

**APPLICATION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY (ID) DESIGNATION  
WITHIN THE MAGIS CORE CURRICULUM**

**SINGLE COURSE**

**(Individual or Team Taught)**

**The approved learning outcomes for the Interdisciplinary (ID) element of the core:**

“An Interdisciplinary Experience will satisfy the following learning outcomes:

- I. Synthesize or draw conclusions by connecting examples, data, facts, or theories from more than one perspective or field of study.
- II. Meaningfully synthesize connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (e.g., life experiences, service learning, study abroad, internship) to deepen understanding of fields of study and to critically examine their own points of view.
- III. Adapt and apply skills, theories, or methodologies across disciplines to explore complex questions and address problems.”

1. Date Submitted: April 1, 2019. We consider applications on a rolling basis but to ensure a decision in time for the course to received designation prior to a given semester, please submit by September 1 for the Spring Semester and January 15 for the Fall Semester.
2. Instructor(s): Ronald M Davidson
3. Course Prefix, Number & Title: RS 188 Buddhism
4. Is this application only for the sections of this course that you will teach?  X  Or will every section of this course count as an Interdisciplinary (ID) course? \_\_\_\_\_ (Please check one.)
5. Is this course already in the University Catalogue? Yes  X  No \_\_\_\_\_. If No, where is it in the review process? The course was taught traditionally under the RS 285 designation, but was approved by the chair of ASCC for renumbering under the Magis core with this number.
6. Have you participated in a course or professional development program (e.g. at CAE) relevant to teaching an ID course (doing so is not required)? Yes  X  No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, please describe it in 200 words or less. I was in the January ID Course Design Institute run by Emily Smith and Jay Rozgonyi, and participated in the follow-up quip and luncheon session.
7. Courses that fulfill the ID element of the Magis Core Curriculum can also count for one but not two of the requirements in the “Orientation” or “Exploration” elements (see the next page). If this course is/will be cross-listed in two departments, in which Exploration element and department will it count?  
**Orientation Religious Studies**

8. Please provide the approved/proposed Catalog Description for the course:

*This course explores the Indian Buddhist tradition, from its beginning in the life of Shakyamuni Buddha through the present revival of neo-Buddhism in the activism of oppressed classes. The course considers the early formative ideas of the Buddha - the Awakened One - as they unfold in the course of Indian history and society, and discusses Buddhist meditation and philosophy as procedures devised to elicit the awakened state. Using written and visual works, the course examines developments in Buddhist religious orders, lay social life, and the rise of the Great Vehicle tradition. Art and archaeology provide a context for Buddhism's compelling missionary activity throughout Central and Southeast Asia.*

9. Please describe how your course will meet the approved learning outcomes for the Interdisciplinary (ID) element of the Core, how some of the content and pedagogies that you will use to meet these goals, and how you will evaluate students' fulfillment of these goals.

Learning Outcome	Pedagogy and Course Content that Will Prepare Students to Meet This Outcome	Evaluation of Students' Fulfillment of This Outcome
I	1. lectures and questions on the sociology of Buddhist small-group process 2. lectures and readings on political models in South, Central and East Asia 3. lectures and readings on Buddhist support and transfer of literacy: writing, lexicography, contract law 4. lectures and discussions of economic systems: accounting procedures, credit unions, monastic loans to merchant guilds and related procedures as part of its strategy for its spread 5. lectures and readings on Buddhist art and architecture 6. lectures and readings on the psychology of fluid models of personality (non-self) 7. lectures on deconstructive philosophy (Madhyamaka) that has thematic similarities to post-structuralist Continental philosophy	Midterm and final essay exam questions: 1. What was the process whereby Buddhism became integrated into lay (non-monastic) life in South Asia? 2. What are the consequences of the 2-wheel of the Dharma political model? 3. Why were the countries between India and China (Central Asia, Tibet, Southeast Asia) concerned with Buddhism? 4. Discuss the symbiotic relationship between monks and merchants. 5. Why would the Buddhists become so heavily invested in art and the artistic depiction of Buddhas, Arhants and Bodhisattvas? 6. What are the meanings and uses of the idea of "non-self"? 7. How does the meaning of dependent arising ( <i>pratītyasamutpāda</i> ) change from the early period, through the Mahayana and Madhyamaka use?
II.	Viewing of the BBC Documentary on "The Life of the Buddha" and consequential class discussion (week 2)  Daily "Buddhism News": students discover outside of class news stories on how Buddhism changes and interacts with the world; these are then discussed in class, and tied into the presentations as applicable.  Viewing of the film <i>Spring, summer, autumn, winter . . . and spring</i> outside	The short paper (5-page) is an answer to a question on the issues of identity of persons going in and out of the monastery:  <i>What are the personal identity problems apparent in monks' or nuns' navigation between the secular world and the sacred environment of the temple or monastery?</i>  By the time students have viewed the films, read the texts and discussed this in class on two occasions, they

