

Dr. Ronald Green

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M-W-F 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon and T-Th 8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. or by appointment

Class website: ww2.coastal.edu/rgreen/Buddhism_Literature_Film

Final Exam: Monday, May 1st at 1:30 in SCI Rm 219

Course description: A study of representations of Buddhism in selected scriptures and ideas identified as Buddhist in world literature and film. The course considers the nature, power, or inability of literature and film to convey various themes such as “no-self,” “suchness,” “Buddhamind”, and “enlightenment.” Students are challenged to question ideas of scriptural authority as well as “Orientalist” representations.

Independent Study: The independent study student must complete the weekly assignments outlined below and arrange to meet with the instructor in EHFA 279 once a week for an hour for discussion of these.

Student Learning Outcomes:

On completion of this course, students will be able to

1. Identify major themes in Buddhist theory and practice
2. Demonstrate familiarity with significant works identified as Buddhist fiction and film
3. Express themselves on issues concerning the viability of literature and film as means of conveying Buddhist ideas.

Required Texts:

Bashō, Matsuo. Nobuyuki Yuasa (trans.). *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1967. ISBN: 0140441859.

Green, Ronald. *Buddhism Goes to the Movies: Introduction to Buddhist Thought and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2013. ISBN: 978-0415841481

Hesse, Hermann, Hilda Rosner (trans). *Siddhartha*. Bantam Classics, 1981. ISBN 0553208845.

Kawabata Yasunari, Edward G. Seidensticker (trans.) *Snow Country*. NY: Vintage, 1996. ISBN: 0679761047

Kerouac, Jack. *The Dharma Bums*. New York: Penguin, 1976. ISBN: 0140042520.

Wheeler, Kate. *Nixon Under the Bodhi Tree and Other Works of Buddhist Fiction*. Boston: Wisdom, 2004. ISBN: 0861713540. Excerpts available on Moodle.

Note: Please bring the appropriate book to class on the discussion days.

Required Films:

Departures (Japanese title: *Okuribito*, Yōjirō Takita, Japan, 2008).

Doomsday Book (excerpt, Pil-Sung Yim and Kim Jee-Woon, South Korea, 2012), excerpt.

Fight Club (David Fincher, USA, 2000).

I ♥ Huckabees (David O. Russell, USA, 2004).

The Cup (Khyentse Norbu, Bhutan, 2000).

Waking Life (Richard Linklater, USA, 2001).

Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East? (Young-Kyun Bae, South Korea, 1989).

Online Information:

A number of class readings, vocabulary sheets and other materials are available online at:
ww2.coastal.edu/rgreen/Buddhism_Literature_Film.

Required Assignments and Grading

1. Quizzes (on the readings). There will be five quizzes, one for each of the required texts except for the *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*. The average of the scores on these five quizzes is **worth 70%** of your final grade for the term. Each quiz will be given before the discussion of the text, so that you must read the assignment before the discussion date.

2. Notebook drafts (on the films). Students are required to keep a composition book style “notebook” or “journal” for this class and turn it in periodically to be graded five times throughout the term. The entries in this notebook will be the draft for your final term paper. As drafts, they can be handwritten (only if neat, easily legible and grammatically comprehensible) or typewritten and printed or submitted electronically via email. Each notebook entry must be a reflection on the film viewed in class. Your reflection on each film should be based on concepts and ideas related to Buddhism, particularly (but not necessarily exclusively) as covered in class and in the readings. I will grade the notebook and possibly give feedback and/or make comments for improvement. The average of the scores on these six notebook drafts is worth 20% of your final grade for the term. Your notebook can and probably should include notes you take in class. That is to say, you can write your notebook during class. They may also be phenomenological or ethnomethodological. Each of these six notebook entries must be at least 500 words in length (around 2 pages if typed in a standard 12-point font and double-spaced).

Do not plagiarize or you will receive an “F” for the term and will be referred to the Dean.

3. Final. A final, polished version of your class notebook is due at the beginning of the final exam hour scheduled for this class, that is, Monday, May 1st at 1:30 in our regular classroom. During the scheduled final exam time, students will evaluate what they first expected from the class and the actual student learning outcomes they experienced. Late notebook submissions will not be accepted. In addition to the improved five notebook drafts, the final notebook must contain a conclusion section, which should reflect (in some part) information gleaned in the last three weeks of class. The conclusion section must be at least 500 words in length. This final will be graded based ½ on the notebook and ½ on attendance plus participation during the final exam. It is worth 10% of the grade for the term.

