Religion 390, Buddhist Philosophy & Meditation

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Texts


Description

This course explores the Buddhist teachings surrounding the cultivation of compassion through daily meditative practice and Buddhist philosophy. Topics of study include: the Buddha’s life, the challenge of spiritual materialism, the experience of basic goodness, the “Four Noble Truths,” the cultivation of mindfulness, the meaning of “warriorship,” and the practice of unconditional loving-kindness (“maitri”).

Goals

1. Define the practice of meditation as mindfulness practice.
2. Maintain a daily practice of beginner’s meditation and a journal of this experience.
3. Explore the Buddhist perspective of “warriorship”.
4. Learn to recognize the “discursive mind.”
5. Define “cocoon” and “warrior” in Buddhist terms.
7. Discuss the meaning of “spiritual materialism”.
8. Define “loving-kindness.”
9. Learn the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path.

Requirements/Assignments

1. Weekly online discussion participation/response to reading assignments.
2. Journal of meditation over period of 9 weeks.
3. 2 hours of meditation per week
4. Reflection paper related to course material and meditation practice.
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Evaluation/Grading

Standard grading principles apply:

1. Each item/activity/assignment will be worth an assigned point value.
2. There is no grading curve; letter grades will be based on the scale presented below.
3. All papers and exams must be submitted by the date specified. Late papers/exams will result in a lowered grade.
4. Grades and final grade will be determined as a percentage of the total points earned from the total points possible in this course.
5. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, reasoning, logic, and citation (optional) will be considered in grading the examinations, papers, and online discussions.
6. The various requirements of the course will be weighted as follows:

Assignment/Examination Values

10 Weeks Reading, Discussion, & Participation (100 points)
Meditation Practice & Journal (100 points)
Reflection Paper (50 points)
Mid-Term (50 points)
Final Examination (100 points)
TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE = 400 points

Extra Credit for Online Course Evaluation = 10 points

Grading Scale

95 – 100% = A
90 – 94% = A-
87 – 89% = B+
83 – 86% = B
80 – 82% = B-
77 – 79% = C+
73 – 76% = C
70 – 72% = C-
60 – 69% = D
00 – 50% = F
Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction & Meditation Instruction
Readings: Syllabus; Lecture 1; No Escape, Chapters 2-4; Myth pgs. 1-4

Week 2 The “Three Lords of Materialism” and the Life of the Buddha
Readings: Lecture 2; Cutting Through, pgs. 3-11; "Meet the Three Lords of Materialism" (article); "The Buddha's Resume" (article)

Week 3 Basic Goodness, Warriorship, Practice & Renunciation
Readings: Sacred World, Chapters 1-2; No Escape, Chapters 5-8, 11; Shambhala, Chapters 1-4, 8

Week 4 The Cocoon & Loving Kindness
Readings: No Escape, Chapter 1; Sacred World, Chapters 4-8; Myth, pgs. 48-51; Shambhala, Chapter 7

Week 5 Checking In: Practice
Reading: Lecture 3 (Mid-Term Examination)

Week 6 The Four Noble Truths
Reading: No Escape, Chapter 9; Cutting Through, Pages 151-164; Myth pgs. 56-59; "The Four Noble Truths" (article)

Week 7 Spiritual Materialism
Reading: No Escape, Chapters 14, 16; Cutting Through, Pages 13–22; Myth, pgs. 5-7; "Narcissism & Spiritual Materialism: The New Age Legacy" (article) (Reflection Paper Due)

Week 8 Working with Emotions
Reading: Lecture 4; No Escape, Chapter 15; Sacred World, Chapter 8; Myth, pgs. 29-35, 37-40, 51-56, 63-72; "To Know Yourself is To Forget Yourself" (article); "When the Going Gets Rough" (article)

Week 9 Going Forward & The Eight-Fold Path
Reading: Lecture 5; No Escape, Chapters 17-18; Sacred World, Chapter 19; Myth, pgs. 90-99 (Meditation Journal Due)

Week 10 Conclusion & Final Examination
Reading: Lecture 6
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Examinations

There will be 2 tests: a mid-term and final examination. All questions will be taken from the text and online lectures. The final examination will be cumulative (featuring questions from all materials covered). Students are encouraged to maintain good study habits and time management skills.

Meditation Journal

The Meditation Journal is due by Friday of Week 9. Over the course of 9 weeks, students are required to maintain a meditation journal using a word processing program (e.g., MS Word, WordPerfect). This journal will be e-mailed to the instructor or submitted online (using the document upload function) for grading during Week 9. It should reflect the inner processes each student experiences while undertaking a beginner’s meditative practice. Students will be on the "honor system" where logging meditation hours (minimum 2 hours/week required) is concerned. Students should write in their journal at least once per week with an average of 1 page per week (for a minimum of 9 pages, total). The completed journal should be saved in Rich Text Format (.RTF extension), formatted with 1” margins all around and typed using Times New Roman 12-sized font.

Reflection Paper

The reflection paper is due by the Friday of Week 7. This is to be 5 pages in length and submitted online (using the document upload function). The purpose of this paper is to give students an opportunity to reflect, form and share opinions, and demonstrate the ability to think critically about the chosen topic. The paper is to be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins in Times New Roman font size 12, and saved in Rich Text Format (.RTF extension). Deviation from this instruction will result in a lower grade.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the practice of quoting another's words without giving that person proper credit. In writing, an occasional quotation is acceptable, but the writer should keep quotations to a minimum, and always when quoting, one should give credit where credit is due. Academic dishonesty of any kind is sometimes illegal and always unethical. A student who practices dishonesty of any kind will receive no credit for that portion of the coursework until it is reworked to correct the problem and re-submitted.

Course Questions

Contact Ryan Harrison at (909)455-7946 or RHarrison2@ulv.edu.