	of class, viewing of film clips on Southeast Asian practice of taking monks' vows as a temporary rite of passage, along with readings about the psychological and social changes both within the scriptural sources and within anthropological literature. (week 7) To prepare them for the paper, they watch the films outside of class and discuss them in class in small group sessions.	<p>understand the challenge of making such a transition.</p> <p>Their paper will be based on the <i>Spring . . . and Spring</i> film, three readings, and the daily news items.</p> <p>The paper will deepen their understanding of the different fields of study and help them examine their own points of view by challenging their suppositions of the nature of Buddhist monastic vocation.</p>
III	Syllabus sections on monastic life, preachers, lay representations, historical development, ideology of non-self, the political theories of the 2 Wheels of the Dharma, artistic involvement and the political realities of transition to Central, Southeast and East Asian cultures. These forms of content expose complex questions of the cultural systems embedded in a trans-national religion.	<p>This is the final paper challenge—the paper requires students to select a topic in cooperation with me, then write their paper answering the question of <i>meaning: how is their topic important to those people?</i></p> <p>The question is explicitly multi-dimensional (see syllabus). After the midterm, we have at least two class periods in which small-group discussions focus on what "meaning" may mean, in all its profusion of dimensions of signification.</p> <p>I do not allow students to collapse meaning into a single dimension, as many want to reduce religion to <i>only</i> politics or sociology or human rights. They must discuss several dimensions of meaning in their papers to correctly understand and represent their topics without pre-prepared answers.</p>

10. Please attach the approved/proposed/existing course syllabus. Please highlight the following in yellow:

- A brief statement (one or three sentences) that notes how the course addresses and fulfills the Interdisciplinary element of Core. This can be part of the course description or included as a separate category.
- Brief statements of how the course engages the approved ID learning outcomes. (E.g., 'As a result of their work in this course, including... students will...')



### Magis Core Curriculum

1. **Orientation** (7 courses):

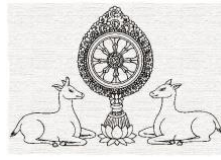
- English (Composition & Rhetoric); Religious Studies; Philosophy; History; Math; Modern/Classical Language; 1 additional course in either Mathematics or Modern/Classical Language

2. **Exploration** (8 courses)

- Humanities:
  - Religious Studies / Philosophy / History (2 courses in 2 different departments)
  - English / Modern Languages and Literatures / Classics (1 course in Literature)
  - Visual and Performing Arts (1 course)
- Natural Sciences: Biology / Chemistry and Biochemistry / Physics (2 courses)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences: Sociology & Anthropology / Psychology / Economics / Politics / Communication (2 courses)

### 3. Signature Elements

- Interdisciplinary element (1 course): either a team-taught course, or a cluster course, or an individually taught course (with at least one instructor in the College of Arts and Sciences). (All courses within the Orientation and Exploration areas.)
- Social Justice element (3 courses): one course providing an introduction to social justice (SJ1), and two additional social justice courses (SJ2), at least one of which accomplishes the learning outcomes through a focus on race (broadly construed), studied intersectionally with gender and class (SJ1 and one SJ2 course fulfilled within the Orientation and Exploration areas. One SJ2 course fulfilled within either the Orientation and Exploration areas or within a Major.)
- Writing Intensive element (3 courses): two courses (within the Orientation and Exploration areas) plus one additional course fulfilled within *either* the Orientation and Exploration areas (Writing across the Curriculum) *or* within a Major (Writing in the Disciplines).



