

Zen and the Art of Nothingness

Syllabus for Six Weeks

Instructor: Dr. Jiang Wu
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the history (mostly stories), teachings, and practice of Zen Buddhism in East Asia and the West. The course will discuss Zen from a variety of perspectives such as philosophy, history, psychology, and contemporary concerns. Students are expected to achieve the following goals if all requirements are met:

- a clear understanding of basic doctrines and theoretical concepts of Zen Buddhism
- an objective characterization of Zen Buddhism as a distinctive Buddhist tradition through one's own analysis and examination
- a general knowledge of the role of Zen Buddhism in Asian and Western culture
- insights into life, health, and wellness

Preliminary Course Reading List:

Zen Action, Zen Person by T. P. Kasulis, University of Hawaii Press (February 1, 1989) ISBN-13: 978-0824810238

Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis by Erich Fromm (Author), D. T. Suzuki (Author), Richard De Martino, Harpercollins; Underlining edition (June 1970) ISBN-10: 0060901756, ISBN-13: 978-0060901752. (Out of print. Please buy used books from Amazon.)

Zen Baggage: A Pilgrimage to China by Bill Porter. Counterpoint; Reprint edition (January 13, 2010) ISBN-10: 9781582435404; ISBN-13: 978-1582435404

Shoes Outside the Door: Desire, Devotion, and Excess at San Francisco Zen Center by Michael Downing Counterpoint (September 3, 2002) ISBN-10: 1582432546; ISBN-13: 978-1582432540.

Zen Sourcebook: Traditional Documents from China, Korea, and Japan. Ed. Stephen Addiss, with Stanley Lombardo and Judith Roitman. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008. ISBN-10: 9780872209091.

Faculty Bio:

Dr. Jiang Wu (Ph.D. Harvard University, 2002) is currently a professor in the Department of East Asian Studies, director of Center for Buddhist Studies. His research interests include seventeenth-century Chinese Buddhism, especially Chan/Zen Buddhism, the role of Buddhist canons in the formation of East Asian Buddhist culture, and the historical exchanges between Chinese Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. He has published two books and edited three plus many articles.

Lecture Topics and Course Schedule

(Please watch lecture recordings and complete quizzes and homework indicated in the following schedule.)

Week 1: Zen Philosophy

Lesson 1: Zen as No Mind

Lesson 2: Zen as Without-thinking

Readings: Zen Action 39–64, 127–141.

Week 2: Zen History in China

Lesson 3: Bodhidharma and the Inception of Chan

Lesson 4: Huineng and Construction of Patriarchal Lineage

Readings: Zen Sourcebook 1–89.

Week 3: Zen History in Japan

Lesson 5: Development of Koan

Lesson 6: Dogen and Hakuin

Readings: Zen Sourcebook 89–133, 140–173, 243–251, Zen Action 65–103, 104–126

Week 4: Monastic Zen in China

Lesson 7: Chan Practice in Monastic Life

Lesson 8: Watch an interview with Bill Porter on his *Zen Baggage*. Find the video on Youtube or Video Link section in D2L.

Reading: Zen Baggage (entire)

Week 5: Zen in America

Lesson 9 Buddhism in the West

Lesson 10: The Problem of San Francisco Zen Center

Readings: Shoes outside the Door (entire)

Video: *Buddhism Comes to America*

Week 6: Zen and Psychology

Lesson 11: D. T. Suzuki's and Fromm's Version of Zen

Lesson 12: Zen Humanism

Readings: Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis (entire), Zen Action 142—153.