COURSE DESCRIPTION

IPS511 – Wisdom and Compassion as a Way of Life in the Buddhist Tradition
Vancouver School of Theology SUMMER 2019

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PURPOSE: This course will first explore the core teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, with special attention to the Buddhist understanding of reality, analysis of the human condition, and path to awakening from suffering. We will also consider what the Buddhist tradition offers in terms of meditation and other techniques within Buddhist praxis. With this as our base, we will explore one of the most distinctive traits of Mahayana Buddhism, the noble path of the bodhisattva, an individual (and some archetypes) who vows not to leave this world of pain and suffering until all sentient beings have achieved awakening. This deep intention lies at the core of Mahayana Buddhism. The bodhisattva cultivates wisdom and compassion through the six perfections of the bodhisattva way of life—generosity, ethics, patience, joyful effort, meditative concentration and wisdom. Bodhisattvas are thus naturally engaged in society, actively struggling both to face their own delusions and offering a compassionate response to world. This quality of deep compassion is seen as inherent in the lives of ordinary women and men. We will explore how these virtues develop and support wisdom and compassion and the meditative technologies that help foster and strengthen these virtues.

EXPECTATIONS AND COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:
1. Recognize the complexity and diversity of the Buddhist tradition throughout the world.
2. Outline the distinct teachings, principles, and practices of the Buddhist tradition in general and the Mahayana stream in particular.
3. Discuss the relevance of Buddhist practices and perspectives to issues facing modern society.
4. Apply the Buddhist understanding of reality and analysis of the human condition to common social view of suffering in the contemporary world.
5. Consider the model of the bodhisattva and what it offers both personally to the world at large.
6. Create a model of your own bodhisattva.

REQUIRED READINGS: Read before classes begin!

Keown, Damien. Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press (Amazon and maybe local bookstores) Online questions for this book will be distributed before class-please read and come prepared to discuss.

Leighton, Taigen Dan. Faces of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Archetypes and Their Modern Expression—An Introduction to Mahayana Buddhism. Revised Edition (Wisdom Publication); Formerly published as Bodhisattva Archetypes: Classic Buddhist Guides to Awakening and Their Modern Expression by Taigen Dan Leighton; Foreword by Joan Halifax (Wisdom Publications) Either edition is fine.
ASSIGNMENTS
1. Reading and class participation: All Students including auditors are expected to do all the required readings and participate in class discussions. 100% attendance is required of Certificate and Degree students.
2. Certificate students: Certificate students are required to hand in 5-6 pages of writing that demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class and gives a personal reflection on the reading and material covered.
3. Basic degree students (Diploma; MA; M.Div): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 1500-1875 words/6-8 pages.

Further details about assignments will be provided on the course syllabus.

4. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Buddhist Web Gateways
- DharmaNet International.
- Buddhainet.net.
- Buddhist Resource File.
- The Buddhist Channel.
- Buddhism Portal E-Sangha.

Online Buddhist Journals
- Journal of Buddhist Ethics.
- The zen Site.
- Journal of Global Buddhism.
- Western Buddhist Review.
- Tricycle.
- Lion's Roar.

Resources & Bibliographies
- Buddhist Studies WWW Virtual Library.
- Resources for the Study of Buddhism.
- Tibetan Studies WWW Virtual Library.
- Bibliography of Buddhism in America.
- Buddhist Digital Library and Museum.
- JBE Online Books.
- Mandala.

General Books on Buddhist Spirituality
Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings by William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield
A Path With Heart by Jack Kornfield
A Wise Heart by Jack Kornfield
Eight-Fold Path by Bhikkhu Bodhi
Going to Pieces Without Falling Apart by Mark Epstein
*Insight Meditation: The Practice of Freedom* by Joseph Goldstein

*Radical Acceptance* by Tara Brach

*Start Where You Are* by Pema Chodron

*Spirit of the Buddha* by Martine Batchelor

*The Miracle of Mindfulness* by Thich Nhat Hanh

*Thoughts Without a Thinker* by Mark Epstein

*Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* by Shunryu Suzuki