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### RLST 354.01: Topics in East Asian Religion - Approaches to the Study of Zen Buddhism

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# TOPICS IN EAST ASIAN RELIGION: APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF ZEN

## RLST 354--Clough

### Class and teacher information:

- Course Meeting: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00-3:20 Liberal Arts Building 23
- Dr. Brad Clough
- Office: Liberal Arts 158 (ext. 2837)
- Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-6:00
- Brad's Email: [bradley.clough@umontana.edu](mailto:bradley.clough@umontana.edu)

Over the course of the last century, the West has displayed a particular fascination with the philosophy and practice of Zen Buddhist traditions coming from East Asia. Those endeavoring to transmit and "translate" Chan or Zen to the West have engaged in an intriguing variety of approaches to understanding these traditions. Each of these approaches has found new insights into Zen traditions, but has also encountered their own interpretive problems and limitations. This course will examine some of the most influential approaches to understanding Zen, beginning in the first half of the semester with investigations of primary Zen texts which have raised particularly difficult hermeneutic issues, such as the transmission of Zen teachings (the story of Bodhidharma), meditation (*The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*), "extra-rational" dialogues (koan collections of the 12th and 13th centuries), and artistic presentations of spiritual realization (Haiku poetry, landscape painting, calligraphy, tea ceremony, etc.). In the second half of the semester, we will focus more on seminal works of figures who were instrumental in bringing Zen into practice and the popular imagination in the West, such as D.T. Suzuki, Thomas Merton, Eugene Herrigel, Alan Watts, and several of poets from the Beat movement. Here we will look as well at some of the most innovative contemporary scholarship in Zen Studies, as produced by such thinkers as John McRae, Bernard Faure, Steven Heine, and Robert Scharf.

### Readings/Required Texts:

(All books are available for purchase at the bookstore).

- Herrigel, Eugene. *Zen in the Art of Archery*.
- Kapleau, Roshi Philip. *The Three Pillars of Zen*
- Kraft, Kenneth. *Zen: Tradition and Transition*
- Merton, Thomas. *Zen and the Birds of Appetite*.
- Snyder, Gary. *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes and Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries*.
- Watts, Alan. *The Spirit of Zen*.
- Yampolsky, Philip (transl.). *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*.

### Requirements:

- 1) Class participation. As much as is possible, this course will be conducted in discussion/seminar format. Therefore, it is essential that all class members regularly attend AND be prepared to participate. More than two unexcused absences will begin to adversely affect your participation grade. As a way of preparing for class, for each reading assignment you must prepare three questions or topics for discussion (30% of the final grade).
- 2) Mid-Term Take-Home Essay Exam (30% of the final grade)
- 3) A 15-20 page research paper. A list of possible topics will be distributed, but the choice of topic is ultimately up to you, with the professor's approval (40% of the final grade).

### Disability Modifications

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please

contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

### Class Meetings and Assignment

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS/READINGS	DUE DATES
Tuesday 1/24	Introduction to the Course	
Thursday 1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Foundational Teachings of Buddhism [Shravakayana]</li> <li>Keown [handout]: Chapters 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 1/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Foundational Teachings of Buddhism [Mahayana]</li> <li>Keown [handout]: Chapter 5</li> <li>Kraft: Chapter 5</li> </ul>	
Thursday 2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen/Chan, Case I: The Foundations of Zen: Bodhidharma &amp; the Early Patriarchs [handout] Broughton, "Introduction," pp.1-4.</li> <li>[handout] McRae: "Bodhidharma, His Immediate Successors, and the Masters of the <i>Lankavatara Sutra</i>," pp. 15-24</li> <li>[handout]McRae:"Beginnings:Differentiating/Connecting Bodhidharma and the East Mountain Teaching</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 2/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen/Chan, Case 1: The Foundations of Zen: Bodhidharma and the Early Patriarchs [handout] Bodhidharma: "The Two Paths," pages 8-12</li> <li>[handout] McRae: "The Earliest Teachings of Ch'an," pages 101- 117</li> <li>[handout] Cleary: "Bodhidharma's Treatise for Contemplating Mind," pages 79-102.</li> <li>[handout] McRae: "Shou-hsin and Meditation Practice in the Hsiu-hsin yao lun," pages 136-138</li> </ul>	
Thursday 2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case II: Meditation and</li> <li><i>The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch.</i></li> <li>Kraft: Chapters 2 and 7</li> <li>Yampolsky: Preface and pages 111-121</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 2/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case II: Meditation and</li> <li><i>The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch.</i></li> <li>Yampolsky: Sections 1-37 (pages 125-162)</li> </ul>	
Thursday 2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation Of Zen, Case III: The Koan Kraft: Chapter 4</li> <li>Watts: "The Technique of Zen"</li> <li>[handout]: Suzuki: "Illogical Zen" and "The Reason of Unreason: The Koan Exercise.</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 2/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case III (continued)</li> <li>[handout] McRae: "The Riddle of the Encounter Dialogue: Who, What, When and Where?".</li> </ul>	
Thursday 2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case III (continued)</li> <li>[handout] Hori: "The Nature of Rinzai (Linji) Koan Practice" and "The Steps of Koan Practice".</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 2/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case III [continued]</li> <li>Selections from the Koan collction, the <i>Gateless Barrier</i>.</li> </ul>	
Thursday 3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case IV: Zen and the Arts</li> <li>Hisamatsu (handout): selections from <i>Zen and the Fine Arts</i>.</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case IV (continued) Merton: "Zen in Japanese Art"</li> <li>Watts: "Zen and the Civilization of the Far East"</li> <li>Suzuki (handout): "Painting, Swordsmanship, Tea Ceremony.</li> </ul>	

