

Expos 20 Spring 2020

Meetings: M/W

Location: Emerson 307

Preceptor: Ezer Vierba

vierba@fas.harvard.edu

Office: 1 Bow St., 223

Office hours: Mon, Wed 2-3:00pm

**Buddhism, Mindfulness,
and the Practical Mind**



Today, mindfulness is touted as a panacea, the secret to happiness and health, superb sex and unparalleled productivity. The hype is not entirely new, however. For decades, ostensibly Buddhist ideas have been tossed around in the West as recipes for success in just about any art or craft. But what hides behind this craze? Can Buddhist teachings offer us tools with which to achieve our goals, or are we corrupting Buddhism by using it in such a way? What have artists and practitioners thought of the use of meditative tools, and how have they integrated Buddhist terms like “bare awareness” and “emptiness” into their work?

In order to answer such questions, we will start the course with a reading of the *Satipatṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha’s instructions on mindfulness meditation. A close reading of the text in our first unit will give us a glimpse of the ancient Buddhist practice, its complexity and richness. In our second unit, we will read the text that gave the West the idea that Buddhism can allow us to “hit the mark” without trying to do so, Eugen Herrigel’s bestselling *Zen in the Art of Archery*. Using Edward Said’s classic work, *Orientalism*, we will ask if Herrigel was romanticizing Zen Buddhism, and if he was, what the consequences of such a romanticization have for Japan and the West. In our last unit, we will dive into the contemporary debate about “McMindfulness” by looking at what scientists and Buddhist practitioners have said about the compatibility of Buddhism with its modern, secular appropriations.

As we read these texts, we will also *practice mindfulness meditation*, as well as various other forms of Buddhist meditation. In doing so, we will think about these meditations both practically and critically, at the same time as we refine our analytical understanding of Buddhist ideas.

Required Readings

1. Joseph Goldstein, *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening* (Sounds True, 2013).
2. Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery* (1948).
3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979).

You will also use Anālyo, *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization* (Windhorse Publication, 2003) as a reference book. Anālyo has made his entire book available freely online, but you may purchase it if you prefer to use the paper copy. All other readings will be available on Canvas.

Assignments

1. You will submit various short (max one-page) **response papers**. These papers are designed to help you prepare for class, and will not typically take much of your time.
2. In each of our three units, you will submit one paper. You'll start by submitting a **draft** of each of these three larger essays. On each draft, you'll receive detailed comments from me (in writing and in 1-1 conferences).
3. You will include a **cover letter** with each essay and draft you submit. In this short letter, you will state your research question and your thesis, mention what you are still trying to figure out, what aspect of your research is not yet completed, and what parts of the essay you think you need help with.
4. We will have an in-class **draft workshop** after you submit each draft. For this workshop, I will choose two or three students' drafts, and we will look at these works closely. In preparation for the workshops, you will submit **written comments** on the students' work. The comments you will provide will help you become better editors of your own work.
5. We will meet for a 20-30 minute conference after each draft you submit, and talk about strategies for revising your essay.
6. The key to good writing is **revision**. You will therefore revise each of your drafts before submitting a final version of the essay for a grade.
7. To prepare for each paper you write, you should read the assignment prompt (Canvas >> Assignments). This is a brief description of these papers:

* **Essay 1** is a four-page close reading of any part you choose of the Satipatthana Sutta. While you should consult Analayo's work, as well as Joseph Goldstein's book, you must develop your own argument about the sutta, and use evidence from the text to make your case.

* In **Essay 2**, you will use the analytical framework that Edward Said developed in *Orientalism* to explore Eugene Herrigel's essay on Japanese archery. In this 5-8 page essay, you will engage in the scholarly debate about Herrigel's work, using your understanding of *Orientalism*, as well as evidence from *Zen and the Art of Archery*, to make your argument.

* In **Essay 3**, you will examine any subject related to the application of Buddhist practices in the modern world. In this 8-12 page essay, you will develop your own research question and argument, using primary and secondary sources of your choice.

Descriptions of all three assignments will be found on our Canvas site (under Assignments), and we will discuss each of them in class.

Other Course Policies

- *Grading:* I will grade only the last version of your essays, not the drafts. The overall course grade will be determined as follows:

Attendance and Participation: 10%

Paper 1: 20%

Paper 2: 30%

Paper 3: 40%

- *Attendance and participation:* Participation is the key to our class' success. I expect you to come promptly to every class, rested and alert, having prepared your readings and assignments. Students are expected to participate in class discussion and in-class activities, to engage with others respectfully and in a friendly manner.

The policy of the Harvard College Writing Program is that if you miss more than one class without the excuse of a religious holiday or illness, you will receive a formal warning letter, copied to your Freshman Dean. If you then miss another class without a legitimate reason, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course. Please note that absences to participate in athletic or other extracurricular activities are not excusable. If you have to be absent for a religious holiday or other important event, please speak to me *before* the date you will be away.

