

JAN - 5 2004

LIBERAL STUDIES

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC # W1-235

Action _____

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- (x) Professor Stuart Chandler Phone 357-5612
- (x) Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when?) _____
- (x) Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
- (x) Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENT COURSE

- () Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
- () Course Number/Title _____
- () Statement concerning departmental responsibility
- () Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- () Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
- () Course Number/Title _____
- () Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) Stuart Chandler

Department Chairperson Stuart Chandler

College Dean Ann

Director of Liberal Studies Chapelle 1/19/04

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Two or three samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students. Limit: 4 pages. (Single copies of longer items, if essential to the proposal, may be submitted to be passed among LSC members and returned to you.)

Please number all pages. Provide one copy to Liberal Studies Committee.

Before you submit: Have you double-checked your proposal against "The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions"?

RLST 220 Buddhist Thought and Practice is proposed for identification as a “W” course. The class has recently been approved as a Liberal Studies Non-Western course and as a Liberal Studies Elective. It will also count toward a Religious Studies major or minor and toward an Asian Studies minor. The class will be offered every third or semester. When taught as a writing-intensive course, class size will be limited to 25.

There are six basic types of writing which occur in this class:

1. Writing ethnographic description: All students will participate in a one-day or two-day fieldtrip to a Buddhist organization (there will be one-day trips to the Buddhist Compassion Relief Society, Soka Gakkai, the Mindfulness Community, and to the residence of an Indiana, PA resident who practices Tibetan meditation and has a home shrine; overnight excursions will go to the Bhavana Society, Pittsburgh Zen Center, and Mt. Equity Zendo). During their fieldtrip and/or immediately afterwards, students will take copious notes on the site and activities. These notes will form the basis of a 4-5 page fieldwork report. At this stage, the focus will be on writing detailed, lively prose based purely on each student’s own observations.
2. Integrating fieldwork and readings to write an ethnographic essay: Once students have submitted their fieldwork reports, they will be assigned articles that are specific to the group they have observed. The students will then be expected to integrate the general readings from class, the case-study specific readings, and their own fieldwork to write a 10-12 page essay about the organization. The task will be to introduce the history, teachings, and practices of the group with special emphasis on how the tradition is practiced here in the United States. Each essay will go through two peer-reads, one by another student on the same fieldwork team, and another by a student on a different team. The author will make revisions based on peer comments, submit this revised version for my feedback, and only then submit a final copy.
3. Writing to improve observational and listening skills: As part of their participation portfolio students will submit two types of notes. First, they will include the notes they took while conducting fieldwork (when it is not required to submit such notes, it is surprising how many students neglect to immediately write down data while conducting fieldwork, apparently assuming they will remember all important details; requiring the submission of fieldwork notes therefore results in much higher quality ethnographic essays). Second, they will include notes they wrote during class lectures and discussions.
4. Writing to improve reading skills: One must be able to read well in order to write well. Unfortunately, very few undergraduate students truly know how to read. Even fewer know how to use writing to read more effectively. To help them develop this skill I will provide study questions that assist in identifying the most important points of each selected text. Students will be required to fully fill out at least five of the twenty-five guides. It should be noted, however, that because questions on the weekly quizzes I give will closely parallel those on the study guides, students will find immediate benefit in filling out all guides (when I have experimented with such study guides in the past, approximately 80% of students have filled the guides out.) All filled out study guides will become part of the participation portfolio submitted at the end of the semester.
5. Writing to clarify thoughts: The study guides serve to help clarify what the author is saying. The next step is to consider the implications of what has been said. Students will be guided in doing so by being assigned a series of short in-class essays. In some cases the topic will be to compare a certain aspect of the most recent reading with a text examined earlier in the semester. Other times, the students will be required to creatively apply a reading to a particular topic (for instance, utilizing Buddhist principles to analyze a variety of contemporary ethical debates). Such assignments will enable students to recognize that writing can be used to aid one in thinking more clearly about subjects. These short essays will be included in the participation

portfolio submitted at the close of the semester. They will also serve as the basis for the essays to be written on the final exam.

