

Holy Cross Thailand Maymester Syllabus: World Religions and Global Society

Syllabus and Class Schedule

Instructors: Acharn [Todd Lewis](#), Ph.D (Columbia);
Acharn [Prista Ratanapruck](#) Ph.D. (Harvard);
Acharn Mathew Schmalz Ph.D. (Chicago).

Overview: This course will introduce students to the religious diversity of Chiang Mai and Northern Thailand. With a focus on Buddhism, the course will also engage Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and shamanic deity (*phi*) cults. Students will be introduced to the main doctrines and practices of each religious tradition through lectures and readings. Building on these will be outings for participant observation and experiential learning; the course is designed to understand the world religions as lived traditions in global perspective and defined by its popular cultural expressions in art, ritual, and spiritual practices.

Course Organization:

The official syllabus will be that posted on the course's master CANVAS website, as it is updated to reflect any changes in event timings and content.

The “**Essential Readings**” posted in CANVAS and on this syllabus will identify those resources (textual readings, ethnographic studies, analytical essays) that explain the specific topic(s).

Many topics also have additional sources under the heading “**Further Readings**” if you want to explore a topic further.

The CANVAS II Website, “Maymester Buddhism Lecture Materials” will also post links to previous **recorded lectures** by the instructors (and others) that students can view to deepen their understanding; also found there are thematically-arranged readings to ease topic inquiries.

The instructors have tried to select key, short readings. Note that relying only on lecture content will not be enough to gain sufficient understanding of the topics. *Lecturers will assume that you have done the Essential Readings before the session.* The most efficient learning occurs when you have begun the study of a specific topic before visiting sites or hearing a lecture.

Course Grade Evaluation: [Specific guidelines for each will be posted on CANVAS]

Journal. (25%) The e-journal will include specific assigned topics for short treatment, in addition of all kinds of other entries including drawings, photos, participant-observation notes, reflections. (Due :June 17, 9 PM)

Participation. (20%) Assessing program citizenship, contributions questions to classroom and field trip discussions, completing assignments.

Class Presentation. (20%) Brief discussion: what of importance do you bring away? (Morning, June 19).

Oral Final. (35%) (A study guide with topics will be distributed at the end of Week 3; to be given by all three Acharns and held on afternoon of June 18)

SCHEDULE OF THE MAYMESTER

Topics and Readings

I. PRELIMINARIES (Predeparture)

Useful Readings for the Entire Program

Diana Eck, *Darshan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*

Thai Monk Jayasaro. [Without And Within - eBook](#) *Q & A on Theravada Buddhism*

Movies/TV Series for Viewing [See CANVAS website]

Fiction of Interest for Understanding Thailand [See CANVAS website]

II. BANGKOK and AYUTTHAYA

Sunday May 24th Bangkok

Morning/Afternoon: **Arriving Flights at Suvarnabhumi Airport**

Check-in for Students at Ibis Bangkok Riverside Hotel

Evening: **5.30 pm Group Dinner (HOTEL)**

Welcome; Practicalities

Short keynote lecture by Benjamin Zawacki (HC 1998), Asia Foundation

Monday May 25th Day Trip to Ayutthaya

Essential Preparatory Readings:

[Ayutthaya: Venice of the East - World History Encyclopedia](#)

[The Rise and Fall of Ayutthaya: A Historian's Perspective - History Tools](#)

S.J. Tambiah, "The Galactic Polity in Southeast Asia" *Canvas Web Reading-[CWR]*

Essential Viewing:

Documentary [Ayutthaya – The Empire That Burned for 400 Years - Thailandtv.tv](#)

Further Reading:

Chris Baker, "Ayutthaya Rising: From Land or Sea" *[CWR]*

Morning: 7 AM Depart from hotel

8:30 Departure by boat from River City Pier; River Sights

// 9:30 CLASS MEETING on boat: Orientation, Overview, Questions, etc. //

10:00 Lunch On Boat; 12 pm arrival at Wat Chonglom, Nonthaburi/Ayutthaya

Afternoon: In Archaeological Park: Ayutthaya (Continued)