- *Deadlines:* Our class will move very quickly, so you must submit work on time. I will only accept late work if the student contacts me to request an extension *well in advance* of the deadline, and has a compelling reason for doing so. Otherwise, late work will receive a significant grade penalty.
- *Completion of Work:* The policy of the Harvard College Writing Program is as follows: You must complete all three of the required courses essays (including drafts) in order to pass the course. All work must be completed by the relevant deadline unless you have made *prior* arrangements with me for an extension. If you then miss the extended deadline, you may be excluded from the course.
- *Policy on Electronic Submissions:* You will submit your work electronically this semester, by uploading it on Canvas. As you send or upload each document, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have saved the document as a Word document (doc., docx.). If you do not have Word on your computer, please use any of the computers available to you on campus (e.g. at Lamont Library or in your house). It is also your responsibility to ensure that the file you are sending is not corrupted or damaged, and that it has uploaded correctly by the deadline. If I cannot open or read the file you have sent, the essay will be subject to a late penalty. In case you are having technical

difficulties, please call the Harvard ITS Service Desk: 617 495-7777, and let me know that a problem exists.

- *Collaboration Among Students*. Developing or refining ideas in conversation with other students and through peer review of written work (including feedback from Writing Center tutors) is recommended. If you would like to acknowledge the impact someone had on your essay, it is customary to do this in a footnote at the beginning of the paper. As stated in the Student Handbook, “You do not need to acknowledge discussion with others of general approaches to the assignment or assistance with proofreading.” However, all work submitted for this course must be your own: in other words, writing response papers, drafts, or revisions with other students is expressly forbidden.
- *Academic Honesty*. All work submitted for this course must be your own work. Any outside sources you use must be cited properly. Any student submitting plagiarized work is eligible to fail the course and will be referred to the college’s Administrative Board for further disciplinary action, including expulsion from the university. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult the relevant sections of *Harvard Guide to Using Sources* and/or speak with the instructor.
- We will be using the Chicago Manual of Style Notes and Bibliography system of citation. For your convenience, you may access the manual either online (in [this link](#)) or at Harvard libraries.

Unit 1 – The Buddha’s Direct Path to Realization

Monday, Feb 3

Vanessa Loder, [“The Most Surprising Way To Increase Employee Wellbeing And Productivity \(That Costs Almost Nothing\).”](#) *Forbes*, March 25, 2015.

[Satipatthana Sutta \(The Discourse on the Establishing of Mindfulness\) Majjhima Nikaya 10.](#)

Wed, Feb 5

Read handout: The 'Art' of Close Reading (Canvas).

Joseph Goldstein, *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Awakening* (Sounds True, 2013), 3-44.

Optional: Peter Harvey, "The Buddha and his Indian Context" (available on Canvas >> Modules >> Unit 1 Optional Reading).

Response paper 1: "Find a problem in the text" due Sunday, Feb 9, 7pm. Upload your paper to Canvas (assignments >> Response paper 1). Note: do not spend a lot of time on this assignment.

Mon, Feb 10

Goldstein, 45-80.

[Guided meditation on the body](#)

*** Optional Reading: Anlyo, *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization* (Windhorse Publication, 2003). Harvard Coop and as a free pdf. (If you're interested in comparing translations, see either Anlyo's translation in the opening of his book, or Bhikkhu Sujato's translation, which can be found here: <https://suttacentral.net/mn10/en/sujato>)

Note: Please **fill out a student introduction form**. Upload the form on Canvas (Assignments >> Student Introductions) I will hold intro meetings Monday through Wednesday.

Wed, Feb 12

Come to class with an outline of your draft. It's okay if it's a very, very rough outline. Bring your laptops, as well as any material you will need in order to write your essay.

[Guided meditation on the breath](#)

*** **Draft of Essay 1 is due Friday, Feb 14**, 7pm. (Upload it to Assignments >> Essay 1 Draft.)***

*** Please **sign up** for next week's draft conference on the Canvas scheduler. ***

*** Feb 17 is President's Day -- **no class will be held**. ***

*** Instead of Wednesday's class, we will hold draft conferences. ***

Mon, Feb 24

Essay 1 Workshop: Read and comment on students' drafts (Modules >> Unit 1 Readings). Download and read the "Workshop Nuts and Bolts" handout. The last page of the handout is a form that will help you organize your comments on the students' essays you are commenting on. Bring two hard copies of your comments on each student's draft to class, as well as a printed copy of the students' essays (with your marginal comments and line-edits).

Read "Elements of an Academic Argument" handout (Canvas).

[Guided Meditation on the vedana.](#)

Wed, Feb 26

Goldstein, 81-120.

Print your introduction and bring it to class. Whatever state it is in is okay. You'll have a chance to work on it in class.