Dr. Ronald M. Davidson  
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## BUDDHISM

RS 188  
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*Focus:* The focus of this course is introducing students to the forms of religious expression that have been developed in Buddhist communities in Asia. The course will emphasize the cultural systems of Buddhist traditions throughout South, Central and East Asia, especially concerning world view, rituals, art, literature, meditation, politics, philosophical thought and related activities.

*Goals:* The primary learning goals of this course are three: 1. gaining factual knowledge about Buddhism, especially in India but also elsewhere in Asia, 2. learning to analyze and critically evaluate Buddhist scriptures, religious communities and rituals; and 3. developing skill in expressing oneself orally and in writing. To further these goals, some technical vocabulary must be mastered, an examination of religious suppositions and sources of understanding will be explored, and clear, objective writing will be required.

At the conclusion of the course, the students should 1) demonstrate comprehension of the linguistic, legal and artistic elements in the trans-national movement of Buddhism from India to East and Southeast Asia; 2) analyze the tensions in social identity and social functions between the Buddhist lay and monastic lives; and 3) model religious, historical, political, economic and psychological themes in a narrative of meaning applied to a specific research topic.

**TEXTBOOKS:** There are two textbooks required for this course:

Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism* (Foundations)

Olson, *Original Buddhist Sources* (Sources)

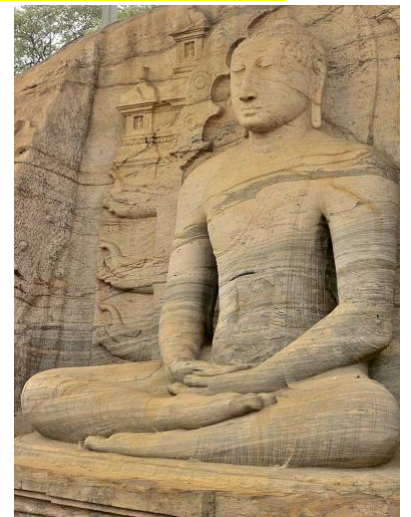
There will also be *several* handouts assigned during the semester (posted in course content section of Blackboard), and **film viewing required outside of class**. Streaming video url-s, access instructions and problem solving are in Blackboard files. There may be the possibility of extra credit, depending on the circumstances.

### REQUIREMENTS:

Class attendance and participation are very important. All students are expected to be on time to every class, bringing with them intelligence and decorum. *Those unwilling to consider alternate realities should consider another course.* This will be a thought-intensive class—if you think you have life all figured out, you may want another course. Class involvement will be 10% of your grade; your enthusiastic participation in the class and eagerness to learn will influence this part of your grade. **Moreover, beginning in the second week of class, I will call on students each day at random to present to the class a news item you have located on contemporary Buddhism; a list of links is already posted in Blackboard content files.** Absences, lateness, news responses, participation and reading preparation will be factored into your class participation. If there is any extra credit, it will be factored into your class participation grade, but will not influence the rest of the grading.

Beyond class participation, grades will be based on the following: eight reading quizzes (10%), 2 quizzes on vocabulary (5% each), one minor (5-page, 10%) and one major (2500 word 20%) writing assignments, a midterm (10%) and a final (30%). Class participation, reading preparation and paper guidelines are appended below.

Those missing assignment deadlines must see me, death and illness being the only valid excuses. Other late materials will receive a reduction of one-third grade per calendar day (B to B- to C+, etc.). Noncompletion of any assignment means that you will not pass the class. No writing assignments of any kind will be accepted after the beginning of the final exam, unless arranged in advance. The procedures for the exams will be explained in class, but all exams must be completed within the time allotted.



