Modern East Asian Buddhism in the Global Context

Summer 2019
Mon/Wed/Thu 13:00–16:00

Instructor: Hwansoo Kim
Office Hours: TBA
or by appointment

This course situates modern East Asian Buddhism in the global context of the late 19th century to the present, with a special focus on Korean Buddhism. Through critically examining the dynamic relationship between Korean Buddhism and the Buddhisms of major East Asian cities — Shanghai, Tokyo, Taipei, and Seoul — the course seeks to understand modern East Asian Buddhism in a transnational light. Discussion will include analyzing the impact of Christian missionaries, pan-Asian and global ideologies, colonialism, Communism, capitalism, war, science, hypermodernity, and atheism.

Grading:

Class participation and attendance: 20%
Weekly responses: 30%
Oral presentations: 10%
Two in-class exams: 40%

Class Participation and Attendance: I encourage all of you to do the readings on time and participate fully in the class discussions. Some people have a tougher time speaking in a group, which I understand, but I urge you, once you feel comfortable, to take a risk by raising questions and adding observations about the readings. You cannot participate if you are not in class, so attendance is expected.

Weekly Responses: As a way of stimulating class discussion and getting you to reflect on the readings and lectures, you will be required to keep an intellectual journal. The entries, which should be 300 words in length, are due in the Digital Forums on the course website by noon on the day of class for which the reading(s) to which you are responding is assigned.

Oral Presentations: Each student will be responsible for giving two twenty-minute in-class presentations concerning the seminar readings for the day of their presentation. The presentations will be shared with one or two other students, allowing the presenter to coordinate and share the work with others. The oral presentations should include a brief summary of the readings, but they primarily should attempt to contextualize the readings in terms of the material previously covered in the seminar and provide analysis of the material. The presentations should be accompanied by an outline. They will be graded on the basis of organization, clarity, insightfulness, and skill in presentation.
Two in-Class Exams: There will be one mid-term and one final-term exam. They comprise three essay questions, two of which students are expected to answer. It will be open-book exams and you can use your class and personal notes.

All readings will be provided in pdf files.

Course Schedule:

Session One: Introduction - How to define East Asian Buddhism?


Session Two: What is Buddhism?


Colonel Olcutt. “Buddhist Catechism” (1881).

Session Three: A Protestant/Catholic Buddhism


Movie, “The Light of Asia” (1925).

Session Four: The Buddha: a Modern Reconstruction


Session Five: Religion as a New Concept for Modern East Asian Buddhism


Session Six: Buddhist Reforms- China and Japan

Session Seven: Mid-term Exam
Movie: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter... and Spring (2003)

**Session Eight: Buddhist Reforms – Taiwan and Korea**

Elise Anne DeVido. *Taiwan’s Buddhist Nuns* (2010), introduction, chapter one.


**Session Nine: Global Buddhism in Shanghai and Colonial Korea**


**Session Ten: Buddhist Christmas in Sri Lanka, Tokyo, and Seoul**


**Session Eleven: Buddhism in North Korea**


Documentary: “Reality of religions in North Korea”

**Session Twelve: Temple Stay Programs in East Asia**


**Session Thirteen: Globalizing Buddhism**

Documentary: “Manhaeng: Path of Clouds”

**Session Fourteen: Future of East Asian Buddhism**


**Session 15: Conclusion and Final Exam**