Gallatin School, New York University  
Transfer Research Seminar: Buddhism and American Culture (FIRST-UG 806)  
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45 AM  
Global Center for Academic and Spiritual Life (GCASL), 238 Thompson Street, Room 383  
Prof. Jean Gallagher Email: jg2835@nyu.edu Office: 1 Washington Place, Room 431  
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11 AM-12 noon and by appointment  
Office Phone: 212-998-7314  

This course focuses on some of the ways in which American literature, visual art, and music reflect, embody, or respond to Buddhist principles and practice. The course includes discussion of Buddhist thought and history, particularly its emergence in the North American context, and of traditional Buddhist arts. Work by Han Shan, Matsuo Basho, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jack Kerouac, John Cage, Meredith Monk, Bill Viola, Gary Snyder, Charles Johnson, and Ruth Ozeki may be included, along with critical and historical work by Donald Lopez, Rick Fields, and Kay Larson. Writing in the course includes informal response papers, three to five shorter essays, and a longer research essay, produced in multiple drafts with in-class workshops.

**Course Objectives**
- To gain understanding of Buddhist thought and practice both in its Asian and North American contexts  
- To explore how Buddhist thought and practice impact some aspects of contemporary American culture  
- To practice a number of rhetorical forms to use to help shape research essays  
- To practice formulating research questions, seeking and finding sources, and to using those sources to draft and rewrite research essays.  
- To practice distinguishing observation from inference in critical writing

**Course Requirements:**
- **Attendance (worth three 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.  
- **Writing Journal (worth three letter grades).** 1-2 pages, due in hard copy every class meeting.  
- **Three short research 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.

**Books to Buy:**

**NYU Classes Site:**
We have an "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 on the “Resources” page.

**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 NYU 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.


Mon Sept 8: Hear observations on Armstrong. "Once/Now" seed sentences. **Assignment**: Write a "Once/Now" core essay.
Wed Sept 10: Hear "Once/Now" core-essays. Write conclusions. Assignment: Read The Dhammapada and "Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion." Choose one section from each for written observation.

Mon Sept 15: Hear observations. Assignment: Read Heart Sutra and Diamond Sutra. Choose one passage from each for written observation.


Mon Sept 22: Hear observations. Assignment: read selections from Eihei Dogen, Shobogenzo and Bassui Tokusho, Mud and Water. Choose one passage from each for written observations.


Wed Oct 8. Observations on Insight essays. Conclusions. Assignment: Read Kerouac, Dharma Bums; choose two passages for written observations and write down 10 questions that arise as you read.

Mon Oct 13: No class meeting (Fall Recess).

Wed Oct 15: Hear observations and questions. Assignment: List questions (who/what/where/when/why/how?; who else, what else, where else, how else?). Choose one, or a combination of related questions. Make a short list: What kinds of sources might help you answer your question?

Mon Oct 20: Bobst Library visit: searching for and finding primary and secondary sources using Bobcat. Assignment: find one secondary source that might help you answer your questions. Read your source and take notes: full bibliographical data + summary of author's key assertion + what kind of evidence he or she uses to support that evidence + quotations (with page numbers where you found the quote). Bring in source and your notes.

Wed Oct 22: Report on finding/reading/making notes from sources. Assignment: Read your secondary source's index/bibliography/list of works cited. Use it and Bobcat to help you find two more sources (primary and/or secondary). Find those sources, read them, record full bibliographical information and take notes, including accurate quotations + page number where you found the quotation; Note particularly where your sources conflict or disagree).


Wed Nov 5: Report on secondary sources. Assignment: using secondary source + Bobcat, find two more sources (primary and/or secondary). Read and take notes.


Mon Nov 24: Reports on secondary sources. Assignment: find two more sources. Read and take notes.


Mon Dec 8: Village Zendo visit. Assignment: final journal entry.