### **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

Students are responsible for the readings and video viewing in **advance** of the class wherein they are listed. Readings in the Blackboard course content file should be printed and brought to class for the day they are assigned. Reading quizzes (RQ) as marked. You also will be responsible for all the material in the textbooks, covered in class or not, unless I specifically exempt it.

- Sept 4: Introduction to nontheistic religion: What is a religion & how is it related to its culture?
- Sept 7: Buddha's hagiography. Foundations 7-34; Sources 26-37; bring Sources to class.
- Sept 11: Four noble truths. Foundations 59-84; Sources 46-49. **RQ** Watch "The Life of the Buddha" BBC Documentary for class—be prepared to discuss the film.
- Sept 14: The monastic life, ideal and real. Foundations 85-101; Sources 96-108. **Vocab quiz 1**
- Sept 18: Cosmology, karma and Buddha's previous lives. Foundations 112-126; Sources 17-25. **RQ**
- Sept 21: Nonself and the psychology of nirvana. Foundations 133-162; Sources 38-45, 55-68.
- Sept 25: Three trainings & Buddhist path. Foundations 163-202, Sources 77-86. **RQ**
- Sept 28: Arhats and hagiography; the earliest nun's literature. Sources 109-136; *Thera-Theri-gatha* selections (Blackboard).
- Oct 2: Scripture, canon and translation. Foundations 35-56; Sources 9-16. **RQ**
- Oct 5: Buddhist preachers, lay life and communities. Foundations 101-111, 126-132; [Lay practice](#)  
*Oct 9 No Class : Chris aims at India, hits Hispaniola and thinks he landed in Japan*
- Oct 12: Buddhism and political reality. Two Wheels of the Dhamma, Ashoka's inscriptions (Blackboard)
- Oct 16: **Midterm.**
- Oct 19: Internationalization of Buddhism. Central Asian Buddhism, Buddhism in SEAsia (Blackboard)  
**View Spring, summer, fall, winter . . and spring** for class—be prepared to discuss the film.
- Oct 23: Buddhist art and architecture. "Buddhism and Art across Asia" (Blackboard). **RQ**
- Oct 26: Mahayana Buddhism & Mahayana scripture. Foundations 56-58, 224-237; Sources 137-162.  
**Research project topics due. 5-page paper due.**
- Oct 30: The Bodhisattva path. Mahayana materials (Blackboard pp.1-5); [Bodhisattva levels](#) **Vocab quiz 2.**
- Nov 2: Emptiness and Buddha nature. Sources 163-188. **Research Bibliographies due.**
- Nov 6: Mahayanist Buddhas and pure lands. Sources 189-197. **RQ**
- Nov 9: Medicine bodhisattvas & Buddhist medicinal practice (Blackboard).
- Nov 13: The Mahayanist layman's representation. Mahayana materials, pp. 6-16, Sources 178-188. **RQ**  
*Nov 16-20: No Class—The Shaman travels to the other side—American Academy of Religion*  
*Nov 22: No Class—Over indulgence with people you thought you knew—Thanksgiving time!*
- Nov 27: Philosophical Mahayana: Mādhyamika, Yogācāra. Foundations 237-252, Sources 198-212.
- Nov 30: Buddhism in East Asia—political, social & linguistic challenges. Foundations 257-266; Sources 317-330, 339-341. **Research Projects due.**
- Dec 4: Tibetan Buddhism—Indian culture comes to Tibet. (Blackboard) **RQ**
- Dec 7: Engaged Buddhism—liberation of the Dalits (oppressed) outcastes, nuclear disarmament, ecological preservation & Buddhism (Blackboard)

Final Exam : Sat Dec 15, 11:30am. No exam schedule changes allowed (be sure your parents understand)



## Disability Policy

Fairfield University is committed to achieving equal educational opportunities and providing students who have documented disabilities equal access to all University programs, services and activities. In order for this course to be accessible to all students, different accommodations or adjustments may need to be implemented. If you require accommodations for this course because of a disability, please contact Accessibility within the Academic and Career Development Center (ACDC) as early as possible this semester as they are the designated department on campus responsible for approving and coordinating reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Accessibility will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and will provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations for your courses. Once you have access to your "Faculty Notification Letter" through your Accessibility profile on my.fairfield, please send the letter to me and make an appointment to meet with me as soon as possible so that we can review your accommodations together and discuss how best to help you achieve equal access in this course this semester.

