

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Continuing Education Course
Springfield, Missouri
June 30 – July 3, 2003

MCSE 639 MINISTRY TO PEOPLE IN BUDDHIST CONTEXTS

COURSE SYLLABUS
(2 or 3 Credits)

Rev. David Oleson
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Summer 2003

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

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

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

Deneui, Paul. *Contextualizing with Thai Folk Buddhists*. [Available at AGTS Bookstore]

Johnson, Alan. *Wrapping the Good News for the Thai*. [Available at AGTS Bookstore]

COURSE OUTLINE

Day	Time	Subject
6/30	8:00:- 9:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative matters • Introductions • Why Study Buddhism? • Extent of Buddhism around the world
	9:40 – 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of the Buddha – Video “The World Religions 600 BC – AD 500” • Understanding Buddhist Worldview
	11:00 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life of Gautama Siddharta
	1:00 – 2:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early History and Expansion of Buddhism • Core teachings of Buddhism
	3:00:- 5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core teachings of Buddhism • Video “The Enlightened One”
7/1	8:00 – 9:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism in the West • Major Streams of Buddhism
	10:00 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Missions to Buddhists • Christianity today in the Buddhist World
	1:00 – 2:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folk Buddhism • Tibetan Channelers (Video)
	2:00:-3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tibetan Folk Buddhism: Video “The Art of Dying”
	3:15 - 5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of Buddhism w Christianity • Forum
7/2	8:00 – 9:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches to Evangelism of Buddhists • Contextualization of the Gospel • Contextualization vs. Syncretism
	9:00 – 9:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redemptive Analogies
	10:00 - 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative models of evangelism in Tibet
	11:00 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other Successes in Evangelism • Samples of using culture to communicate the Gospel
	1:00 – 1:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous Revelations • Power Encounters
	2:00 – 2:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Considerations for Evangelism
	3:00 – 5:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form of the church in Buddhist cultures

7/3	8:00:- 10:20	• Video: "Kundun"
	10:40 – 12:00	• Web based Missions Research
	1:00 – 5:00	• Catch up time • Principles for Successful Missionary Career

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 4 days, attendance each day is imperative. For every ½ day 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/interest.
 - d. Describe how a particular Buddhist doctrine/concept might be used as a bridge to presenting the gospel.
5. **Submit all coursework to:**

**AGTS Continuing Education
ATTN: Rev. David Oleson
1435 N. Glenstone Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802
agts-ext@agts.edu**

All written work must be turned in to the Continuing Education Office at AGTS (postmarked) by December 31, 2003. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want me to return your graded work.

3 Credits

1. Class attendance. Because the class is condensed to 4 days, attendance each day is imperative. For every ½ day missed, the grade will be reduced one letter grade (20%).
2. Read all required texts. Do a response sheet for each of these readings. In addition 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.

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COURSE GRADING SCALE

98 — 100	A+
94 — 97	A-
90 — 93	A
87 — 89	B+
84 — 86	B
80 — 83	B-
77 — 79	C+
74 — 76	C
70 — 73	C-
67 — 69	D+
64 — 66	D
60 — 63	D-
Below 60 —	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. Ministry in a Buddhist Context

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boorstein, Sylvia. That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1997.

Burnett, David. The Spirit of Buddhism: A Christian Perspective on Buddhist Thought. Crowborough, East Sussex, UK: Monarch Publications, 1996.

Central Asian Fellowship. "Freedom from Karma." Kathmandu, Nepal, nd (Mimeographed.)

_____. "An Introduction to the Bible for Buddhists" Kathmandu, Nepal, nd. (Mimeographed.)

_____. "Tibetan Buddhism, Ways of Understanding a Complex Religion; Paths to Present the Gospel." Kathmandu, Nepal, nd. (Mimeographed.)

Cleary, Thomas, translator. The Dhammapada. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1996.

Chopel, Norbu. Folk Culture of Tibet. Dharamsala, Himachel Pradesh, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1983.

Coleman, Graham, Editor. A Handbook of Tibetan Culture. Calcutta, India: Rupta & Co., 1995.

Dalai Lama. The Good Heart. Boston, Mass: Wisdom Publications, 1996.

Dhammananda, K. Sri. What Buddhists Believe. Privately Published, 1998

David-Neel, Alexandra. Magic and Mystery in Tibet. NY: University Books, Inc. 1958.

Davis, John R. The Path to Enlightenment: Introducing Buddhism, Communities of Faith Series, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997.

_____. Poles Apart: Contextualizing the Gospel in Asia. Bangalore, India: Theological Book Trust, 1998

Delotavo, Allan. "Toward A Christ-Centered Way of Doing Theology in Asia." Asian Journal of Theology (3:1, 1989): 330-34.

Elwood, Douglas J. What Asian Christians Are Thinking. Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1976.

Fernando, Antony. Buddhism Made Plain: An Introduction for Christians and Jews, revised ed. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985.

- Guthrie, Stan. Missions in the Third Millennium. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2000.
- Johnstone, Patrick. Operation World, 5th ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 1993.
- Koyama, Kosuke. Waterbuffalo Theology. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974.
- Lim, David and Spaulding, Steve, editors. Sharing Jesus in the Buddhist World. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2003.
- Maguire, Jack. Essential Buddhism. NY: Pocket Books, 2001.
- Nakamura, Hajime. Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India, China, Tibet and Japan, revised edition edited by Philip P. Wiener. Honolulu, Hawaii, 1964.
- Niles, D.T. Buddhism and the Claims of Christ. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1967.
- Plymire, David V. High Adventure in Tibet, Revised Edition. Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1997.
- Richardson, Don. Eternity in Their Hearts. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981.
- Rigzin, Tsepak. Festivals of Tibet. Dharamsala, Himachel Pradesh, India: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1993.
- Rinpoche, Sogyal. The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying. San Francisco: Harper, 1992.
- Sangharakshita. A Survey of Buddhism 6th ed. London: Tharpa Publications, 1987.
- Simson, Wolfgang. Houses That Change the World. Chennai, India: Mission Educational Books, 1998.
- Smith, Alex. Strategy to Multiply Rural Churches: A Central Thailand Case Study. Bangkok: OMF Publishers, 1977.
- _____. The Gospel Facing Buddhist Cultures. Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Assoc., 1980
- _____. Buddhism through Christian Eyes. Littleton, CO: OMF International, 2001.
- Sy, Charis Faith. “A Study of Tibetan Culture and Religion and of Potential Redemptive Analogies which would heighten the Tibetan’s Receptivity to Christianity.” MA Thesis, William Carey University, 1987.

Thurman, Robert and Wise, Tad. Circling the Sacred Mountain. NY: Bantam Books, 2000.

Tsering, Marku. Sharing Christ in the Tibetan Buddhist World 2nd ed. Upper Darby, PA: Tibet Press, 1993.

Wagner, Elizabeth. Tearing Down Strongholds: Prayer for Buddhists. Hong Kong: Living Books For All, 1988.

Winter, Ralph D. and Hawthorne, Steven C. Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Revised Edition. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1992.

Yamamoto, J. Isamu. Beyond Buddhism: A Basic Introduction to the Buddhist Tradition. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982.

_____. Buddhism, Taoism & Other Far Eastern Religions. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998

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.