

NTHU 2016-2017 Fall ANTHRO XXXXXX

Anthropology of Buddhism

佛教人類學

[This version of the syllabus as updated April 6, 2016]

Instructor: C. Julia Huang 黃倩玉

Class: Tuesday @ HSS

Office Hours: by appointment

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Course description:

This course introduces different anthropological approaches to the studies of Buddhist cultures and society. We will focus on Buddhist practices and ideas of embodiment as a subject of the anthropology of religion and the body. We draw on research in social/cultural anthropology, history, and religious studies, and examine a selection of approaches to the Buddhist bodies: the body of power in Buddhist charisma, the gender of the bodhisattva's and monastic bodies, the extraordinary body in martial arts, healing, and immolation, and the "gift" of the body in bioethics and medical education. We draw on examples in different traditions of Buddhism in a range of societies with a special focus on Chinese Buddhism. Students will be supervised by the instructor in the writing of a research paper based on the relevant literature and ethnographies, and will be encouraged to bring in reflection on the readings based upon his/her observations of an example of Buddhist bodily practices in Taiwan. Through reading, discussing, and writing about the Buddhist body and about a case study of the student's choice from the local Buddhist community, this seminar will explore the topics and approaches to the shifting focus in the anthropology of the body, and in the formation of the anthropology of Buddhism.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Bodies Forum: Early in the course, each student will choose a topic of Buddhist bodily practice to study with ethnographic method and/or literature review. (We will discuss the topic of your choice individually during the first two weeks of the quarter.) Each class, students will post a 100-150 word (or 125-250 word for graduate students) journal-style entry (in the course's online forum) that critically engages the readings of the day. Due 9:00AM on the day of the class. The weekly post will consist of two parts: (1) raising two questions for group discussion; and (2) pointing out how the readings of the week help – or fail to help – analyzing the topic of the student's choice. No post for the first class, the last

week, and for the day of class presentation. Each student may choose to miss a total of two posts.

- 2) Classroom presentations and participation: Each week, a pair of students will do a presentation on the assigned readings. Other students will be asked to contribute either a question or a topic for discussion and should come to class prepared to actively engage in conversations on the assigned readings.
- 3) Research Paper: The final project of the course will be a 10-page double-spaced for undergraduate (20-page for graduate students) research paper analyzing your example of the Buddhist body, using perspectives offered in the course. This paper will be due in stages over the course of the quarter, with the deadline for the final draft in the final weeks. Oral presentations of final projects will be scheduled for the last week of the quarter.
- 4) Laptops and tablet computers are allowed in the classroom for note taking and presentation only. Please silence your cell phone before coming into the classroom.

Grading:

Journal Entries: 25 percent

Classroom Participation: 25 percent

Research Paper brief description: 5 percent

Research Paper Prospectus: 10 percent

Presentation on Research Paper: 10 percent

Research Paper: 25 percent

Syllabus

Week 1: Introduction and Overview of the Syllabus

Gellner, David. 1990. "What is Anthropology of Buddhism?" *JASO* Vol. XXI, No. 2, pp. 95-112. <http://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/ISCA/JASO/1990-21-2.pdf>

Week 2: Religion and the Body

Asad, Talal. 1997. "Remarks on the Anthropology of the Body," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 42-52.

Rahula, Walpola. 1959. *What the Buddha Taught*. New York: Grove Press, Inc. Chapter VII, "'Meditation' or Mental Culture: *Bhāvanā*," pp. 67-75.
<https://sites.google.com/site/rahulawhatthebuddha/meditation-or-mental-culture>

Week 3: Some Buddhist Ideas about the Human Body - Text

Collins, Steven. 1997. "The Body in Theravada Buddhist Monasticism," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 185-204

Williams, Paul. 1997. "Some Mahayana Buddhist Perspectives on the Body," in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 205-230.

Week 4: Some Buddhist Ideas about the Human Body - Context

The Suffering Body in Global Context

Adams, Vincanne. 1998. "Suffering the Winds of Lhasa: Politicized Bodies, Human Rights, Cultural Difference, and Humanism in Tibet." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* Vol. 12 (1): 74-102.

Film: *Satya: A Prayer for the Enemy*

Recommended:

Grunfeld, A. Tom. (1997). "Video Review of Satya: A Prayer for the Enemy." *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.56: 579-580.

Tedesco, Frank M. (1999). "Video Review of Satya: A Prayer for the Enemy." *Education about Asia*, Vol. 4, No. 1: 78-79.

http://www.aems.illinois.edu/searchresults_reviewavailable.html?biblioId=2319

Brief Description of the Buddhist Body example due in class.

Week 5: Charisma - Context

Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1984. *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets: A Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism, and Millennial Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 6: Charisma - Text

Kieschnick, John. 1997. "Asceticism" and "Thaumaturgy" in his *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in a Medieval Chinese Hagiography*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 16-66, 67-111.

Week 7: Bodies, Power, and Globalization

Huang, C. Julia. 2009. *Charisma and Compassion: Cheng Yen and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Movement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 8: Gender and Sexuality

Faure, Bernard. 2003. *The Power of Denial: Buddhism, Purity, and Gender*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 9: Gender and Sexuality

Powers, John. 2009. *A Bull of a Man: Images of Masculinity, Sex, and the Body in Indian Buddhism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 10: Gender and Monasticism

Gutschow, Kim. 2004. *Bing A Buddhist Nun: The Struggle for Enlightenment in the Himalayas*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 11: Gender and Monasticism

Yü, Chün-fang. 2013. *Passing the Light: the Incense Light Community and Buddhist Nuns in Contemporary Taiwan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. Chapter 5: Incense Light Buddhist Seminary for Nuns and Chapter 7: Profiles of Individual Nuns: pp. 105-149. 186-208.

Week 12: Gender and Monasticism

Cook, Joanna. 2014. *Meditation in Modern Buddhism: Renunciation and Change in Thai Monastic Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 13: Martial Arts

Shahar, Meir. 2008. *The Shaolin Monastery: History, Religion, and the Chinese Martial Arts*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. Part III: Fist-Fighting and Self-Cultivation; and Conclusion: History, Religion, and the Chinese Martial Arts, pp. 113-181, 182-202.

Week 14: Martial Arts

Film: *Shaolin Ulysses* [provisional]
*reading(s) for the day to be assigned

Research prospectus with bibliography due in class.

Week 15: Healing, Immolation, and Giving

Benn, James. 2007. *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press..

Birnbaum, Raoul. 1989. "Chinese Buddhist Traditions of Healing and the Life Cycle," in *Healing and Restoring: Medicine and Health in the World's Religious Traditions*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan. New York: Macmillan, pp. 33-58.

Week 16: The "Gift" of the Body

Simpson, Bob. 2004. "Impossible Gifts: Bodies, Buddhism and Bioethics in Contemporary Sri Lanka." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol. 40 (4): 839-859

Ohnuma, Reiko. 2007. *Heads, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapter V: A Flexible Gift, pp. 167-198; Chapter VI: Bodies Ordinary and Ideal, pp. 199-241.

Weeks 17 & 18: Student Presentations and Wrap-up

Final Research Paper due.