Contact information for Accessibility (ACDC): Accessibility in the Academic and Career Development Center  
203-254-4081. Kelley Center. [acdc@fairfield.edu](mailto:acdc@fairfield.edu)

## Electronic Classroom Policy

I allow no use of any kind of electronic device in my class—laptop, phone, tablet, recorder—unless I am presented with an accommodation letter from Student Disability that it is necessary for your success.

## Class Participation Grade

Two unexcused absences per semester will be allowed. Beyond that, your class participation grade will be dropped one-third grade per absence (B > B- > C+, etc.), lowering the grade you would otherwise receive. Three late arrivals will equal an absence. Students may not leave the classroom except in the event of an emergency, so lavatory visits should be scheduled before and after class, and leaving class to use your cell phone is unacceptable.

More often than not, we will be looking at some reading you will be expected to prepare for the class. This primarily indicates the readings outside the Foundations textbook. In the past, students have either come unprepared (“I didn’t have time, just tell me what it means”) or poorly prepared (“I don’t get it”). If these are your normal reactions, you will need to overcome these habits to do well, both in college and afterwards.

**Buddhism News:** Each day, I will call on students to contribute Buddhism news bits that you located outside of class and that we will discuss as a class. Links to news sources are in the Buddhism News Links folder of Blackboard. Expect that I will call on you any day.

Class reading preparation — this is what I expect:

1. You have read the material carefully, at least twice. Most of the readings will be foreign to you, and in need of a slow, careful reading. Do not worry if you don't understand all of this new information, but read for gist.
2. In our case, “reading the material carefully,” also involves making notes on the various arguments, narratives, or scriptural points.
3. After you are done, note in a single sentence or two the overall idea, theme or argument of the reading.

Students coming with prepared materials will learn to be high-performers in real time. This period in college is the *only* time you have to learn to be a high-performer prior to your employment. In your professional life after graduation, high-performers are generally well paid and advance well in their chosen profession; the others play catch-up but rarely succeed.



Buddhism syllabus



## Reading Quizzes

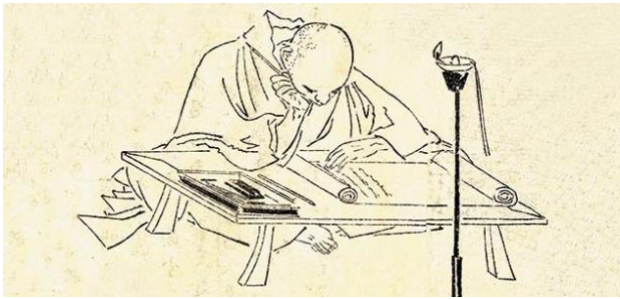
Eight times we will have short, multiple choice quizzes on the reading, to ensure that everyone is coming to class prepared. The quizzes will be done using your reading notes, as described above in Class Participation.

## The 5-page Paper—To be uploaded to Blackboard as a Word docx by October 26

The film *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter . . . and Spring*, is a disturbing look at relationships, a fall from grace, responsibility, crime and redemption in a Korean Buddhist temple, quite different from the BBC "Life of the Buddha" that we discussed in the second week of class. **Having seen this film, having listened to our "Buddhism News" events each day, and having read your class materials, write five pages in answer to the following question: What are the personal identity problems apparent in monks' or nuns' navigation between the secular world and the sacred environment of the temple or monastery?**

The various sources in your possession should be sufficient, but I require references both to the film and to at least three other sources to be read by October 26, whether texts in the *Sources* book or other materials you have received in the course. You may also integrate our "Buddhism News" items into the discussion. If you wish to do more research, it can only help your grade, but three textual references are minimum, in addition to the film. Please complete the essay in the length required; papers shorter than five full pages will be severely penalized.

