REL 303: Japanese Religions  
Special Topics: Zen and Pure Land Buddhism

Course Overview
This course will focus on Zen and Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. We will explore the historical origins of these traditions as well as the religious scriptures (sutras) that influenced their development. The majority of the course will be devoted to close readings of the works of major figures in Zen and Pure Land Buddhism. Our guiding questions throughout the class will be: What is the nature of reality? What is the self? And, how should one live? Another major point of focus will be the relation between religious teaching and practice. In addition to Buddhist texts, this course will address the aforementioned themes through poetry, short video clips, and a novel.

Required Texts
2) *Coffinman: The Journal of a Buddhist Mortician*, by Shinmon Aoki, Buddhist Education Center, 2002 (available at the UO Bookstore)
3) A course reader will be available for purchase at the Copy Shop on 13th Ave, 4 blocks west of campus.

Assignments & Grading
Exams: An exam will be given during Week 2. The format will be fill-in-the-blank and short answer. A take-home exam consisting of short answer and essay questions will be given during Week 4. The exams will cover key concepts in the readings and lectures. The format will be short answer and essay questions.
Papers: Students will be responsible for writing one 5 page comparative paper due at the beginning of Week 4. Paper topics will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class at least a week before the papers are due.

Class Participation: Students are required to come to class having done the reading and ready to participate. If there is reason to believe that students are not completing the readings, the instructor will administer reading quizzes. Students will be given a grade based on their attendance as well as the quantity and quality of their participation.
Exam 25%
Paper 30%
Take-home Exam 25%
Attendance 10%
Participation 10%

**Attendance & Late Paper Policy**
Attendance is mandatory. Absences that are not cleared with the instructor will result in missed attendance and participation points (Absences will only be excused if they are due to sickness or family emergency). **More than two absences will cause the course grade to drop by one full letter grade. More than four absences will cause the course grade to drop by two letter grades.** Late papers will only be accepted if students communicate with the instructor before the due date and receive permission or present a doctor’s note.

**Academic Honesty**
Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is the student’s responsibility to understand what counts as plagiarism for the university. Please see the Student Conduct Code: [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/conduct-code.html](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/programs/student_judi_affairs/conduct-code.html). If students are caught plagiarizing they will fail the course.

---

**Week 1 The Origins of Zen and Pure Land in India and China**

**The Self, Reality, and the Meaning of Religious Teachings**

M- Introduction to Buddhism: Historical Origins in India and the Life of the Buddha

T- “Mahayana Buddhism” pp. 204-217; Nagarjuna, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* p. 39-40; Commentary 220-224 & 67-72


Th- An Introduction to Zen Buddhism: The Story of Bodhidharma
Chinese Chan and its Influence in Japan (Goroku Genre)
Selections from Linji’s *Rinzairoku* (5 pages)
Hisamatsu *The Record of Linji*, p. 3-14

**Recommended Reading:** Introduction to Buddhism: Peter Harvey, “The Buddha and His Indian Context” p. 9-14 and “Basic Teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha” p. 151-177

---

**Week 2 Zen Buddhism**
The Self and Religious Practice

M. ***In-class Exam ***
Hisamatsu *The Record of Linji* continued p. 15-37

T- Dogen *Ikka Myoju* (One Bright Pearl) and *Genjokoan* (Manifesting Suchness) p. 31-45

W- No Class: July 4th

Th-Dogen *Uji* (Being-Time) and *Bussho* (Buddha-Nature) p. 47-72

Week 3 Zen and Pure Land Buddhism
The Self and Religious Practice

M- Shunryu Suzuki (Descendant of Dogen) *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* p. 21-49

T- Nembutsu, Shan-tao, and Honen
Selections from “The Three Pure Land Sutras” p. 17-19 and 106-114
“Honen Shonin” p. 254-259
“Pure Land Hymns on the Right, Semblance, and Last Dharma-Ages” pp. 399-412

W- Shinran *Tannisho* p. 3-14, 37-47

Th-Shinran *Tannisho* continued p. 15-34, 49-66

Week 4 Zen and Pure Land Buddhism in the 20th Century
Life, Death, and the Reception of Buddhism in the West

M. ***Paper Due in class***
Nishida Kitaro *In Memory of My Deceased Child* p. 90-95
Taitetsu Unno “When a Person Dies,” from *River of Fire, River of Water* p.183-187
*Coffinman* p. 1-30

T-Coffinman p. 31-70

W- Zen Buddhism and the West: *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* by Erich Fromm p. 77-92; 113-121

Th- *** Take-home Exam Due***