



Phil 260-2: Zen and Philosophy
45 Contact Hours

Dr. J. Jeremy Wisnewski
Johnstone 301 LEC MTWThF 12:00PM – 3:00PM
Phone Extension: x4671 **Office:** GOL 133
Office Hours: before or after class, by appt

Required Course Texts

- Kapleau, *Three Pillars of Zen*, Anchor Books, 2000.
- Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Shambhala, 2011.
- Paul Reps and Nyogen Senzaki, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones: A Collection of Zen and Pre-Zen Writings*, Tuttle Publishing, 1985.
- Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good*, Yale University Press, 1992

Course Description

In this course we will explore the writings of some notable figures in the history of Zen and in the 'Kyoto school' of Japanese philosophy, examining the specific ways in which they try to articulate the philosophical underpinnings of Zen to a Western audience.

What you will learn:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate:

1. Basic understanding of the technique of vipassana meditation
2. Basic understanding of the relevance of meditation to Buddhist philosophical reflection
3. Basic understanding of the central tenets of Zen Buddhist philosophy as presented in the works of the Kyoto School and through notable historical figures.

What will be assigned:

1. Students will complete a koan essay
2. Students will complete reflections on the readings and on the progress and challenges present in the practice of meditation.
3. Students will write one final paper on a topic of their own choosing (this topic must be approved by the instructor).
4. Students will complete a final project.

Grading

Koan Essay (30%); Final Paper (30%); Final Project (20%); Journal (20%)

A NOTE ON MEDITATIVE PRACTICE

There are many kinds of meditation. Indeed, there is no single word in Sanskrit for what we call 'meditation.' Different meditative traditions emphasize different things—some encourage focus on an object, some involve repeating a particular thought or name, some involve the attempt to cultivate *metta* (loving kindness). There are even differences among Zen approaches to meditation (*zazen*). In this course, we will engage in *vipassana* meditation—a practice at the root of many

other meditative traditions (including *zazen*). If you are familiar with other forms of meditation, please refrain from utilizing them when we sit.

ASSIGNMENTS

Koan Essay

There will be one short essay assignment in the class (3-4 pages). Student will explicate one koan from *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, utilizing material we have read to aid in the explication. Essays should emphasize critical argument and analysis skills, interacting fruitfully with the texts we are reading. Under no circumstances should I receive a paper that has not quoted and examined those course texts under consideration or relevant to the koan in question. *I mean it. No funny business. [turning in a blank sheet of paper and calling it 'zen' is a fun joke; it is not an act of enlightenment, nor a good way to do well in the class!]*

Final Paper

Students will write a final paper on a topic of their choosing (note: all topics must be approved by the instructor). Final papers should be approximately 5 pages, and should deal with issues relevant to the course. Final papers are due on the last day of class.

Final Meditation Project (last day of class)

Students will complete a one-hour sitting meditation, followed by 5 minutes of noble silence and 15 more minutes of meditation. It'll be okay. You can do it.

Journal

Students are required to keep a journal, to be turned in periodically. Journal entries should be at least 200 words *per entry* (see schedule for specific due dates and number of required journal entries). In journal entries, students should reflect on their experience of meditation, as well as how this experience relates to the readings we are doing. It is perfectly acceptable for some journal entries to be devoted solely to exploring meditative practice (what one is struggling with, not understanding, finding difficult, etc). It is also acceptable for some journal entries to deal exclusively with some issue in the reading. However, students are expected to do *both things* regularly. Moreover, I expect those entries taking up issues in the reading to actually *quote and analyze* the texts we're using. ***Dates should be provided for each journal entry.***

Weekend Homework

In addition to the readings and regular assignments, students will be expected to engage in *vipassana* on the weekends as well. This will be considered part of the regular coursework. I ask that all students sit for a minimum of 15 minutes on each weekend day during the course (if this is going to be problem, please see me immediately). This means that, by the end of the course, students will have practiced *vipassana* for over 3 weeks, without missing a day. (tip: it is *much* easier to sit in the mornings).

POLICIES

Electronic devices

Electronic devices are not to be used during class time. No computers, no phones—not even calculators. Under no circumstances should a phone ever ring during class. Under no circumstances should a student ever check his or her phone, favorite website, Facebook feed,

computer battery, etc. during class. If you are caught using a phone during class time, you will be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

If you are caught with a cell phone during meditation, you will receive an F for the course. No exceptions.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance is absolutely essential in this course, given what we're doing. Missing more than 3 classes will thus result in automatic failure for the course.

Be on time. We will sit at the beginning and end of each class. Punctuality is thus essential. If you are late, please wait outside of the classroom until after the class has finished sitting. At that point, you may come in.

3 late arrivals = 1 absence; 3 absences = automatic failure in the course

Perfect attendance will boost your grade by 1/3 (e.g. B to B+, B+ to A-)

Academic Dishonesty

All students are responsible for knowing the academic honesty policy of the college. Violations of this policy will not be tolerated.

Special Accommodations

Hartwick College makes reasonable accommodations for qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a learning disability, a chronic illness, or a physical or psychiatric disability that may have some impact on your work for this class and for which you may need accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services. 607.431.4546

Sex Discrimination, Harassment, and Misconduct Statement

Hartwick College is deeply committed to equal opportunity and a tolerant, supportive learning environment and thus prohibits Sex Discrimination, Harassment, and Misconduct (www.Hartwick.edu/TitleIX). Please note that faculty and staff are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. If you wish to speak *confidentially* about an incident of sexual misconduct, please contact one of the following resources: Perrella Wellness Center, Health – (607) 431-4120, or Counseling – (607) 431-4120; or Opportunities for Otsego's Violence Intervention Program – (607) 432-4855. If you wish to report an incident to the College or have questions about school policies and procedures, please contact our school's **Title IX Coordinator**, Traci Perrin, at PerrinT@Hartwick.edu or 607-431-4293. In an emergency and to request immediate assistance contact Campus Safety at 607-431-4111.

Schedule

You should read assignments at least **twice** and take notes while you read. In addition, you should review the reading prior to each class. If you cannot present the main points in a given reading assignment then you haven't read it carefully enough!

Date & Day	Reading (to be completed prior to class)	Due Dates
	Introduction to the course and to <i>vipassana bhavana</i>	
	Kapleau, 31-94	
	Kapleau, 110-173	Two Journal Entries due (at least 200 words each) <i>Late assignments will not be accepted.</i>
	S. Suzuki, <i>Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind</i> , 1-79	
	S. Suzuki, <i>Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind</i> , 80-138 Kapleau, 180-210	
	Kapleau, 228-298	
	<i>Zen Flesh, Zen Bones</i> , 109-161	Two Journal Entries due (200 words each) One entry should describe the mindfulness exercise assigned in class. <i>Late assignments will not be accepted.</i>
	Kapleau, 299-324	Koan Essay due <i>Late assignments will not be accepted.</i>
	Nishida, 1-36	
	Nishida, 1-36	
	Nishida, 37-83	
	Nishida, 37-83	Two Journal Entries due (200 words each) <i>Late assignments will not be accepted.</i>
	Nishida, 87-145	One Journal Entry due on Nishida <i>Late assignments will not be accepted.</i>
	Nishida, 87-145 (cont.)	
	Nishida, 149-176	
	Nishida, 149-176 (cont.)	
	FINAL PROJECT	Final paper due <i>Late assignments will not be accepted.</i>