Course description: In this course, we will read works about the lives of individuals related to Hinduism and Buddhism, who are alleged to be “saints.” These include stories, biographies and autobiographies. We will compare some of the life accounts to similar episodes occurring in canonical epics such as the Hindu *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata Purana*, and Buddhist *Jataka*. We will consider the genre of religious biography in such terms as intended audience and practical usage of the texts. We will have the opportunity to learn stories about ancient and modern Hindu and Buddhist personalities from India, China, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia and America, and to think of these in terms of history, hagiography and myth.

Student Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course, students will be able to

1. identify major historical figures in the history of Hinduism and Buddhism,
2. speak with familiarity on issues in hagiography,
3. apply hermeneutic approaches to interpreting writings about religious figures,
4. express themselves on issues concerning religious biography as a means of conveying Hindu and Buddhist ideas.

Required Texts:


Required Assignments and Grading

1. **Quizzes on the readings.** There will be **four short quizzes**, one on each of the first four required texts (not on the Kūkai text). The average of scores on these five quizzes is worth 75% of the final grade for the term. Each quiz will consist of ten short-answer questions.

2. Students are required to submit a **written evaluation of Kūkai, founder of Japanese Shingon Buddhism: portraits of his life.** This must include comments on portions of that writing that are difficult to understand or otherwise in need of elaboration. Comments may also address such issues as believability, internal continuity, and how boring or interesting passages appear. Students are encouraged to make comparisons between portraits of Kūkai’s life and lives of other religious or secular personalities. This evaluation may be written in essay form or as margin notes to the text. The evaluation is due at the beginning of the final exam but may be submitted earlier. This evaluation is worth 10% of the final grade for the term.

3. **Final exam.** There will be a **cumulative final exam** administered during exam week. It will consist of five questions focusing on the course information not included in the five quizzes, e.g., the TM movement, Nichiren, the Dalai Lama, etc. Students are expected to relate this information to the readings. For example, students may be asked to explain how depictions of the life of Nichiren or the Dalai Lama compare and contrasts to those of the Buddha.

   **Summary of grading:**
   
   Average of the four quizzes = 75%
   Evaluation of Kūkai… = 10%
   Final Exam = 15%

   Based on this, students will earn a letter grade for the term according to the following system:

   A = 91 - 100%   C = 70 - 77%
   B+ = 88 - 90%   D = 61 - 69%
   B = 81 - 87%   F = below 61%
   C+ = 78 - 80%

   **Attendance:** Following the guidelines posted in the **CCU Student Handbook**, students who are absent for more than 25% of the regularly scheduled class meetings will receive a final grade of “F” for the term. In our course, this means **if you miss 10 classes for any reason, you will fail.**

   * Please bring the appropriate book/s to class.

Schedule of Classes

**Week One**

Wednesday, August 19
   Overview of the course; introduction to the required texts

Friday, August 21
   Fundamentals of Hinduism in relation to hagiography and myth (part 1)
   Weekend reading suggestion, start reading *Life of Ramakrishna*
Week Two

Monday, August 24
Fundamentals of Hinduism in relation to hagiography and myth (part 2)

Wednesday, August 26
Models for lives of saints (part 1): Rama and Krishna

Friday, August 28
Models for lives of saints (part 2): Shankara and Chaitanya
Weekend reading assignment, continue reading *Life of Ramakrishna*

Week Three

Monday, August 31
Life of Ramakrishna

Wednesday, September 2
Ramakrishna and hagiography - QUIZ 1: *Life of Ramakrishna*

Friday, September 4 - (Full Moon *Uposatha*)

Week Four

**Monday, September 7 Holiday - No Classes**

Wednesday, September 9
Baba Ram Das *Fierce Grace*
Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1917-2008) Transcendental Meditation (TM), a trademark of Maharishi Foundation, Ltd.

Friday, September 11
Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948)
Weekend reading assignment, Handout on Meher Baba

Week Five

Monday, September 14 - Friday, September 18 - (New Moon *Uposatha*)
World Religions and Hagiography

Week Six

Monday, September 21 - Friday, September 25
Meher Baba (1984-1969)
Weekend reading assignment, *Life of the Buddha*, chapters 1-6

Week Seven

Monday, September 28 (Yom Kippur) – Friday October 2
The Life of the Buddha – exemplifying Buddhist ideology in hagiography
Weekend reading assignment, *Life of the Buddha*, chapters 7-14
Week Eight

Monday, October 5 - QUIZ 2: Life of the Buddha
Life of the Buddha

Wednesday, October 7
Hagiography in Meissonnier’s *Life of the Buddha (La Vie de Bouddha)*

Friday, October 9
Giving away the body in Indian Buddhist literature.
Weekend reading assignment, *The Silk Road Journey With Xuanzang*

Week Nine

Monday, October 12
*The Silk Road Journey With Xuanzang*

Wednesday, October 14 - QUIZ 3: *The Silk Road Journey With Xuanzang*
Film - *A Chinese Tale Story*
Weekend reading assignment, *Kūkai, founder of Japanese Shingon Buddhism: Portraits of his life*, Introduction – Chapter 4

Friday, October 16 - No Classes

Week Ten

Monday, October 19
*Nihon Reiiki, Miraculous Lives of Japanese Saints*

Wednesday, October 21
Life of Kūkai
Weekend reading assignment, *Kūkai, founder of Japanese Shingon Buddhism: portraits of his life*, Chapter 5 - end

Friday, October 23
Kūkai comics, historical ‘truth’ and the life stories of Kūkai

Week Eleven

Monday, October 26
Film: *Kūkai*

Wednesday, October 28
Kamo no Chomei’s *Ten Foot Square Hut*

Friday, October 30
Halloween talk
Week Twelve

**Monday, November 2** - (Full Moon *Uposatha*)

Film – *Nichiren and the Great Mongol Invasion* (*Nichiren to moko daishurai*, 1958)

**Wednesday, November 4**

*Nichiren Shonin* (1222-1282)

**Friday, November 6**

*Nichiren and Soka Gakkai International* (*SGI*)

Weekend reading assignment – *The Life of Milarepa*

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Week Thirteen

**Monday, November 9**

*The Life of Milarepa* (c. 1052-c. 1135 CE)

**Wednesday, November 11 – QUIZ 4** - *The Life of Milarepa*

Milarepa; Hagiography in *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa* (956-1041); Padmasambhava (*8*th century CE) and Marpa the Translator (1012-1097)

**Friday, November 13**

Film: *Milarepa*

Weekend reading assignment – handout on the Dalai Lama

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Week Fourteen

**Monday, November 16** (New Moon *Uposatha*) - **Wednesday, October 18**

The Dalai Lama and *Kundun*

**Friday, November 20**

Lives of Modern Korean Buddhists

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**NO CLASSES NOVEMBER 23 - 27**

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Week Fifteen

**Monday, November 30**

*How to be a Saint – The Way of the Bodhisattva* (part 1)

**Wednesday, December 2** - (Full Moon *Uposatha*)

*The Way of the Bodhisattva* (part 2)

**Friday, December 4**

Conclusions and discussion of the Final Exam

*The Final Exam will be on Monday, Dec. 7 at 1:30 in EHFA 166 (our regular classroom).*