

College of Visual Arts and Design, University of North Texas
Spring 2018
AEAH 4824: Topics in Asian Art



Buddhist Art of Asia
T/Th 2-3:20pm

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Course Description: This course is an introduction to the Buddhist arts of India, China, and Japan, with a special focus on the early periods of their development within each country. Selected artworks will be examined in detail with an emphasis on their historical and socio-religious contexts. Though the course is divided into three separate geographical units, similar themes are addressed throughout. Topics that are highlighted in each unit include the iconography and iconology of Buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and other celestial beings—the roles of imperial and monastic patronage—the development of different schools of Buddhism and their interactions with other religious traditions—and the ritual use of art.

Course Objectives and Goals: This course is designed to familiarize students with the Buddhist arts of Asia, specifically India, China, and Japan. The goal is to attain a clearer understanding of selected artistic forms, contents, and contexts of artworks produced in these countries. By engaging in the visual cultures of Asia, students can cultivate a thorough knowledge of this important area within the field of art history, and, at the same time, foster the essential skills of critical looking, reading, and writing about art.

Goals of the course include:

- (1) to enhance critical reading skills
- (2) to refine writing skills
- (3) to recognize a variety of approaches and paradigms employed in the study of Buddhist art

Course Structure: This is a lecture course that meets twice a week for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Reading assignments for the course are listed below in the lecture schedule under each main subject of study. In order to fully prepare for lecture, the student should complete the reading assignment *before* the scheduled class.

Required Text: Robert E. Fisher, *Buddhist Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993). Available for rent or purchase at the UNT bookstore and on reserve in Willis Library.

Required Readings: In addition to the textbook, required readings are available on Blackboard (learn.unt.edu)

Articles/Chapters on Blackboard:

Donald S. Lopez, Jr. *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to its History & Teachings* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001), 37-59.

"Edicts of the Indian Mauryan Emperor Ashoka," in R. Brown and D. Hutton, eds. *Asian Art* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 13-20.

- Susan Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal* 49 (1990): 401-8.
- Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* XXI (1992): 45-66.
- Gregory Schopen. "On Monks, Nuns and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism," *Artibus Asiae* 49 (1989): 153-68.
- Robert L. Brown, "The Feminization of the Sarnath Gupta-Period Buddha Images," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 16 n.s. (2002): 165-179.
- Lisa N. Owen, "Constructing Another Perspective for Ajanta's Fifth-Century Excavations," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 24.1 (2001): 27-59.
- Stanley K. Abe, "Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple," *Ars Orientalis*, 20 (1990): 1-31.
- Amy McNair, "On the Patronage by Tang-Dynasty Nuns at Wanfo Grotto, Longmen," *Artibus Asiae* 59, no. 3/4 (2000): 161-188.
- Barbara E. Reed, "The Gender Symbolism of Kuan-yin Bodhisattva." In José Ignacio Cabezon, ed. *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 159-180.
- Wen C. Fong, "Of Nature and Art: Monumental Landscape," in R. Brown and D. Hutton, eds. *Asian Art* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 278-288.
- "Proclamation of the Emperor Shomu on the Erection of the Great Buddha Image," in R. Brown and D. Hutton, eds. *Asian Art* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2006), 275-277.
- Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, "The Phoenix Hall at Uji and the Symmetries of Replication," *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 4 (1995): 647-672.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:

Exams (3 in-class essay exams @ 25% each).....	75%
Writing Assignment.....	15%
Attendance and Participation in Class Discussions.....	10%

Description of In-Class Exams: There will be a total of 3 in-class essay exams. Dates for these exams are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. At least one week prior to each in-class exam, 20-25 images will be available on Blackboard for review. For the exams, I will select 6-8 images. On the exam, I will provide the relevant information of each artwork (title, location, date), but you will need to answer specific questions relating to the images (either as a pair or individually). You will have approximately 15 minutes to write a response to each of the questions. It is imperative that you arrive to class on time, as I will not re-show the images once the exam is in progress.