1-4 PM: Tour Ayutthaya (Guest Lecturer)

4.30 pm departure by bus from Ayutthaya

Tuesday May 26th Bangkok

8 AM-8:45 Lecture and Discussion: Acharns Todd, Prista, Mat

TOPIC: Studying Other Cultures

Essential Readings:

John Dunne, "Passing Over" [CWR]

Edward Said, "Orientalism" [CWR]

9 AM-11:30 Lecture and Discussion: Acharn Todd and Prista

TOPIC: Introduction to Buddhism

Essential Readings:

T. Lewis, "Ancient India: A New Society", "The Human Condition", "The Path of the Buddha", "The Four Noble Truths" [CWR]

Pali text, "*Sigalovāda Sutta*" [CWR]

Further Readings:

Selections from "*Old Path, White Cloud*" [CWR]

Without and Within, p. 22-2 [CWR]

11:30 AM-12:15: HOTEL lunch

Afternoon: Bangkok Site Visits

Essential Readings:

Justin McDaniel, "Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand" [CWR]

Further Readings:

Phya Rajadhon, "Thai charms and Amulets" [CWR]

H. Woodward, "Monastery, Palace, City Plans: Ayutthaya and Bangkok," [CWR]

[1] Visit to Suan Mokkh Center of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu

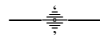
Roving Discussions of Buddhist Teachings

[2] Visit Amulet Market

[3] Dinner at Street Market

[4] Wat Visits: Wat Po, Boat crossing Chao Phraya River to Wat Arun

Evening: Independent exploration of the Chao Phraya area



III. CHIANGMAI

Wednesday May 27th Flight from Bangkok; Settling in Chiangmai

Morning: 10.30 am. Flight to Chiangmai

Noon: Transfer and Check-in to Yantarasri Apartments

Afternoon: 1 PM: Group Lunch with Thai students (Hotel)

3 PM: Chiangmai University Campus Visit

Tour of Campus facilities

Library access card for international students

5:30 Lecture and Discussion (Hotel): Acharns Todd, Prista, and Mat

“The Academic Study of Religion”

Essential Reading:

“Rules for Comparative Religion” [CWR]

Late Afternoon/Evening: **Exploration of Nimman and Suthep Road**



Thursday May 28th Chiangmai: Islam -----||

Morning (9:00 AM): Acharn Mat

Lecture and Discussion: **The Five Pillars**

Essential Reading:

John Esposito, “Islam: The Many Faces of Muslim Experience.” [CWR]

10:30:

Muhammad; Quran; Sharia

Essential Reading:

“The Cow,” a *Sura* from the Holy Quran [CWR]

Mosque Visit

Afternoon (3:00 PM at CMU) Lectures

Intro to Islam

Islam in Southern Thailand



Saturday May 30th: Ritual to Pacify *Ph'i Pu Sae Ya Sae*; Observe Spirit Mediums

6:30 AM departure

7 AM: Participant Observation of Temple

9:30 AM: Visit Wat Prathat Doi Kam

11:30: Return to CMU; Lunch

Essential Reading:

Shigeharu Tanabe, "Sacrifice and the Transformation of Ritual: The Pu Sae Nā Sae Spirit Cult of Northern Thailand"

Bernard Formoso, "Thai Buddhism as the Promoter of Spirit Cults"

Morris, "Chiang Mai Mediums in Context"

S.J. Tambiah, excerpts from "*The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*"
Without and Within, p. 132-135

Further Readings

James Scott, excerpts from *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*

Peter Jackson, "Buddhist Visions, Dreams, and Possession: Spiritual authority, Ritual Diversity and Religious Innovation in Thailand"

Afternoon: **Free**



Sunday May 31 Full Moon day, Buddha's Birthday

Essential Reading:

Charles F. Keyes, "Merit-Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism" [CWR]
VERY THAI, "Temple Fairs," "Festivals", "Lucky Numbers and Fortune Tellers" [CWR]

Further Readings

Without and Within, p. 60-61, 118-119

Robert Lester, "Dynamics of Buddhist Life" [CWR]

Morning (7.30 AM departure):

8-9:30 am Morning alms offering and dharma session at Wat Upakut
/On Site Discussion/ Merit making, Dedication of merit, Sukwuan

Afternoon: 1 PM [CMU] Acharns Todd and Prista

Lecture/Discussion: **Dhamma, Buddha's teaching; Buddhist Ritual Traditions**

Essential Reading:

Ven Gnanaseera, "Buddhist Rituals" [CWR]

"Pali Ritual Recitations: *Paritta*" [CWR]

Late Afternoon **OFF**

Evening Program:

5 PM. Chanting at Wat Chedi Luang

7 pm. Circumambulation of Stupa



Monday June 1st Buddhism: Wats, Arts, The Sangha

Essential Readings:

Todd Lewis, "Ancient India: Society," "The Human Condition," "The Four Noble Truths," "The Path of the Buddha," in K. Trainor, ed. *Buddhism: An Illustrated Guide* [CWR]

"Merit Making: Ten Wholesome Actions" [CWR]

"10 Great Jataka Tales" [CWR]

Kate Crosby, "The Good Buddhist" Chapter in *Theravada Buddhism* [CWR]

[Wat Chiang Man - Wikipedia](#) [CWR]

[Wat Sri Suphan - The Breathtaking Chiang Mai Silver Temple](#) [CWR]

Further Readings

Without and Within, p. 32-46

Morning

(9:00 AM): Site visits

Wat Mahanbudharam, Wat Chiangman, Wat Sri Suphan, Wat Tung U

Afternoon at CMU

(1:00-2 PM): Guest Speaker: Prof Lipikorn Makaew, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna,

Thai Buddhist Arts

Essential Reading:

Nicolas Revire, "The Study of Visual Culture in South and Southeast Asian Buddhism" [CWR]

Peter Skilling, "Aesthetics of Devotion Buddhist Arts in Thailand" [CWR]

Further Readings

Peter Skilling, "Cloth Painting in Thailand" [CWR]

(3 PM): Lecture and Discussion: Acharn Todd

The Sangha and Monastic Economy

Essential Reading:

Todd Lewis, "A New Community," in *Buddhism: An Illustrated Guide*. [CWR]

"Pali Vinaya Readings I Historical Themes" [CWR]

Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Thai Sangha Forest Tradition" [CWR]

Further Readings

Without and Within, p. 72-77, 114-117, 120-124

"Buddhism and Power" *Thailand Handbook* [CWR]



Tuesday June 2nd: Buddhist Monasteries, Teachings, Thai Women

Morning (9 AM): Guest speaker: Prof. Surachai Jongjitngam, Faculty of Fine Arts, CMU

Understanding the Buddha's Teachings through Paintings

Wat Umong and the Spiritual Theater, Wat Umong, Wat U Sai Kham]

Essential Reading:

"10 Great Jataka Tales" [CWR]

Afternoon (1:00 PM): CMU

1-3: Lecture and Discussion: Acharn Todd

Topics in Popular Buddhism

Essential Reading:

Kate Crosby, *Theravada Buddhism*, “WORSHIP” CHAPTER [CWR]

Tannenbaum, “Merit in Northern Thai” [CWR]

Pali Text: “Sigalovāda Sutta, The Discourse to Sigala” [CWR]

Further Readings

Without and Within, p. 72-77, 114-117, 120-124

3:30-5 Lecture and Discussion: Acharn Prista

Women in Thai Society

Essential Reading:

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, “Buddhist Texts from a Feminist Perspective” [CWR]

Keyes, “Buddhist Attitudes to Women in Rural Thailand” [CWR]

Further Readings

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, “Buddhism and Prostitutes” [CWR]