Prior to receiving your 5-page paper, I require that all students take the utility Exploring Academic Integrity for Undergraduates, which includes a quiz. Email me the results of your quiz before uploading your five page paper.



*I allow rewrites on all papers; but the rewrite grade is averaged with the initial grade for the assignment grade. It is far better for your grade to make an appointment prior to the paper due date, so we can discuss any issues you may have. The rewrite may only be done in conversation with me, so that we understand the problems in your paper. Please be aware that a rewrite does not guarantee a better grade.*

## The Research Paper — Due November 30

Topic: Your topic is due Oct 26. You may select a topic of your choice, so long as it is a single topic that involves Asian Buddhist religious culture.

Topics may not be comparative—Buddhist & Christian literature, Chinese vs. Indian Buddhist art, etc. Topics must be on Buddhism as a religion in Asia. Some topics will be impossible for you to do, simply because of a lack of English or European language resources, or because specialists have yet to grapple with the specific issue.

For some reason, Fairfield students want to do general "influence" topics or "origin" topics ('love' in Indian Buddhism, the influence of Buddhism on society in Japan, the origin of Zen Buddhism in China). These approaches are poorly formulated and frequently doomed, the first because general discussions make weak research papers and the second because the material is only available at extremely technical levels. Please, no influence or origin topics.

The other problem topics are topics too broad and that encode exclusively political suppositions, especially "the position of women/lower castes/disenfranchised persons in Buddhism." These are important questions, but the papers written usually devolve into exclusively politics papers, not interdisciplinary religious studies papers. Conversely, topics on individual or small groups of women or disenfranchised persons yield good results. **The best papers almost invariably have been on single authors / schools / or sites, involving a *specificity of time & place* and considering the multi-dimensionality of decisions humans make about significance and their place in the world.** **Bottom line:** Please, no comparative, influence, origin, exclusively political, or Buddhism outside Asia topics.

Questions? I require all students to see me about topics, so that I may help you select a topic focused on your area of interest. Topics not discussed with me in advance will not be accepted.

Bibliography: A bibliography on your topic is due Nov 2. The bibliographies must include a minimum of six items. One of them must be a primary source (written as an internal Buddhist document, and therefore translated from the





Asian language of your Buddhist tradition) while there must be five secondary sources, one of which must be first published 2011 or later. At least two of the secondary sources must be books. Sources must be independent works; this means that isolated quotations in one place do not constitute a separate source. Secondary sources must be academic sources, from an academic press or published in an academic journal, such as Asian Humanities Press or the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. Academic sources are relatively easy to spot: they have footnotes and bibliographies, and are not delightful to read, being more concerned with accuracy than with style. Please, NO textbooks (ours included), NO class readings, NO popular books or articles, NO general books on “Buddhism” (Hinduism/Taoism, etc.) NO encyclopedias, NO dictionaries, NO introductory books, NO secondary on-line sources of any variety. Your sources must be focused on your topic or its context, and all sources must be referenced somewhere in the body of your paper, identifying the page number in the source as well.

**Answer the research question:** The paper should be the answer to a question of meaning: **Why is your topic important to those people?** The paper should consider and synthesize the various dimensions of meaning: religious, social, psychological, political, etc. The paper should support its thesis with specifics of the people, articulating data from individuals and groups in time and space. Above all, however, a **critical approach** is essential—you must speak **about** the specific Buddhist tradition (objectively), **not for** the tradition (subjectively). Objective writing does not assume the individual(s) of the topic to be correct, but it does assume them to be sincere. Many students have received poor grades because of this problem, so do not neglect it.

The standard of a critical approach is to ask yourself, “How do we *know* this is the case?” Thus, we don't know the Buddha obtained awakening, we only know that the Buddhists said he did. We don't know if there is karma, we only know that the Buddhists hold there is. No Buddhist metaphysical value (emptiness, suchness, awakening, karma, etc.) has distinctive physical evidence, which is why it is meta-(above)-physical. So speak as if you are evaluating the claims of the tradition to the best of your ability, based on evidence in public space and nothing more. Most important: Fundamentalist papers of any variety—Christian, Buddhist, blood sacrificial—will be given an automatic failure.

