

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**Continuing Education Course**  
**Central Bible College**  
**3000 N. Grant**  
**Springfield, MO 65803**

**MHTM 639 (02) MINISTRY TO PEOPLE IN BUDDHIST CONTEXTS**  
**July 22-26, 2002**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**(2 Credits)**

**Dave Oleson**

**Summer 2002**

**Course Description**

A general survey of Buddhism that gives special consideration to aspects of ministry to people living in Buddhist contexts and influenced by Buddhist worldviews. The history of the Buddha, expansion of Buddhism, overview of the various traditions and examination of major doctrines/themes will be studied. A comparison of Buddhist and Christian doctrines will be made, especially noting bridges for evangelism and current strategies. Special attention will be given to the history of Christian mission among Buddhists, church planting models among Buddhist peoples and tools for research and further study.

**Course Objectives**

At the end of this course the student will be able to:

1. Relate the main events in the life of the Buddha.
2. Describe the core doctrines of Buddhism that are common to all the traditions of Buddhism.
3. Identify points of difference between the three main traditions.
4. Will be able to identify some elements within Buddhism that can serve as bridges to presenting the Gospel.
5. Outline the history and expansion of Buddhism.
6. Discuss aspects of folk Buddhism.
7. Share their faith more effectively with Buddhists and those influenced by Buddhism and New Age thinking.

**Textbooks and Reading Materials**

Tsering, Marku. *Sharing Christ in the Tibetan Buddhist World*, Revised Edition. Upper Darby, PA: Tibet Press, 1988.

Smith, Alex G. *Buddhism Through Christian Eyes*. Littleton, CO: OMF, 2001

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Davis, John. Poles Apart: Contextualizing the Gospel in Asia. Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1998. [Available on AGTS Website]

Maguire, Jack. Essential Buddhism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs and Practices. New York: Pocket Books, 2001.

Deneui, Paul. Contextualizing with Thai Folk Buddhists. [Available on AGTS Website]

Johnson, Alan. Wrapping the Good News for the Thai. [Available on AGTS Website]

### **Recommended Readings**

### **Course Outline and Reading Schedule**

July 22 – Introduction to Buddhism

Should Christians Study Buddhism?

Extent of Buddhism around the World

Life of Gautama Siddharta

Early History and Expansion of Buddhism

July 23 – Christian Missions to the Buddhist World

Major Streams of Buddhism

Historical Overview of Christian Missions to Buddhist

Christianity Today among Buddhist Peoples

July 24 – Evangelism among Buddhists

Understanding the Buddhist Worldview

Comparison of Major Buddhist Doctrines and Christianity

Folk Buddhism

Redemptive Analogies

Thematic Approaches to Evangelism

Culturally Considerations for Evangelism

Realistic Expectations

July 25 – Ecclesiastical Models of Success

Form of the Church among Buddhists

Case Studies

Hanan

Houses That Change the World

Planting Churches in Thailand (Jim Hosack)

July 26 – Web Based Missions Research

Doing Research on the Web (Scott Fontenot)

Self-directed Module for Learning Practical Culture

Course Evaluation

**Methodology**

Lecture, video, discussion, case studies, guest lecturers, web research, group work.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

**2 credits**

1. Class attendance. Because the class is condensed to 5 days, attendance each day is imperative. For every 3 hours missed, the grade will be reduced one letter grade (20%)
2. Read all required texts. Complete appropriate response/reflection (30%).
3. Annotated list of Buddhist web sites. Find 15 Buddhist web sites, explore the site and identify its features. Name the site, give its URL and describe the site in 3 or 4 sentences (20%)
4. A 10-page paper developing one of the following topics (30%):
  - a. Folk Buddhism as practiced among the people with whom the student will be working.
  - b. Identify the Buddhist holidays among the people with whom the student will be working and appropriate Christian response.
  - c. Research a Buddhist people group in the student's country of assignment.
  - d. Describe how a particular Buddhist concept might be used as a bridge to presenting the gospel.

**3 Credits**

1. Class attendance. Because the class is condensed to 5 days, attendance each day is imperative. For every 3 hours missed, the grade will be reduced one letter grade (20%).
2. Read all required texts. In addition to the required texts, the student will choose a book related to their particular field or people group and get it approved by the professor before reading it. Complete a 5-6 page book review using the attached form (30%).
3. Annotated list of Buddhist web sites. Find 20 Buddhist web sites, explore the site and identify its features. Name the site, give its URL and describe the site in 3 or 4 sentences (20%)
4. A 15-page paper developing one of the following topics (30%):
  - a. Folk Buddhism as practiced among the people with whom the student will be working.
  - b. Identify the Buddhist holidays among the people with whom the student will be working and appropriate Christian response.
  - c. Research a Buddhist people group in the student's country of assignment.
  - d. Describe how a particular Buddhist concept might be used as a bridge to presenting the gospel.

**Course Grading Scale**

100-95 A

94-90 A-

89-86 B+

85-82 B

81-80 B-

79-77 C+

76-72 C

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71-70 C-

69-67 D+

66-62 D

61-60 D-

59-0 F

**Course Procedures**

1. Consistent attendance is required. (More than a half-day absence could result in grade reduction).
2. Late work will be penalized.
3. A grade of Incomplete will be given only in the event of extreme circumstances.
4. Work received after the post-session due date specified in the syllabus will result in a change of grade fee (\$15.00) being charged, even when an extension has been granted by the instructor.

## BOOK REVIEW FORMAT

This format can be used for standard book and journal article reviews of variable length. The usual is 3-4 pages, but for a larger book or more detailed work you could do 5-7 or 8-10.

Follow a three part structure.

### ***Part 1 Overview and Description***

Put the bibliographic data on the top as the title or just under your title

Sketch out the major purpose and themes of the book article.

### ***Part 2 Interpretation, Analysis, Critique***

In this section interact critically with the material and/or give an analysis of it.

### ***Part 3 Personal Application***

Here is where you talk about what you learned personally from the material. How does it apply to your life? Focus on two or three things that were very important to you and how you would use them.