6. Writing for evaluation: Students will take a two-hour final examination. They will be provided with the questions well beforehand but will not be allowed to consult any notes while writing the test. The essays will be evaluated on content, as well as on clarity of argument and organization of thought. Because of the time constraints of an in-class examination, however, there will be no expectation of finely edited prose.

Summary Chart for Writing Assignments*

A. Writing Assignments					
Assignment Title	# of Assignments	# of total pages	Graded (Yes/No)	Opportunity for Revision (Yes/No)	Written Assignment represents what % of final course grade
Fieldwork notes	1	4-5	yes (collected as part of the participation portfolio)	yes—will be written up as report	participation (including portfolio) = 10% of course grade
Fieldwork report	1	5-6	Yes: high pass, pass, or fail	Yes—when it is developed into an article	a failing grade for this exercise results in a 5 point deduction in the final grade for the ethnographic essay; a grade of “high pass” results in two points being added to the ethnographic essay’s grade
Ethnographic essay	1	10-12	yes	Yes (twice: after peer reads and again after receiving feedback from me)	40%
In-class essays	app. 6	app. 6	yes (collected as part of the participation portfolio)	no	participation (including portfolio) = 10% of course grade
In-class note-taking	NA	variable	yes (collected as part of the participation portfolio)	no	participation (including portfolio) = 10% of course grade
Study guides	app. 25	app. 50 (app. 2 pages per study guide)	yes (collected as part of the participation portfolio)	no	participation (including portfolio) = 10% of course grade
Totals			NA	NA	50%
Required	14	35-39			
Including optional	34	75-79			

B. Examinations (Complete only if you intend to use essay exams/short answers as part of the required number of pages of writing.)			
Exams	Approx.% of exam that is essay or short answer	Anticipated # of pages for essay or short answer, or approx. word count	Exam constitutes what % of final course grade
1.	100%	The equivalent of 5 to 6 typed pages	20%
2.			
3.			
Totals	100%	5-6 pages	20%

***Total writing assignments should contain at least 5000 words (approximately 15-20 typed pages) in two or more separate assignments; written assignments should be a major part of the final grade—at least 50% or more.**

Writing Intensive Course Proposal: Buddhist Thought and Practice

I. Catalog Description

RLST220 Buddhist Thought and Practice	3 credits
	3 lecture hours
Prerequisite: none	0 lab hours
	(3c-01-3sh)

In this course we will explore the history, teachings, and practices of the main schools of Buddhism. We will consider the tradition both as it has developed in Asia as well as its modifications as it has been introduced into Western societies.

II. Course Objectives

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Gain a thorough knowledge of the history, teachings, and practices of Buddhism.
2. Compare the teachings and practices of the Buddhist tradition as it has taken root in such places as India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet, and the United States.
3. Develop a critical appreciation for both continuities and differences within Buddhism.
4. Synthesize and apply their knowledge of Buddhism. Students will be asked, for example, to write an essay in which they integrate information learned in assigned texts with data they have collected through ethnographic fieldwork.
5. Write better prose.

III. Course Outline

Evolution of core Buddhist teachings and practices through history (12 hours)

Buddhist Understandings of the Human
Cosmology
Metaphysics
Soteriology

South and Southeast Asian Buddhist Practice (9 hours)

Buddhist History of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar
Noble Eightfold Path
Samatha and Vipassana Meditation

Fieldtrips: Bhavana Society, Mindfulness Community

East Asian Traditions: Chan/Zen and Pureland (9 hours)

Buddhist History of China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam
Chan/Zen practice
Pureland Practice
Fieldtrips: Soka Gakkai, Buddhist Compassion Relief Society, Pittsburgh Zen Center, and Mt. Equity Zendo

Tibetan Practice (6 hours)