In addition, **there will be no make-ups for the in-class exams.** If you miss an exam, you will receive a **zero** on that test unless you provide proper documentation for a University-sanctioned absence (e.g., documented illness, team event, religious observance, family emergency, etc.). You must contact me within 24 hours of the missed exam. If, after reviewing your documentation, I agree to schedule a make-up exam with you, it must be taken within one week of the missed test.

Description of Writing Assignment: During the semester, students are to turn in a short paper that assesses one or more of the assigned readings. The assigned reading(s) and date of discussion are highlighted in bold in the lecture schedule. Specific content guidelines will be distributed at the appropriate time. Check the lecture schedule for discussion and due date and read over the Grading Criteria on the last page of this syllabus. *The paper must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date* and the student must stay for the lecture. In other words, do not simply drop off your paper and leave. If you do so, I will not accept the paper. In addition, **emailed submissions are not accepted under any circumstances.**

Late work is also not accepted unless there is a documented emergency. As with the exams, the student must notify me about the emergency within 24 hours of the due date of the assignment. If I agree to accept a late assignment, it will be marked down 10 points per *day* (not class) that it is late.

Attendance Policy: Attendance WILL be taken via a sign-up sheet that is passed around during each class. It is up to you to make sure that you have signed the roster. You are allowed two absences without penalty. After that, your attendance grade (which is initially recorded as 100% A) will be lowered by half a letter grade for each absence over those two. It is also important for you to attend class as the exams are based on lectures and the visual material presented. In many cases, I do not completely agree with the information provided in the readings and so I will offer alternative interpretations of selected artworks and include supplemental visual comparisons during lecture. Since you will be responsible for this material when preparing for and taking exams, it is imperative that you come to class and participate fully if you wish to do well. Should you miss a class lecture, it is up to you to get notes from a classmate. I do not respond to emails asking "what did I miss" nor do I repeat entire lectures during my office hours.

Posting of Grades: Grades will be posted on Blackboard one day after exams or assignments are handed back. It is your responsibility to verify that the posted grade corresponds with the grade recorded on the assignment/exam. If you are not satisfied with the grade you earned, you can come and see me for a re-grading. However, you must realize that a re-grading can either raise or lower your original score. Once the assignment or exam is passed back, you have a window of two weeks to talk to me about your grade. In other words, at the end of the semester, I will not look over past material for you. I would also suggest that you hold onto all of your graded work until you receive the final grade for the class.

Extra Credit: Opportunities for extra credit will be available throughout the semester. Typically, these include attending lectures offered in CVAD. After attending the lecture, please turn in a computer-generated, 1-page (double-spaced) summary of the material presented. Students can submit 2 summaries for a total of 5 extra credit points that will be added to the lowest exam score.

Student Behavior in the Classroom: Student behavior that interferes with a professor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences: According to UNT Policy 18.1.16, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism necessitates that I file an incident report to the appropriate authorities and this may result in your failing the assignment, failing the course, or being expelled from the University. Please consult the University's Code of Student Conduct or ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how you should give proper acknowledgement to your sources in your written work.

Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, and Assault: UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

ADA Accommodation Statement: UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at *disability.unt.edu*

Course Risk Factor: According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category 1 course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students in this class will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

Emergency Procedures: In case of emergency (alarm will sound), please follow the building evacuation plans posted on each floor of your building and proceed to the nearest parking lot. In case of tornado (campus sirens will sound) or other weather related threat, please go to the nearest hallway or room on your floor without exterior windows and remain there until an all clear signal is sounded. Follow the instructions of your professor and act accordingly.

