First Year Research Seminar: Buddha Studio (FIRST-UG 744), Spring 2013

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:45 AM, 1 Washington Place, Room 401

Prof. Jean Gallagher   Email: jgalla@poly.edu   Office: 1 Washington Place, Room 431
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11 AM-1 PM and by appointment   Office Phone: 212-998-7329

Buddha Studio: The Art of Practice and the Practice of Art
What is the place of Buddhism in modern and post-modern American culture, particularly in the practice of art? How has Buddhist thought impacted American literature, music, and performance? How have Western cultural assumptions and aesthetic practices in turn affected the understanding and practice of Buddhism in America? This course will focus on some of the ways in which American literature, visual art, and music reflect, embody, or respond to Buddhism, and how these arts impact the landscapes of American Buddhism. The course will include readings in Buddhist thought and history, particularly its emergence in the North American context. Writing in the course will include informal response papers, three shorter essays, and a longer research essay, produced in multiple drafts with in-class workshops. Field trips and guest lectures will supplement the course reading.

Course Requirements:
• **Attendance (worth two letter grades).** You’ll receive a separate grade for this: 0-1 unexcused absence=A; 2 absences=B; 3 absences=C; 4 absences=D; 5 or more absences=F.
• **Written observations (worth three letter grades).** About a page on assigned reading, due in hard copy every class meeting.
• **Three short essays (worth one letter grade each) and one longer research essay (worth two letter grades).** You’ll submit a first draft of each essay in hard copy in class on the due date; I’ll provide written observations; you’ll submit a final draft in hard copy on the due date for a grade. The grade will reflect not only the quality of the essay but your timely submission of all drafts and preparatory writing. Late essays will be progressively downgraded.
• **Two Research Trips (worth one letter grade).** These might include visits to Buddhist practice centers in New York City, visits to events at Tibet House or the Rubin Museum of Art, or other sites/events related to Buddhism and art practice in the city. See the syllabus below for timed events, or the “Resources” page of our class site for information about practice centers. If you find another site/event you’d like to attend, please discuss it with me before you go. After each research trip, please write a page of observations about the event or site.

Books to Buy:

NYU Classes Site:
We have a "NYU Classes" course site where you’ll find:
• **Announcements,** including the current reading and writing assignments. Always check the Announcements page well in advance of each class meeting to make sure you know what the
current assignment is. Announcements will also be sent to you NYU email address, so please be sure you have set your Blackboard settings to receive emails.

- **Resources:** Shorter reading assignments will be found in "Resources."

**A Few More Things to Keep in Mind:**

- **In-class writing:** We’ll be doing a lot of it, and I’ll ask you to do this the old-fashioned way: with paper and pen. Why? Because attention is not only one of the key subject we’ll be reading about (as an essential element of contemplative practice); it’s also one of the key skills we’ll be practicing as readers and writers. I’ve observed that the presence of laptops, etc. tends to interfere with the practice of this skill. So please leave laptops, tablets, and cell phones in their cases during class meetings.

- **Saving copies of your work:** Please always keep a back-up copy of everything you write for the class.

- **E-mail:** I will always post the current assignment to our Classes site AND send it by email. If you tend to use an e-mail address other than your NYU address, please arrange to have any mail sent to your NYU e-mail address automatically forwarded to your non-NYU address.

- **Electronic noise:** Please check to be sure your cell phone and other electronic noisemakers are turned off before coming to class. If you forget, and your cell phone rings in class (it happens to the best of us), please do not answer the phone! Just turn it off as unobtrusively and quickly as you can. We’ll all do our best to act as if we never heard it ring.

- **Arriving:** We’ll start class right on time. If for some extraordinary reason you arrive late, please quietly look in at the door to check to see if a fellow student is reading something out loud. If she/he is reading out loud, please wait until she/he is finished, then come in quietly.

- **The Gallatin Writing Center** is staffed by tutors who can help you with any stage of the writing process. The Center is at 1 Washington Place, room 423. See www.nyu.edu/gallatin/writingschedule for instructions on how to make an appointment.

**Academic Integrity:** Here is the Gallatin School’s official statement on academic integrity:

"As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html] for a full description of the academic integrity policy."

**Reading and Assignment Schedule**

This may be subject to some change as we move through the semester, so please always check our NYU Classes Announcements page for current assignments.

**Part 1: Buddha and Early Buddhist Texts**


[**Possible Research Trip:** Wednesday, January 30, 6-8 PM: Attend *Listening to the Body Fluid* by Jayoun Yoon at Tibet House, 22 West 15th Street, New York, NY 10011, 212.807.0563. The performance is part}

Thursday, Jan. 31. Hear observations. Assignment: Early Buddhist texts from India: *Dhammapada* and selections from the Pali Canon. Choose one section from each for written observations.

*[Possible research trip: Sunday, February 2, 12-3 PM: Sharon Salzberg, "Suffering and the End of Suffering: Exploring the Four Noble Truths." The Shala Union Square, 815 Broadway. Website: theshala.com.]*

Tuesday, Feb. 5. Hear observations. Assignment: Mahayana sutras from India: *Diamond Sutra, Heart Sutra*, and selections from Nagarjuna, *Verses from the Center*. Write observations on *Heart Sutra* and Nagarjuna poems; choose one passage from *Diamond Sutra* for observations.

*[Possible Research Trips: February 6-April 20, Brainwave 2013 at the Rubin Museum of Art. Various talks and screenings. The "Lunch Matters: Best of Brainwave" screenings are free admission for NYU students. Website: [http://www.rmanyc.org/brainwave](http://www.rmanyc.org/brainwave)*

Thursday, Feb. 7. Hear observations. Assignment: Ch'an writing from China: Poems by Han Shan (Cold Mountain) and selections from the *Mumonkan* and *Blue Cliff Record*. Seed sentences for Essay 1. Assignment: First draft essay 1.


**Part 2: Zen and American Culture in the 1950's**


**Part 3: Three (or More) Vehicles: Contemporary Buddhist Writing and Practice in the U.S.**


[Research trips to Buddhist Practice Centers: Between now and March 27, visit one or two local Buddhist practice centers (see list in "Resources") and write a page of observations about each visit.]


**SPRING RECESS**


**Part 4: Contemporary Art/Practice**

Thursday, March 28. Observations. Hear research visit reports. Seed sentences for Essay 3. Assignment: Write first draft of essay 3. Write five research questions arising from any of the reading we've done so far, and/or your research trips. Choose one (or two that seem related).

Tuesday, April 2. Guest Lecture by Ethan Nichtern. Seed Sentences for Essay 3. Assignment: Write final draft of Essay 3. Read selected poems; choose four for observations.

Thursday, April 4. Hear observations. Hear research questions. Discuss possible sources. Assignment: Read selected poems. Choose four for observation. Write final draft of Essay 3.


Thursday April 11. Bobst Library visit. Assignment: Selections from Nixon Under the Bodhi Tree. Choose one story for written observations. Begin to gather, read, and take notes on research sources.

Tuesday, April 16. Observations. Selections from Nixon Under the Bodhi Tree. Choose one story for written observation. Continue to gather, read, and take notes on research sources.


Tuesday, April 23. Screening from Marina Abramovic: The Artist is Present. Assignment: Read Abramovic interview and essays. Choose two passages for observation.


Thursday, May 9. Final meeting: get back second drafts of Essay 4. Final drafts due by e-mail on the scheduled final exam date.