Critical thinking involves emotional distance from your topic.

*If you are unclear on the difference between objective and subjective writing, you should see me as soon as possible.*

#### Guidelines for writing research papers:

The assignment is to write three thousand words (about 9 pages, assuming 12 pt. times font, double-spaced, one inch margins), having researched your topic.

Some psychological or compositional traps are often evident in student papers. *Moral relativism* (“no one can say if this is right or wrong”)—this unwarranted statement usually means the student abandons analysis because it is too complicated. *Cynicism* (“they're just doing this for money”)—cynicism is no more a virtue than blind belief in critical writing, and we will presume good will and sincerity on the part of the principals unless refuted by evidence. *Christian comparison* (“this is just like my church”)—please leave Christianity out of your papers. *True religion* (“this is not true Buddhism”)—people often talk about “true religion” in order to distance themselves from uncomfortable realities seen in the behavior of actual believers. For our purposes, we can only evaluate actual Buddhism as lived by actual people and groups in real time and real space. “True religion” is a theoretical construct that does not belong in our class.

Your paper must have a thesis, body, and conclusion. Be sure to answer the question in your thesis and conclusion. Use any paper writing form that appeals to you, but **you must provide notes** (footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notes – including the page numbers in your sources telling me where you obtained the information) so that



I can tell that you have examined the sources you reference. Be sure that I am able to understand your selection of sources—I always have the option to check them out for myself to see how you have done. All the sources you put in the paper's bibliography must be referenced or cited in the body of the paper, or you will not get credit for using that source. If I am convinced that you have not used sufficient sources, your grade will suffer accordingly.

Be aware that, if you represent other's work as your own, it is plagiarism—which is academic dishonesty—and I will fail you. Do not use quotations of any variety



unless you represent them as such, using quotation marks, indented & single-spaced paragraphs, or other approved quotations systems. The basic rule is simple: **if they are not your words, they don't belong in your paper**, unless you show them to be someone else's words as quotations. Simply giving a parenthetical/endnote reference without quotation marks or single space/indentation, and introduced by some phrase like 'White says,' is still plagiarism. For references, follow the guidelines of a standard text (MLA, Chicago).

*Style:* This is a mental, not an emotional exercise. Unsupported opinions and random value judgments will be assigned random grades (maybe D, maybe less, depending on how I feel). Clarity of purpose and felicity of presentation will be placed at a premium. Assume I know the topic. The thesis will synthesize the material into a precise, nuanced answer to the question, not a bland general identification of the obvious (e.g., "Buddhism is very important to the Chinese"—this is not a thesis). The body will discuss the material in an intelligent manner, maintaining critical distance from the topic while empathetic to its position. Do not fill your paper with lists and quotes or act as if a book report is a research paper—do not summarize books, but instead discuss their ideas or evidence. A good writing style is difficult to perfect and requires constant practice. Before printing the final draft, read the paper aloud to yourself or to a friend. This will allow you to hear your prose and see how you may have gone astray.

*Penalties:* Penalties for papers of insufficient length will be severe. A paper of 2500 words cannot obtain a grade greater than a C (and probably less). Papers less than 2000 words will not get above a D and papers below 1500 words will accrue an automatic failure. Papers without notes (of whatever style — but including page numbers) will not get above a D. Do not neglect to paginate your paper—I have received entire classes of papers unpaginated because students forgot to perform the command "insert > page number" in their word processor.

Essential Points:

- Required — research, foot- or end- or parenthetical notes (with source page numbers!), excellent thesis, excellent style, consideration of temporal & spatial dimensions, critical distance, 3000 words + notes and bibliography (with all sources referenced somewhere in the paper, and exact source page numbers listed).
- Forbidden — plagiarism, short papers, judgmentalism, personal beliefs.
- Encouraged — working beyond minimum requirements, curiosity, creativity, enthusiasm.