DATE	ASSIGNMENTS/READINGS	DUE DATES
Thursday 3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case IV (continued)</li> <li>• Herrigel: Introduction (by Suzuki) and pages 3-32.</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 3/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems in the Interpretation of Zen, Case IV (continued)</li> <li>• Herrigel: Pages 33-81.</li> </ul>	
Thursday 3/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part I: Zen Experience and the Study of Zen</li> <li>• William Barrett (handout): "Zen for the West".</li> <li>• D.T. Suzuki (handout): "Satori, or Enlightenment" and "An Interpretation of Zen Experience."</li> </ul>	<b>FRIDAY 3/17: Mid-Term Take-Home Essays Due by 4:00 PM</b>
Tuesday 3/21	No Class: Spring Break	
Thursday 3/23	No Class: Spring Break	
Tuesday 3/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part I (continued)</li> <li>• Scharf (handout): "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism" and "Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience".</li> </ul>	
Thursday 3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part I (continued)</li> <li>• Faure (handout): "The Rise of Zen Orientalism" and "Chan and Language: Fair and Unfair Games"</li> </ul>	<b>Final Paper Proposal and Bibliography Due Today 3/30</b>
Tuesday 4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part II: Zen and the Beats</li> <li>• Watts (handout): "Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen"</li> <li>• Snyder: Selections from <i>Earth House Hold</i>.</li> </ul>	
Thursday 4/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part II: Zen and the Beats (continued)</li> <li>• selections from the prose and poetry of Gary Snyder, Jack Kerouac, Philip Whalen, Lew Welch, Kenneth Rexroth, and Diane DiPrima.</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 4/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part II: Zen and the Beats (continued)</li> <li>• further selections from the Beat writers.</li> </ul>	
Thursday 4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Zen for the West," Part III: Zen and Psychedelics</li> <li>• Villalba Sensei: "Dissolving the Roots of Suffering"</li> <li>• Warner: "Waking Yourself"</li> <li>• Fadiman and Henkel: "Buddhism and Psychedelics"</li> <li>• Dass, Aitken Roshi, Baker Roshi, and Halifax Roshi: Roundable discussion</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 4/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zen for the West," Part III: Zen Practice in the West</li> <li>• Watts: "Life in a Zen Community".</li> <li>• Suzuki (handout): "The Mediation Hall and the Monk's Life".</li> </ul>	
Thursday 4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zen for the West," Part III: Zen Practice in the West (continued)</li> <li>• Kraft (handout): Chapter 10 and Epilogue.</li> <li>• Tworikov (handout): Introduction and Afterword to <i>Zen in America</i>.</li> <li>• Shimano Roshi (handout): "20th Century Buddha-nature"</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 4/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zen for the West," Part III: Zen Practice in the West (continued)</li> <li>• Kapleau: Foreword, Prefaces, and Chapter 1.</li> </ul>	
Thursday 4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zen for the West," Part III: Zen Practice in the West (continued)</li> <li>• Kapleau: Chapter 3.</li> </ul>	
Tuesday 5/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zen for the West," Part III: Zen Practice in the West (continued)</li> <li>• Kapleau: Chapter 5.</li> </ul>	
Thursday 5/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zen for the West," Part III: Zen Practice in the West (continued)</li> <li>• Kapleau: Chapter 5.</li> </ul>	
Monday 5/8	<b>Monday 5/8 Research Papers Due at 4:00 PM</b>	