

World Religions 161: Perspectives on Buddhism

Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Fall 2004.

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DESCRIPTION: An overview of Buddhist history, traditions, rituals, experiences, narratives, doctrines, ethics, institutions, and material expressions from a variety of academic, Buddhist, and Christian perspectives.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To introduce the complexity of Buddhism as a major world religion by employing insights from various academic disciplines.
- 2) To read selected materials by Buddhist authors and groups.
- 3) To consider diverse Christian perspectives on Buddhism.
- 4) To develop one's own perspective on Buddhism.
- 5) To understand "religion" in comparative perspective.
- 6) To enhance the scholarly enterprise of the seminary community.

READINGS AND RESOURCES:

Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)

Paul David Numrich, *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Temples* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996)

Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, rev. ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1974)

Handouts, Internet sites, and other assigned readings

Section I: "Religion," Buddhism as a religion

Paul D. Numrich, "Perspectives on Religion," August 2004 (handout)

"To the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions," August 31, 1993 (handout)

<http://www.uwec.edu/academic/curric/greidebe/WorldReligions/>

Ninian Smart, "The World's Religions: Seven Dimensions of Religions"

Charles J. Dawes, C. Robert Pryor, and Winifred C. Wirth, "Buddhism," in *Religion in Ohio: Profiles of Faith Communities*, ed. Tarunjit Singh Butalia and Dianne P. Small (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 319-336 (on reserve at MTSO library)

Section II: Academic perspectives on Buddhism

Paul David Numrich, "How the Swans Came to Lake Michigan: The Social Organization of Buddhist Chicago," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39,2 (June 2000): 189-203 (handout)

Section III: Buddhist perspectives on Buddhism

<http://www.buddhistvihara.com/online/narada> (Narada Thera, *The Dhammapada: Pali Text and Translation with Stories in Brief and Notes*)

<http://www.budaedu.org.tw/en/ghosa> (Dharma Talks, The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation); this Website requires special computer capabilities, consult MTSO library staff for help

Kenneth K. Tanaka, "Christian Prayer from the Eye of a Buddhist," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 22 (2002): 87-92 (handout)

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/thai/chah/atasteof.html> (Ajahn Chah, "A Taste of Freedom")

<http://www.kwanumzen.com/primarypoint/v08n2-1991-summer-jonkabat-zinn-mindfulmedicine.html> ("Mindful Medicine: An interview with Jon Kabat-Zinn")

<http://samsara.law.cwru.edu/~cbt> (Cleveland Buddhist Temple)

<http://www.ohiobuddhist.org/index.php> (Wat Buddha Mongkol Bhavana, Columbus area)

http://columbus_zen_corner.tripod.com (Columbus Zen Corner)

<http://www.tfn.net/~cypress/zenforbeginners.html> (Cypress Tree Zen Group, Tallahassee, FL)

<http://www.eastsidesangha.org> (Eastside Sangha, Columbus area)

<http://www.geocities.com/mindfulnesscolumbus> (Mindfulness Meditation of Columbus)

<http://www.shambhala.org/centers/columbus> (Shambhala Meditation Group of Columbus)

<http://www.nichirenshoshumyoshinji.org> (Nichiren Shoshu Seiganzan Myoshinji Temple, San Francisco area)

Section IV: Christian perspectives on Buddhism

Terry C. Muck, "The Buddha," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 19 (1999): 105-113 (handout)

<http://www.namb.net/root/resources/beliefbulletins/religions/buddhism.asp> (North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention)

<http://www.onebillionwait.org/index.asp?internal=1> ("Buddhism," OMF International, formerly China Inland Mission)

http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/10_3_PDFs/Weerasinga.pdf (Tissa Weerasingha, "Karma and Christ: Opening Our Eyes to the Buddhist World," *International Journal of Frontier Missions*)

Paul D. Numrich, "Gathering around the Table of Fellowship: Lake Street Church," in *The Church Next Door: Local Christians*

Face America's New Religious Diversity (unpublished manuscript), Chapter 6 (handout)

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/

[rc_pc_interelg_20020409_vesakh2002_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_20020409_vesakh2002_en.html) (Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Vatican)

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Jan1997/feature1.asp#F6> ("The Dalai Lama Visits Gethsemani," *St. Anthony Messenger*)

<http://gbgm-umc.org/missionstudies/interfaith/f-buddhism.html> (Creating Interfaith Community, United Methodist Church)

"Few people cross to the further shore; the others simply run around the bank on this side." (Gautama Buddha, *Dhammapada* 85)

"For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Jesus Christ, *Matthew* 7:14)