Wednesday June 3rd Buddhism: Wats, Meditation and Female Monastics

Morning (9:00 AM): Acharn Todd, Acharn Prista with Guide: Naphat Pradupsri

Visits to Wat Suandok, Wat Chedi Luang, Wat Ged Yod

Essential Reading:

“10 Great Jataka Tales” [CWR]

Afternoon (1:00 PM): at CMU Acharn Todd, Acharn Prista

Buddhist Meditation Traditions: Doctrinal Theory

Essential Reading:

N. Thera, “Four Objects of Mindfulness” [CWR]

3 PM: Guest Lecturer: Bhikkhuni MuNissara Horayangura

[via ZOOM] **Women Monastics in Thai Buddhism**

Essential Reading:

Sophana Srichampa, “Thai Buddhism, Women and Social Change” [CWR]

Emma Tomalin, “Thai Bhikkhuni Movement”

Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, “*Maechi*” [CWR]



Thursday June 4th

Morning (9 AM) Acharn Mat

Hinduism

Essential Reading:

Diana Eck, *Darshan: Seeing the Divine in India*, 2nd

Stephen Hoyer, "Hinduism: The One and the Many" in *Puja and Piety*, 56-88 [CWR]

Ursula Sharma, "Theodicy and the Doctrine of Karma" [CWR]

Morning (9:00 AM): Professor Arati, Chiangmai University, on Hinduism in Thailand.

Hindu Traditions in Thailand

Essential Reading:

Justin McDaniel, "This Hindu Holy Man is a Thai Buddhist" [CWR]

Further Readings:

Peter Skilling, "King, Sangha, and Brahmins" [CWR]

10:30: Lecture/Discussion: Acharn Mat

The Hindu Worldview and Worship

Afternoon: *Free*

Evening, 5:30: Temple Visits

Wat Lok Moli and Dev Mandir Hindu Temple



Friday June 5th Sikh Traditions

Lecture/Discussion: Acharn Mat

Introduction to Sikhism

Essential Readings:

Eleanor Nesbitt, "Guru Nanak and His Successors" [CWR]

Eleanor Nesbit, "Turban, *Khalsa*, and Codes of Conduct" [CWR]

10:30 AM: Lecture/discussion, Frank Sethi, Chiang Mai Gurudwara

History of Sikhism

Afternoon (Noon): Acharn Mat

Lecture and Discussion: **Namthari Sikhism**

Remaining afternoon: *Free Time*

Evening:

5.30 pm Worship at Sikh temple (Host, Montri Jawala)



Saturday, June 6th Day Off



Sunday June 7th Christianity as Global Religion

Essential Reading:

Linda Woodhead, "Jesus: The God-Man" [CWR]

8.30 am Departure for Jomthong

10:00 Join morning congregation at St. Michael Garicoïts Church, Jomthong

1 PM: Depart for the national park
Visit Karen villages and a waterfall

3:30 pm: Arrive back in Chiangmai

Late afternoon: Free



Monday June 8th Buddhism Amulets

10:30 AM -Noon [CMU]: Acharn Todd

Relics, Amulets, Pragmatic Buddhist Material Culture

Noon- Individual Amulet Scavenger Hunt



Tuesday June 9th Hinduism: Image Consecrations, Buddhist Atelier, Puja

Essential Reading:

H. Daniel Smith, "Hindu *Pratistha*" [CWR]

Swearer, "Buddha Image Consecration" [CWR]

Further Readings

Richard Davis, "Living Images" from *Lives of Hindu Images* [CWR]

G. Buhnemann, "The Ritual for Infusing Life " [CWR]

"Art of Brahmanism in Thailand" [CWR]

Morning (9:00 AM): Acharns Mat and Todd

Topic: Hindu Images: Consecration, Iconography, and Meaning

Afternoon (1:00 PM): Individual Consultations with Acharns Todd, Mat, and Prista

5 PM: Visit with the atelier/artist making the Buddha image.

7 PM: **Laxmi Puja at Dev Mandir**
Dinner at the temple



Wednesday June 10th Trip to Chiangrai

Essential Reading and Viewing:

