being for oneself and others? What do the texts teach about how to find happiness? What do we learn about the problems of human suffering?

How are we to understand the tragically sad story of the morally good lay follower of the Buddha, King **Bimbisāra** and his troubled son **Ajātasattu**? What does the story teach us about refuge in the Buddha? What does it mean for a person who has committed terrible crimes to take refuge?? What does the story try to teach us about Buddhist understandings of karma? What does the story suggest about the problems of kings who want to be morally good persons?

After Ajātasattu's father dies, he realizes that he will only find relief from his remorse through the Buddha. The Buddha preaches a sermon to him about "the fruits of karma" and Ajātasattu takes refuge. The commentaries tell us that after his death, Ajātasattu would suffer for 60,000 years in hell and then would be reborn and become enlightened. The commentaries also tell us that not only was Bimbisāra was killed by his son Ajātasattu, Ajātasattu was later murdered by his beloved son Udāyibhadda who was in turn murdered by his son Anuruddhaka (http://www.palikanon.com/english/pali_names/am/Ajātasattu.htm).

Aśoka is one of the most renowned converts to Buddhism in the religion's history, a model for future Buddhist kings and an exemplar of lay devotion and generosity. How is Aśoka's conversion represented in his inscriptions? Remorse and redemption? How does Aśoka's story represent the predicament of Buddhist kings? And how does Aśoka's story and history help us understand the influence of the figure of the Buddha even after his death?

From your **e-textbook** assignment, read through the "sangha" section for an overview of how the early Buddhist community lived and governed themselves, and take note of the basic chronology and geography of the Mauryan Empire, and how and why the dynasty was important to the historical development of Buddhism.

WEEK 5 Feb 22/24 IMAGES OF THE BUDDHA

Video lecture: Buddhist Images & Practices of Looking

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class.

Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we will have an in-class activity on “practices of looking.”

There is **no in-class lecture on Wednesday**. Instead, you will be doing self-guided tour and guided learning activity on Buddhist images at the Chazen Museum of Art* on your own time, to be completed before your discussion sections on Thursday and Friday. It takes about 2 hours to complete. Please be sure to: 1) read instructions on your course site about rules for working on assignments at the Chazen, and 2) read and **DOWNLOAD + PRINT** your worksheet before you go to the Chazen. You will not be able to take your laptop into the galleries (only your paper worksheet and a pencil).

This activity takes the place of your lecture and synchronous class. You will be reading and preparing your primary source analysis as usual, which is connected to the primary source Buddha Abhiseka that you are reading.

*For those of you not on campus this semester, we are working on an alternative format for this activity that will involve touring the images via a new on-line kiosk of Chazen images. Please contact us for special instructions!

Reading/viewing assignment:

- “Image Consecrations (Thailand): Creating and Disseminating the Sacred,” pp. 34-44, Donald K. Swearer. From: *The Life of Buddhism*, edited by Frank E. Reynolds and Jason A. Carbine
- *Buddha Abhiseka* [Consecrating the Buddha Image], pp. 50-58, translated by Donald K. Swearer. From: *Buddhism in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr.
- “Buddhism in Southeast Asia,” pp. 144-157 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish
- Buddhist images in the Chazen Museum. Please plan to spend about 2 hours in the Chazen Museum this week, viewing Buddhist images and answering questions on the worksheet provided (you can find instructions and questions on your course site).

Reading suggestions: In your textbook assignment – take note of the geography, history and characteristics of Theravada Buddhism. A number of the later Chazen images you’ll see come from Southeast Asia.

Your other readings this week include both primary and secondary (ethnographic) sources about image consecration in Thailand. They include a description and translation of a Theravada (Thai) ritual involving images of the Buddha called *Buddha Abhiseka* (“Buddha image consecration”). Note that the consecration ritual ceremony itself contains a ritual biography of the Buddha. What are the other aspects of the ritual necessary for consecrating the image? How do they correspond to events in the biography of the Buddha? According to the *Buddha Abhiska*, how is the image of the Buddha meant to be viewed by ritual practitioners? How do the image and ritual story interact? I.e., does the image somehow convey or contain the story, or is it distinct from the biography? Can an image function as a kind of visual “biography” — or does it have other aims and functions than telling the life of the Buddha? What does this text help us understand about the importance of the figure of the Buddha in Buddhist practices in 20th century Thailand?