[Relaxing -- a guided meditation.](#)

***** Revised Essay 1 Due Friday, Feb 28, 7pm.** (Upload it to Assignments >> Essay 1 Revised.) Before you submit, look at Owl's sample Chicago Style paper, as well as at the instructions on how to submit a revised paper. Ensure that your own paper is edited accordingly. ***

Check out the more advanced meditations on parts of the Satipatthana Sutta by these fantastic Dharma teachers:

[Marcia Rose: a guided four-elements meditation](#)

[Anushka Fernandopulle: guided meditation on 32 parts of the body](#)

Unit 2 – Zen, Archery, Orientalism

* **Response Paper 2:** "Describe a clinging." Due Sun, March 1, at 7pm. Upload your paper to Canvas (assignments >> Response paper 2.)

Mon, March 2

Eugen Herrigel, *Zen in the Art of Archery* (1948). Read up to the section that opens “Day by day I found myself...”

[Guided meditation on the breath with labeling.](#)

Wed, Mar 4

Herrigel, rest of the book.

[Guided meditation on thoughts](#)

* **Response Paper 3:** Keyword – orientalism. Due Sun, Mar 8, 7pm.

[Jack Kornfield: Meditation on sound](#)

Mon Mar 9

Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Introduction and ch. 1 part i.

[Guided meditation on body and vedana](#)

Wed, Mar 11

Said, *Orientalism*, rest of Ch. 1, as well as Ch.2 part iv.

[Sayadaw U Tejaniya: morning instructions on retreat \(with translation\)](#)

***** Spring Break March 14 - 22 *****

Mon, Mar 23

Shōji, Yamada. "The Myth of Zen in the Art of Archery." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, no. 1/2 (2001): 1-30. (On canvas)

[Guided concentration meditation](#)

Wed, Mar 25

Robert Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism." (Canvas)

[Bhante Buddharakkhita: Meditation on sleepiness and dullness](#)

*** A **draft of Essay 2** is due **Friday, Mar 27, at 7pm**. (To upload: Assignments >> Essay 2 Draft). Please sign up for a draft conference with me for the following week.***

*** After reading the "They Say, I Say" handout, please write **Response Paper 4**: "They Say, I Say" **Due Sunday, Mar 29, 7pm**. ***

Mon, Mar 30

Essay 2 workshop: read and comment on students' drafts. Download the "Workshop Nuts and Bolts" document (Modules >> Resources and Handouts); fill out the last page of this document and print it. Bring two hard copies of your comments on each student's draft to class.

Sign up for next week's draft conferences.

Wed, April 1

Essay 2 draft conferences throughout the week -- **no class** will be held.

Unit 3: Buddhism Applied, Appropriated or Incorporated?

Mon, Apr 6

Library visit: class will meet at Widener Library (room TBA)

*** **Response Paper 5**: Proposal for final essay due **Tuesday, Apr 7, 7pm**.

Wed, Apr 8

Ron Purser and David Loy, "[Beyond McMindfulness](#)," Huffington Post, July 1, 2013.

Sources workshop will be held in class.

***Your **revised Essay 2** is **due on Friday, Apr 10, at 7pm** ***

Mon, Apr 13

Read one of the following suttas and report to the class about it:

The [Kālāma Sutta](#) (Kesaputtiya: Aṅguttara Nikāya 65)

Or [The Greater Discourse on the Lion's Roar \(MN 12\)](#)

Or [Cula-Malunkya Sutta \(MN 63\)](#)

Or [The Shorter Heart Sutra](#) (Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra: Taishō Tripiṭaka volume 8, number 251)

* **Response Paper 6:** Revised Proposal for final essay and annotated bibliography due Tuesday, Apr 14, 7pm.*

Wed, Apr 15

Monteiro, Musten and Compson, "Traditional and Contemporary Mindfulness: Finding the Middle Path in the Tangle of Concerns." *Mindfulness* (2015) 6:1–13.

Mon, Apr 20

Purser, "Clearing the Muddled Path of Traditional and Contemporary Mindfulness: A Response to Monteiro, Musten, and Compson." *Mindfulness* (2015) 6:23–45

Counter-argument handout (Canvas)

Wed, Apr 22

Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Scientific Buddha, His Short and Happy Life* (Yale Univ. Press, 2012), Ch. 2. (Canvas)

UNC Writing Center, *Conclusions* (Canvas)

Mon, Apr 27

Lopez Jr., *The Scientific Buddha*, Interlude.

Concentrated writing: bring laptops to class, as well as any material you'll need in order to write your draft.

Wed Apr 29

Last class!

Please bring a laptop to this class.

*** A **draft of Essay 3** is due Friday, May 1st at 7pm. ***

*** Instead of 1-1 conferences, we will hold small workshops with 3 students each in the first week of May. Please sign up for these workshops early. Come prepared to the workshop with hard copies of your friends' drafts, as well as a printed version of your comments on the Workshop Nuts and Bolts form. ***

*** **Revised final essay due date TBA** ***