Video about 6 temples in Chiangrai

USEFUL Additional Short Readings

7:00 AM: Depart for Chiangrai

Noon: **Arrival at Analaya Bhikkuni Aram.**

Lunch at the Aram

Afternoon and Evening: Bhikkuni _____

Meditation Instruction and Practice

Overnight: Resthouse at the monastery



Thursday June 11th Buddhism Day 6 (Chiang Rai)

Essential Reading:

Without and Within, p. 78-81 (on monastic life)

Morning: **Meditation practice and Morning Alms**

After lunch: **Depart for Wat Pa Yen Boon**

Afternoon: **Wat Pa Yen Boon**

Tour of Wat; Merit making

Conversation with Than Athit

Short meditation practice

Visit 1-2 temples with traditional and contemporary Buddhist arts

Check in to Hotel

Evening: Free



Friday June 12th Buddhism and Return to Chiangmai

Essential Reading:

Without and Within, p. 148-175 (on meditation)

USEFUL Additional Short Readings

Morning Program: Alms offering

Visit Temples with traditional and contemporary Buddhist art

Later morning/Afternoon: Depart for Chiangmai; Lunch On the Way

6-7 PM Discussion: Acharns Todd and Prista

Forum on Buddhist Tradition: Teachings and Meditation Practice



Saturday June 13th Sikhism Day 2

Essential Reading:

USEFUL Additional Short Readings

Morning 7:30 AM: Visit to Sikh Morning Congregation, with host Frank Sethi

Afternoon: Free

Individual student discussions on research paper



Sunday June 14th Christianity Day 2

Essential Reading:

Mathew N. Schmalz, "Protestantism and Catholicism: What's the Difference?"

USEFUL Additional Short Readings

Morning (8.30 AM): Dr. Prasert Trakansuphakon, Pgakenyaw Association for Sustainable Development
TOPIC: The Karen People and Their History

10:30 AM: Congregation at Karen Baptist church

Lunch at the Church

Afternoon (1:00-2 PM): Acharn Mat

The Art of Inter-religious Dialog and Understanding

2:30-4 PM: Dr. Herbert Swanson, Prayap University

Christianity in Thailand



Monday June 15th (No Moon Day)

Morning (9:00 AM): Chinese Temple Visit

Essential Reading:

T. Lewis, "Diffuse Religions of East Asia" [CWR]

Further Reading:

Peter Jackson, "Royal Spirits, Chinese Gods, and Magic Monks" [CWR]



Tuesday June 16th Buddhism Day 9 (Lampang)

Essential Reading:

James B. Pruess, "Merit Seeking in Public: Buddhist Pilgrimage in Northeastern Thailand"

Excerpts from Donald Swearer, *Wat Haripunjaya: A Study of the Royal Temple of the Buddha's Relic, Lamphun, Thailand* (1976)

Morning (6.45 AM):

6.45 am departure from Yantarasri

7.30 am departure by train for Lampang

Visit Wat Phra That Lampang Luang and Wat Prathat Hariphunchai

Afternoon, 4 PM: Professor Kwancheewan Buadaeng, Chiangmai University

Lecture: Amulets and Charismatic Monks



Wednesday June 17th: Free

7 PM: E-journals due



Thursday June 18th: Assessments

Morning (9:00 AM-Noon): *Free*

Noon: Lunch

Afternoon (1:00 PM-5 PM): *Oral Finals*



Friday June 19th: Student Presentation and Consecration Ritual

Morning (9:00 AM): **Student Presentations** of the final papers/ research projects

Afternoon (1:00 PM): **Receiving the Commissioned Image and Consecration Ritual**

Sukwuan Ritual for Travel Safety and Future Blessings

Evening: **Farewell Dinner**

Saturday June 20th Departure: Hotel Checkout and Flights to Bangkok