THE DHARMA

WEEK 6 Mar 1/3 THE SECOND GEM: THE DHARMA

Video lectures: The Buddha’s First Sermon: The Four Noble Truths (Parts 1 & 2)

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

As part of our Dharma unit, we will incorporate meditation into our synchronous meetings, starting on Monday. We’ll use the meditations to learn about Buddhist conceptions of the mind and understandings of the nature of reality, as well as to practice our course aim of “being present” and “being engaged” — in spite of the many challenges of the time period we are living through. On Wednesday we’ll continue to talk through the meanings and implications of the Four Noble Truths in our break-out groups. In particular, we’ll try to wrap our minds around what it means to *not* have a “self” according to the Buddhist theory of *anattā* (Skt. *anātman*).

Reading assignment:

- “The Dharma,” pp. 42-58, *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish
- *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*, pp. 17-20, translated by Rewata Dhamma. From: The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma
- “Conditioned Genesis, pp. 115-125, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, translated by Donald K. Swearer. From: *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*, edited by Donald K. Swearer

Reading suggestions: This week you are reading the Buddha's first sermon, the *Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta*. It lays out the 4 Noble Truths, including the Buddha's teaching of *paṭicca-samuppāda* in the Third Noble Truth. What are the Four Noble Truths? Can you re-state them in your own words? In addition to carefully reading the sutta, plan to invest some time reading and possibly re-reading the essay "Conditioned Genesis" (we'll talk about its author, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, in week 8 as well as continuing to talk about the concept of *paṭicca-samuppāda*). "Conditioned Genesis" is Buddhadasa's translation of "*paṭicca-samuppāda*," a conception of the nature of reality as perceived by the Buddha during his enlightenment. How does Buddhadasa explain *paṭicca-samuppāda*? Can you express this idea in your own words?

WEEK 7 Mar 8/10 DHARMA IN PRACTICE: MEDITATION & MINDFULNESS

Video lecture: Meditation in the Buddhist Tradition

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we'll learn a *mettā* (loving-kindness) meditation and do an activity on Buddhist understandings of *sati* (mindfulness). On Wednesday, we are extremely fortunate to be hosting Jan Cittasubha Sheppard from [Madison Insight Meditation Group](#), who will lead us in some meditation instruction.

Janice Cittasubha (her monastic name) Sheppard is a well-known teacher who was trained in the Thai forest meditation tradition at [Abhayagiri Monastery](#) in California. We will learn basic meditation techniques from the Buddhist tradition for relieving stress and increasing our awareness and attention.

Reading assignment:

- *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* [Foundations of Mindfulness], pp. 109-119, translated by Walpola Rahula. From: *What the Buddha Taught*, Walpola Sri Rahula
- Excerpts from *Forest Recollections*, Kamala Tiyanich, ch. 3 "Facing Fear," pp. 79-105; ch. 5 "Battling Sexual Desire," pp. 127-142
- "Meditation," pp. 120-138 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading suggestions: According to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* (one of the most important Theravāda Buddhist scriptural texts on meditation), what is the aim of meditation practice? What does meditation help practitioners achieve? What does *sati* (mindfulness) do for practitioners, according to these text, and how can it be achieved? How is meditation important as a Buddhist *ethical* practice? How is meditation important to achieving an understanding of the Dharma?

The *Forest Recollections* readings about late 19th/early 20th century forest monks in Thailand are meant to help us reflect on how later Buddhists have interpreted and acted out early Buddhist teachings on meditation such as the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* as well as the monastic rules of conduct found in the *Vinaya*. What obstacles arise for serious meditators, such as those discussed by Kamala in her study of Thai forest monks? How do these monks deal with these impediments to their practice? What do their accounts tell us about the aims and meaning of meditation for Buddhists?

NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS OR PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSES DUE THIS WEEK

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR WEEKLY POST AS USUAL

WEEK 8 Mar 15/17 RELATING THE DHARMA TO MODERN LIFE IN THAILAND

Video lecture: Buddhadasa on the Problems of Modern Life/Thich Nhat Hanh & Inter-being

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we'll work with Buddhādāsa's poem "Don't Be Shamed By the Chickens" and try to apply his concept of *paṭicca-samuppāda* to observing our own lives. On Wednesday, in break-up groups, we'll come up with ways to teach Thich Nhat Hanh's concept of "inter-being," preferably without using explanatory language.

Reading assignment:

- "Everyday Language and Dhamma Language," pp. 126-140, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, translated by Donald K. Swearer. From: *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*, edited by Donald K. Swearer.
- "A Modern Sermon on Merit Making," pp. 399-401, Buddhādāsa Bhikkhu, translated by Donald K. Swearer. From: *Buddhism in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr.

- “Please Call Me by My True Names,” p. 72-73, “Interbeing” p. 150, and “Interrelationship,” p. 154, Thich Nhat Hanh. From: *Call Me By My True Names: The Collected Poems of Thich Nhat Hanh*.
- Not required *but you may want to look back at* “Conditioned Genesis, pp. 115-125, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, translated by Donald K. Swearer. From: *Me and Mine: Selected Essays of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa*, edited by Donald K. Swearer. We’ll talk about it again this week!

Reading suggestions: What are Buddhadāsa’s main themes in these two essays/sermons?

How does he apply the Dhamma to ordinary peoples’ lives? According to Buddhadāsa, how should Buddhists practice the Dhamma? Based on your reading of Buddhadasa, how is the Dhamma relevant to understanding modern life and modern problems?

Are Buddhadāsa’s teachings reinterpretations of the Dhamma? Is it legitimate to reinterpret the Dhamma, or religious teachings in general? Why or why not? Can you think of similar “updating” interpretive projects in other religious traditions?

Like Buddhadasa, Thich Nhat Hanh is another important modern Buddhist thinker who updates Buddhist concepts and tries to make them relevant to contemporary life. The poems express his understanding of *paṭicca-samuppāda*. How does Thich Nhat Hanh understand the causative cycles of becoming (what he calls “arriving” here) in “Please Call Me By My True Names”? The poem goes beyond mere inter-connectedness to argue for the non-duality (or “interpenetration” or “inter-being”) of all things. What imagery can you find for non-duality in the poem? What is the nature of this non-duality/inter-being? Use the other two poems to help you understand what Thich Nhat Hanh means by the phrase “inter-being”. See if you can define it in your own words. How do people “inter are?”

How might we use one of Thich Nhat Hanh’s poems to help us understand Buddhadasa’s idea of “conditioned genesis” — or vice versa?

WEEK 9 MAR 22/24 THE TRIPLE GEM GOES TO CHINA

Video lectures: Buddhism in China/Rise of the Mahāyāna

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we'll debate in our break-out groups about a Buddhist parable that became especially popular in China. We'll spend Wednesday trying to understand what it means to see through the Dharma-eye.

Reading Assignment:

- Excerpts from *The Holy Teachings of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*, trans. Robert A. F. Thurman:
 - Chapter 1 "Purification of the Buddha-Field," pp. 10-19. (Note that this section illustrates the visual aspects of the "Buddha-Field," which directly relates to the composition of the caves at Dunhuang we will be viewing this week. This section introduces the ideas of multiple realities overlapping in the same space, and how they are accessible through (or access of which produces) the Dhamma-eye).
 - Chapter 2 "Inconceivable Skill in Liberative Technique," pp. 20-23
 - Chapter 3 "The Disciples' Reluctance to Visit Vimalakīrti," pp. 24-27
 - Chapter 5 "The Consolation of the Invalid," pp. 42-49
 - "Mahāyāna," pp. 100-112 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish
 - "China," pp. 165-66 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading suggestions: Discussion sections this week will be focused on *The Holy Teachings of Vimalakīrti*.

