AAS/RLS 367  Meditation and Enlightenment  

Spring 2014  
SUNY at Stony Brook

**When:** Tu Th 10:00 - 11:20 AM  

**Where:** 201 Heavy Engineering Lab  

**Instructor:** Prof. Sung Bae Park  

**Office:** HUM 1127. Tel: 632-7314  

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays from 10:00AM to Noon at HUM 1127. Or by appointment.

**Purpose of Course:**  
This course is designed to guide students to a deeper understanding of Zen Buddhism as taught and practiced in East Asia. In this course you will be critically analyzing various interpretations of the major Zen Buddhist texts with a particular focus on *The Heart Sutra* or *Maha Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra*. You will be asked to study *The Heart Sutra* in great depth. The course will explore the nature of the enlightenment experience, the various aspects of meditation practice, and the relationship between Zen experience and Buddhist philosophy.

**Texts required:**  


**Requirements:**  
1. Class attendance is important. Poor attendance in this class will affect your grade.  

2. Reading assignments should be completed before the scheduled lectures. Participation in class discussion is also important.  

3. Two exams and one term paper are required.  

1st exam on 2nd Tuesday, March;
2nd exam on 3rd Thursday, April.

Term paper due: by Thursday, 1st Tuesday, May.

*** All papers are to be typewritten, double spaced, with footnotes and a bibliography. If you are not familiar with the MLA Handbook for Paper Writing, then you should become so. Students may choose a topic of interest which relates to the issues discussed in class. The paper can express your own ideas and responses to the study of Zen Buddhism in East Asia.

*** No late exams or papers are permitted. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the professor for advice concerning the writing of the paper.

*** Any kind of plagiarism is absolutely prohibited.

*** You will be given a copy of the *Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra* translated by Thich Nhat Hahn. It is a short text, (about 2 pages) and you be asked to read this and memorize it. All other readings are very important; the other books will provide you will a necessary foundation for understanding *The Heart Sutra*. Class discussion will normally revolve around *The Heart Sutra* and topics related to it.

*** It is strongly recommended that you finish each book once you have started. The assigned books will be extremely beneficial and deepen your understanding of *The Heart Sutra* and understanding of the purpose of this course.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

Upon successful completion of this course, you are expected to:

- Understand the global importance of Korean culture and its contribution to American society.
- Develop a basic body of knowledge concerning Korea.
- Enhance the capability to think critically about topics related to Korean literature, history, religions, and society.
- Obtain comprehension of research methods about Social Sciences and/or Humanities.
- Be able to write clearly and grammatically in English.

**Guidelines for writing the term paper:**

Topic: A non-dualistic Interpretation of Zen meditation

*** Your discussion must reflect the class lectures and include your evaluation of the Buddhist theory of PRACTICE in terms of its applicability in contemporary Western culture. Students are expected to demonstrate one's ability to incorporate some of her or his ideas (perhaps by raising intelligent questions) into the paper. Whether or not the student truly engages the topic or merely reiterates the lectures and texts will be evaluated.

*** Texts to be used for writing your paper are the texts required for the course this semester. Also you may use the texts recommended for the course.
*** Length and Format:

Your paper is to be 10 pages long (including notes and works cited), typed and double spaced. There should be a one inch margin along the top, bottom and both sides of each page of text.

**Topics of Discussion and Reading Assignments:**

*** It is strongly recommended to all students to finish reading the entire book once you started. It would be truly beneficial.

1. Introduction.

2. The meaning of meditation and enlightenment and the relationship between the two. Understanding this within the philosophical system of Buddhism. Read Shunryu Suzuki: pp. 1-22.

3. The primacy of faith in understanding Buddhist philosophy and practice.

   Read Suzuki: Part 1, Right Practice, PP. 23 - 49.


5. Right Attitude(continued), Suzuki, pp. 75-95.


8 Theory and Practice, Kapleau, pp. 1-73.


10. Ysutani-Roshi, Kapleau, pp. 95-173.


15. Transformation, Park, pp. 35-56.

17. Awakening of Mahayana Faith, Park, pp. 77-105.


21. What is the most important message of the Heart Sutra? Read Thich Nhat Hahn, pp.1-2.

22. How could the all sufferings be gone? Read the 1st para. of the sutra.
23. What is meant by the passage, “Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.” Read THICH pp.3-5.


25. Discuss the role of Chanting the Heart Sutra. Read THICH vii-x

26. What is meant by that “Perfect Understanding is a great mantra”?

27. Conclusion, Park, pp. 131-134.