Schedule

Please Note: The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus, particularly the reading schedule and assignments, if necessary. © 2018 Lisa N. Owen

Jan 16 (T): *Introduction to the Course; Who is Buddha?*

Jan 18 (Th): *Biography of the Buddha*
Readings: textbook 7-16 and Lopez on Blackboard

Jan 23 (T): *Buddhism and Ashoka*
Readings: textbook 29-30 and "Edicts" on Blackboard

Jan 25 (Th): *Buddhism and Ashoka con't*

Jan 30 (T): *Art of the Stupa*
Reading: textbook 31-41

Feb 01 (Th): *Art of the Stupa and Debates over Aniconism*
Instructions for Writing Assignment (Huntington and Dehejia on Blackboard)

Feb 06 (T): *Debates over Aniconism*
Readings: Huntington and Dehejia on Blackboard

Feb 08 (Th): *Origins of the Buddha Image*
Readings: textbook 41-52 and Schopen on Blackboard

Feb 13 (T): *Origins of the Buddha Image*; Writing Assignment due in class

Feb 15 (Th): *Developments in Buddhist Imagery*
Readings: textbook 54-56 and Brown on Blackboard

Feb 20 (T): *Buddhist Monastic Architecture*
Readings: textbook 52-61 and Owen on Blackboard

Feb 22 (Th): *Buddhist Monastic Architecture con't*

Feb 27 (T): Exam 1—India

Mar 01 (Th): *Art and the Silk Road*
Reading: textbook 86-95

Mar 06 (T): *Early Buddhist Imagery in China*

Mar 08 (Th): *Sacred Architecture: Pagoda and Caves*
Readings: textbook 96-98 and Abe on Blackboard

Spring Break—Mar 12 to Mar 16

Mar 20 (T): *Sacred Architecture con't*
Reading: McNair on Blackboard

Mar 22 (Th): Independent work

Mar 27 (T): *Pure Land Buddhist Art in China*
Reading: textbook 99-110

Mar 29 (Th): *Popularization of Kuan-yin*
Readings: textbook 115-124 and Reed on Blackboard

Apr 03 (T): *Chan Buddhist Art and the Development of Landscape Painting (Neo-Confucianism)*
Reading: Fong on Blackboard

Apr 05 (Th): *Landscape Painting con't*

Apr 10 (T): Exam 2—China

Apr 12 (Th): *Buddhism and Prince Shotoku*

Reading: textbook 138-144

Apr 17 (T): *Buddhist Monastic Architecture*

Readings: textbook 144-148 and "Proclamation" on Blackboard

Apr 19 (Th): *Esoteric Buddhist Art*

Reading: textbook 148-154

Apr 24 (T): *Pure Land Buddhist Art in Japan*

Readings: textbook 154-156 and Yiengpruksawan on Blackboard

Apr 26 (Th): *Pure Land Buddhist Art con't*

May 1 (T): *Zen Buddhist Art*

Reading: textbook 156-166

May 3 (Th): Exam 3—Japan

Grading Criteria for Written Work

A = Such a grade indicates that the student assessed the reading(s) and did so with rigor and clarity of thought. An 'A' paper means that there were little to no errors in grammar/spelling and that the introduction and conclusion were clear as was the development of the body of the paper. An 'A' paper also demonstrates that the student not only carefully read the *entire* assignment, but thought about the larger issues and considered the author's use of evidence.

B = Such a grade indicates that the student was able to execute the assignment with diligence and forethought, though some main issues in the reading(s) were not addressed fully by the student. A grade of 'B' also usually indicates that there were limited structural, spelling, or grammatical problems.

C = This is similar to the 'B' description, but the number of problems is more extensive. These may include significant grammatical or structural problems, adding irrelevant material or new material inappropriately, too many generalities, and/or not addressing the main issue(s) in the assigned reading(s). 'C' papers often contain too many quoted passages.

D = A grade of 'D' indicates that the student did a poor job in demonstrating that s/he read the assignment. Further, grammatical/structural problems make a 'D' essay quite difficult to follow. There are usually far too many generalities and a lack of analysis.

F = This either indicates that the assignment was not done or what was done was simply unacceptable for any number of reasons. This includes any indication of plagiarism, which may entail further academic penalty. See the description of plagiarism in this syllabus.