What is a "Buddha field," according to the text? (Buddhist scholar Bob Thurman alternatively translates "Buddha field" as "Buddhaverse," in case you find that term more helpful). What is the Dharma-eye?

What are the fundamentals of Vimalakīrti's Liberative Technique? How is it different from the teachings about enlightenment and liberation that we have studied so far?

How does the text present the sensory experience of seeing? Keep this in mind since you'll be seeing in this fashion next week!

WEEK 10 MAR 29/31 VISIONS OF DUNHUANG

Video lecture: Buddhism along the Silk Road

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

This week we'll continue to explore the concept of the Buddha-eye and Buddha-fields in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. Instead of reading, you'll build on last week's reading with "visions of Dunhuang," an activity that allows you to make virtual visits to cave shrines in China. In particular, we'll explore Chinese visualizations of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī in their selected caves and hopefully make the intellectual leap from reading about "buddha fields" to understanding them from your own experience, using virtual reality.

Monday's class will introduce you to the Dunhuang Caves and the "Visions of Dunhuang" activity that you'll do with your break-out group on Wednesday. BEFORE CLASS MONDAY, log on and sign up for an account on the e-Dunhuang site www.e-dunhuang.com.

BEFORE CLASS TIME ON WEDNESDAY, you'll need to read through the instructions for the Visions of Dunhuang assignment, using Siftr, and take the tour on your own. Your group can revisit favorite sites together and decide on an image to analyze together.

More detailed instructions for your cave explorations individually and in your break-out groups can be found on Canvas.

Reading assignment: Your reading assignment this week is to "read" — or see — images. But you will need to keep the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* and your notes on it handy to help you through the "Visions of Dunhuang" activity and assignment.

THE THIRD GEM: THE SANGHA

WEEK 11 Apr 5/7 ZEN LIVES

Video lecture: Ch'an and Zen Buddhism

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday, we'll do a meditation and learning activity on *mujō* (impermanence, change) and *mushin* (a non-attached, non-dualistic state of mind), two prominent themes in Ryōkan's poetry. On Wednesday we won't meet as a group. Instead you will have an individual meditation/nature/poetry Siftr activity that you can do when it's convenient. Hopefully the weather will be beautiful this week

for your Siftr activity but even if it's not, I think you'll be able to capture enough of Ryokan's zeitgeist to appreciate the day as it is.

Channeling Ryokan, you will take a walk by the lake, head out to Picnic Point or cycle over to the UW Arboretum. Find a quiet, beautiful spot for a reflection exercise on nature and the nature of Zen insights on impermanence and emptiness. Before you go, download or print the activity worksheet. You'll need your phone to take a photograph (or optionally, materials to make a drawing).

Please remember that it usually works better to wait to post your Siftr assignments from a laptop rather than using your phone. Detailed instructions for this activity and your assignment are posted on Canvas.

Reading assignment:

- "Seeing Off a Man of the Tao" by Chia Tao, p. 49. From *Selected Poems of Chia Tao*, trans., Mike O'Connor.
- *One Robe, One Bowl: The Zen Poetry of Ryokan*, trans. John Stevens.
- "Chinese Buddhist Schools - Ch'an," read the intro paragraph to this section on p. 166 and the description of "Ch'an," pp. 169-170, in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish
- "Japan," pp. 175-177, and "Japanese Buddhist Schools," pp. 177-183, in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish
- "Zen," p. 141; "Zen meditation," pp. 205-206 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading suggestions: Ch'an Buddhism developed in China and was later carried to Japan, where it developed as Zen.

Start with a brief but beautiful Chinese poem by Chia Tao that gives you a feeling for the Chinese Ch'an tradition of farewell poetry, poems that were ritually presented at moments of farewell. The translator of Chia Tao's poetry suggests that "...these lyrics might be compared to the cold stone chimes sounded at temples to gently summon monks out of deep meditation or trance" (O'Connor p. 9).

Ryokan's poems draw on Chinese poetry forms but also reflect the deeply Japanese Zen approach of finding Dharma and enlightenment in nature. As we turn our attention to the sangha, we will use Ryokan's poetry to help us enter into an individual Buddhist's way of seeing the world. In other words, to see through Ryokan's eyes.