Summary of grading:	Average of the five quizzes	=	70%
	Average of five notebook drafts	=	20%
	Final notebook grade	=	10%

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

A = 91 - 100%	C = 71 - 77%
B+ = 88 - 90%	D+ = 68 - 70%
B = 81 - 87%	D = 61 - 67%
C+ = 78 - 80%	F = below 61%

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.

Schedule of Classes

Week One: January 12-16

Overview of the course; a crazy film menagerie with narration

Excerpt from the film *Doomsday Book*

Basics of Buddhism and Film

Week Two: January 21-23

Monday, **January 19, Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday - No classes**

Elements of Literature applicable to Buddhism and Buddhist Studies; Elements of Film and their applicability to Buddhism and Buddhist Studies: “Seeing through the screen.”

Reading assignment: *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*, Chapter 1.

Week Three: January 26-30

FILM: *Waking Life*

Discussion of *Waking Life*. Can you be a Buddhist (or a Buddha) and not know it?

Excerpt from the film *The Burmese Harp*, 1956 (if we have time)

Reading assignment: *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*, Chapter 3.

Weekend Reading assignment: *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*

Week Four: February 2-6

QUIZ 1, Monday, February 2: *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.

Part 1: Transmitting the Buddha Dharma by pointing beyond words with words, a Discussion of Basho’s “Old Pond”, Buddhist poetry and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*.

Part 2: *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* and Buddhist pilgrimage, representations of the Buddhist *śramana* in literature.

***TURN IN *Waking Life* NOTEBOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS Wednesday, February 4**

Week Five: February 9-13

Film: *Departures*; Japanese Jōdō Shinshū Buddhism

Reading assignment: *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*, chapter 8;

Reading assignment to be completed by Monday, Feb. 16: *Dharma Bums*

Week Six: February 16-20

QUIZ 2, Monday, February 16: *Dharma Bums*.

Discussion of Buddhist elements in *Dharma Bums* and *Turtle Island*

Reading assignment: in-class handout: selections of Gary Snyder poems

***TURN IN *Departures* NOTEBOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS Wednesday, February 18**

Week Seven: February 23-27

FILM: *The Cup*

Tibetan Buddhism; Discussion of *The Cup* and *Dharma Bums*; Beat Zen, Square Zen, Star Wars Zen: Holden Caulfield and Orientalism.

Reading assignment: *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*, chapter 7;

Weekend Reading assignment: *Siddhartha*

Week Eight: Tuesday, March 2-6

QUIZ 3, Monday, March 2: *Siddhartha*

Discussion of *Siddhartha*; excerpts from the film, *Siddhartha*

***TURN IN *The Cup* NOTEBOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS Wednesday, March 4**

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 9-13

Week Nine: March 16-20

FILM: *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*

Discussion of *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*

Reading assignment: *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*, Chapter 5.

*Read by March 23: *Snow Country*.

Week Ten: March 23-28

QUIZ 4, Monday, March 23: *Snow Country*

Discussion of *Snow Country*; Japanese Impressionism, the viewer and ethnomethodology.

Reading assignment: Handouts from Kawabata's *Palm of the Hand Stories*, "Japan the Beautiful and Me," and *The Flower Ornament Scripture*.

***TURN IN *Bodhidharma* NOTEBOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS Wednesday, March 23**

Week Eleven: March 30-April 1 (no class Friday, April 3)

FILM: *I ♥ Huckabees*

Reading assignment: *Buddhism Goes to the Movies*, Chapter 4.

Week Twelve: April 6-10

Discussion of *I ♥ Huckabees* and Buddhist Dependent Origination;

Can drama lead to Buddhist Awakening? Arts as *upaya* (skill-in-means).

***TURN IN *Huckabees* NOTEBOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS Wednesday, April 8**

Week Thirteen: April 13-17

FILM: *Fight Club*

Representations of the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, Leaving Home and no-self in *Fight Club*, excerpt from the film *Principles and Practices of Zen*.

Reading assignment: *Goes to the Movies*, Chapter 2.

Weekend Reading assignment, handout from *Nixon Under the Bodhi Tree and Other Works of Buddhist Fiction*

Week Fourteen: April 20-24

QUIZ 5, Monday, April 20: *Nixon Under the Bodhi Tree*

Discussion: How the Swan came to the Lake: Buddhism in America today.

***TURN IN *Fight Club* NOTEBOOKS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS Wednesday, April 22**

Week Fifteen: April 27-29

Representations of Buddhism in Literature and Film (crazy film menagerie with narration)

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