Buddhist History of Tibet
 Bardos of life and death
 Dzogchen Tantra practice

Contemporary Buddhist Movements (6 hours)

Engaged Buddhism in Asian countries
 Engaged Buddhism in the United States

IV. Evaluation Methods

- 10% Participation (including portfolio of class notes, in-class writing, fieldwork notes)
 30% Quizzes on reading content (approximately 15 given over course of term; 3 lowest scores dropped)
 40% Fieldwork report and ethnographic essay
 20% Final exam

VII. Required Textbooks

Lopez, Donald. *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History & Teachings*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001.

Sivaraksha, Sulak. *Seeds of Peace: A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society*. Berkeley CA: Parallax Press, 1991.

Chandler, Stuart, "RLST 220 Reader."

This reader will include short selections from:

Gunaratana, Henepola. *Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness: Walking the Buddha's Path*. Boston: Wisdom, 2001.

Thich Nhat Hanh. *Heart of the Buddha's Teachings*. Berkeley CA: Parallax Press, 1998.

Shih Sheng-yen. *Hoofprint of the Ox*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Scriptures*. NY: Penguin Books, 1979.

Suzuki, Shunryu. *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*. NY: Weatherhill, 1999.

Thich Thien-Tam. *Buddhism of Wisdom and Faith*. Sepulveda, CA: International Buddhist Monastic Institute, 1991.

Shih Zhengyan. "Tz'u Chi Buddhism." Los Angeles: Tz'u Chi Foundation, 2001.

Sogyal Rinpoche. *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993.

RLST 220 Fieldwork Assignment

Each of you has signed up to do fieldwork with a team at a Buddhist organization in western Pennsylvania. This assignment has two parts:

Site report: This report, based purely on what you learn during your visit, should give a vivid description of the sights, smells, sounds (and some times even tastes) that you experienced. It should also include any information you learned through any public talk given during your visit. There is no specific page length required for the field report, although typical reports run from five to seven pages.

Essay: After visiting the fieldwork site, each student will receive feedback from me on his or her site report and will complete further background reading for the specific group or tradition being studied. You will then transform your report into an essay. In writing the essay, assume that the audience is your classmates, i.e. a group who has a solid understanding about Buddhism, but likely knows only the basics about the organization you have researched. Your task therefore, is to teach your classmates about this particular style of Buddhism, especially as it has evolved after arriving in the Pittsburgh area.

Criteria for Evaluation of Ethnographic Essay

The essays will be evaluated according to four criteria:

1. Content (60%)

The field report is descriptive, based purely on your fieldwork. The final essay, however, should integrate material gathered through fieldwork with that found in primary and secondary written sources to provide an insightful thesis into continuities and transformations of the tradition as it has evolved in the United States. Notice that quality of content plays a predominant role in determining the essay's grade.

2. Style (30%)

a. **Vocabulary:** Variety in word choice makes for a better read. Don't continually repeat the same words. Use a thesaurus. When appropriate, use terms from the vocabulary lists that have been distributed thus far. The more such words used in an appropriate, effective manner, the better. Please underline or highlight these terms so I can easily identify them.

b. **Sentence structure:** Sentences should be grammatically correct. There should also be variety in sentence structure.

c. **Organization:** Paragraphs should follow a logical, clear order. Note, however, that it is often more effective not to present the material in the order that you learned it. In other words, just because something occurred early on in fieldwork does not mean that you talk about it at the beginning of your essay.

3. Presentation (10%)

a. **Title:** The piece should have an appropriate title.

b. **Spelling:** In these days of spell-check, there is no excuse for misspellings or typographical errors.

c. **Capitalization:** Standard American capitalization should be used.

d. **Punctuation:** Standard American punctuation should be used.

e. **References:** All sources must be cited in a bibliography provided at the end of your essay. Page references should be provided parenthetically for any quotes garnered from a written source.

f. **Print quality:** Please use plain black print. The font should be 12 point and easy to read.

g. **Format:** Do not provide a cover sheet. Each page should be numbered. The evaluation sheet should be attached after the essay's last page. Do not write your name on any page. Instead, your name should be neatly written (along with your section number and the number of words in the essay) on the back of the evaluation sheet. All pages should be stapled together.