The book of Ryokan's poetry is a quick read but linger over your favorite poems and use those to think through the questions below rather than trying to answer them from the standpoint of the

entire volume. You'll also need to select a poem or two to respond to in your Siftr activity and to use in your poetry salon in discussion sections this week.

How does Ryokan live? Drawing on one or more of his poems, how does his way of life convey his Buddhist perceptions? What is the aim of the Zen life conveyed in the poems? Is his life meant to be a prototype for others? How? How does his life help us to better understand the other two gems, the Buddha and the Dharma? What is a good life? What causes *dukkha* for humans? How to find happiness and freedom from *dukkha*? How and why does Ryokan find *mujō* in nature? What examples of this concept can you find in his poems? Can you find evidence in his poetry of non-dualism?

WEEK 12 Apr 12/14 AMERICAN ZEN

Video lecture: American Zen

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class.

Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

On Monday we'll work on American notions of non-dualism through reading a Beat poem in our break-out groups. On Wednesday, we have a special event! We will host a guest panel of American Buddhists who will share their stories, how they came to Buddhism and tell us about their sanghas in US communities.

Reading assignment:

- "Express Yourself Fully," pp. 8-11; "Freedom From Everything," pp. 12-15; "Jumping off the 100-Foot Pole," pp. 16-20; "Changing Our Karma," pp. 21-24; "Enjoy Your Life," pp. 25-28; "Walk Like an Elephant," pp. 29-32; "Be Kind With Yourself," pp. 77-80; "Not Always So," pp. 95-98; "The Boss of Everything," pp. 11-114; "Wherever You Are, Enlightenment is There," pp. 127-130; "The Teaching Just for You," pp. 134-138; "Sitting Like a Frog," pp. 151-153. From *Not Always So*, Shunryu Suzuki, pp. 5-61, 65-80,
- "Sunflower Sutra," Allen Ginsberg, pp. 89-91, 96-98. (See also: <http://boppin.com/sunflower.html> and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8A_tDB7t5eg in his own voice and/or this short film version http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzWai_QkYrk)
- "No Problem Party Poem," Diane Di Prema, pp. 139-140, 151-153
- "Buddhism in the Western World," pp. 205-217, in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading suggestions:

We are reading a series of selected talks or sermons by the Japanese Zen priest Sunryu Suzuki, an important figure in the development of American Buddhism. The short talks can be read independently but taken together, they will give you an understanding of Suzuki's Zen approach.

What is Zen and what are its aims? What repeated images does Suzuki use? Highlight or make notes on some of the key passages in the book that seemed to you to most clearly articulate Zen ideas. Try to formulate, in your own words, what Zen is and isn't. Even though it can't be conveyed in dualistic human language.

Look closely at the poems "Sunflower Sutra" and "No Problem Party Poem" by beat poets Allen Ginsberg and Diane Di Prima. What images appear in each of these poems? How are these images (or not) "Buddhist"? What are the main points of each poem? What do the poems have in common? How do their perspectives differ? How are Ginsberg and Di Prima transposing Zen Buddhist ideas for an American context? How might these works be described as Zen poetry? Beat poetry?

Could you do an "intertextual" analysis of one of the images in one of the poems by reading it in conversation with one of Suzuki's sermons or in connection to one of Ryokan's poems?

Final Assignment Selection This Week: We need to know which final assignment option you are choosing in order to make plans for grading. We also want to ensure that no one falls through the cracks at the end of the semester. You will be asked to indicate your final assignment choice in discussion section this week (April 15 & 16).

WEEK 13 Apr 19/21 THE BUDDHIST SANGHA IN THE CRUCIBLE OF THE VIETNAM WAR

Video lectures: Buddhism in the Crucible of the Vietnam War/Socially Engaged Buddhism

Synchronous lecture class periods:

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class. Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

Please be forewarned that you may find some of the content for this week to be emotionally and intellectually challenging. We will start to work through ideas about the self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc and other Vietnamese monks and nuns together on Monday, with the help of Thich Nhat Hanh's letter to Martin Luther King, Jr., which you will be reading this week. On Wednesday, we'll use concepts from Socially Engaged Buddhist thinkers to help us start to wrap up the course.