4. Timely submission (5 points deducted from paper's score for each day submitted after due date).

RLST220 Buddhist Thought and Practice**Ethnographic Essay Evaluation Sheet****1. Content (60 points) _____ points**

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|------|----|------|-----------|
| a. Material gathered through fieldwork | missing | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Accuracy of facts | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Comprehensiveness, appropriateness and insightfulness | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| b. Material gathered through background reading | missing | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Accuracy of facts | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Comprehensiveness, appropriateness and insightfulness | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| c. Thesis | missing | poor | ok | good | excellent |

2. Style (30 points) _____ points

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|------|----|------|-----------|
| a. Vocabulary | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Word choice | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Variety | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Vocabulary terms | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| b. Sentence structure | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Grammar | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| Variety | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| c. Organization | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| d. Effective use of quotes | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| d. Opening paragraph | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| e. Closing paragraph | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |

3. Presentation (10 points) _____ points

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|------|----|------|-----------|
| a. Title | missing | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| b. Spelling/ typos | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| c. Capitalization | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| d. Punctuation | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| e. References | missing | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| f. Print quality | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |
| g. Format | unacceptable | poor | ok | good | excellent |

4. Late Submission Date (-5 points per day) _____ - _____ points**OVERALL GRADE _____**

Sample study guide: Sheng-yen, *Hoofprint of the Ox*, chapter 8

[N.B.1 There is always at least one vocabulary question on each quiz.]

[N.B.2 Students are told to note down in the margin the page numbers where information is found. This aids in class discussion, providing references in essays, and finding material while studying for the final exam.]

Vocabulary

pellucid (140): transparent or translucent. Very clear in style or meaning.

to reify (141): to regard (something abstract) as a material or concrete thing.

enigmatic (142): something that is puzzling, ambiguous, or inexplicable.

desiccated (142): to be thoroughly dried out. To be preserved by having the moisture removed.

simile (144): a figure of speech in which two essentially unlike things are compared, often using *like* or *as*.

to impede (146): to retard or obstruct the progress of

caveat (149): a warning or caution

spurious (152): lacking authenticity or validity; false.

provisional (155): provided or serving only for the time being

frenetic (158): wildly excited or active; frantic; frenzied.

to surmise (161): to infer with little evidence; guess.

nihilism (167): a doctrine holding that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated.

ineffability (172): Incapability of being expressed; indescribability. Not to be uttered; taboo.

exponential (178): indicating the power to which a number is to be raised; to increase ever more rapidly.

Study Questions

How does the approach of silent illumination differ from the Linji method of using *gong'an* and *huaou*?

What is meant by “no-thought” or “no-mind?”

What is it that is silenced in “silent illumination?” What is left after such silencing? What occurs to the subject-object dichotomy?

Describe the method of silent illumination. Why does Sheng-yen refer to it as the “method of no method?” What is one of the greatest problems in putting this method into practice?

What are some of the things one is to let go of during silent illumination? What is to be the attitude toward gain, toward enlightenment?

What occurs to the experiences of space and time during silent illumination?

What is the relationship between silence and illumination? What does each of these emphasize?

What is the Chan understanding of the intrinsic nature of mind? How is the method of silent illumination related to this?

What is Sheng-yen's critique of the levels of *dhyana* espoused in the Hinayana method? How does silent illumination differ from these? What is meant by true "non-dwelling?"

What occurs as the method of silent illumination matures?

Describe each of the prerequisites for practicing silent illumination:

For what type of person is silent illumination not a helpful method of practice?

What pitfall must be avoided when practicing silent illumination?