Reading assignment:

- *Vietnam Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, pp. 1-3, 63-72; “In Search of the Enemy of Man” (a letter addressed to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King), pp. 106-108; “Statement of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, June 1 1966, Washington DC,” pp. 109-114; “Statement of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh on the Vietnam National Day, November 1 1966,” pp. 114-115. From: *Vietnam Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, Thich Nhat Hanh
- “Recommendation,” pp. 18-19; “The Fire that Consumes my Brother,” pp. 50-51. From *Call Me By My True Names*, Thich Nhat Hanh
- “Experience,” pp. 60-69; “Sister Mai,” pp. 96-108. From *Learning True Love* by Chan Khong
- “What is Socially Engaged Buddhism?” pp. 218-220, in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

Reading suggestions: Please be forewarned that you may find the content of this week’s readings to be emotionally and intellectually difficult. Do your best to bring all of the Buddhist sources we have covered this semester to help you analyze the readings.

Your readings this week include excerpts from a famous 1967 anti-war book by Vietnamese monk and teacher Thich Nhat Hanh, some of his poems from the same period that were banned by the governments of both the North and the South in Vietnam, and his letter to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on the self-immolation of Thich Quang Duc. An excerpt from Edward Miller’s book *Misalliance* on the Diem regime in southern Vietnam gives context on the political and religious background of Thich Quang Duc’s self-immolation in relation to the Buddhist Crisis of 1963 as well as the 1920s/30s Buddhist Revival in Vietnam. Other socially involved monks and nuns followed Thich Quang Duc, as you will read in two chapters from the compelling memoir *Learning True Love* by the Vietnamese nun Chan Khong.

Thich Nhat Hanh’s ideas developed in the historical context of the French-Indochinese War and the later Vietnamese-American conflict in Vietnam. How were his religious perspectives influenced by the experience of war and violence? How do his religious perspectives seem to shape his analysis of the conflict and violence in his country?

How do Chan Khong and Thich Nhat Hanh understand the self-immolations and attempt to explain these acts to non-Vietnamese? Can you relate them back to the *jataka* story, “The Hungry Tigress,” that we read at the beginning of the semester? How might the life story of the Buddha help to explain the acts of these monks and nuns?

WEEK 14 Apr 26/28 A FLOATING MONASTERY

Video lecture: Conclusions**Synchronous lecture class periods:**

Please watch the assigned lecture video for each class prior to synchronous lecture classes and jot down any questions you have about the material presented in the video to bring to class.

Synchronous lecture classes will run from 4:20-5:15.

There is no lecture or synchronous class for Monday. Instead, you will be watching the beautiful Korean Buddhist film “Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring, & Summer” on your own time, to be completed before your final discussion section this week. You can find a link to the film on your course site. You will be reflecting on the film in your discussion section as a way of wrapping up the course. Please note that the **prompts for your primary source analysis assignment on the film** are available on Canvas. This week is your last opportunity to submit a primary source assignment.

Wednesday’s synchronous class will offer some concluding reflections and activities. The last portion of the class will be devoted to collecting feedback on your experience of the course.

Viewing/Reading assignment:

- “Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring, & Summer”
- “Korea, historical sketch” pp. 171-173 and “Modern Developments in Korean Buddhism,” p. 175 in *Buddhism – eBook*, Keown & Prebish

FINAL ASSIGNMENT (CHOOSE 1 OPTION)

We need to know which final assignment option you are choosing by Week 12. This is important in order to ensure that no one falls through the cracks at the end of the semester! You will be asked to indicate your final assignment plan in discussion section on Week 12. Papers and video projects will be submitted online and are due no later than the end of the scheduled exam period.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE: no later than 12:00 NOON ON WEDNESDAY MAY 5, 2021 (details for submitting your papers and video projects will be included with the instructions)