Japanese Culture & Civilization: 
Buddhism in Theory and Practice

The University of Shiga Prefecture
The Japan Center for Michigan Universities

September 30- December 2, 2015

Course Description and Goals

This course presents an introduction to, and an investigation of, specific topics in Japanese culture and society as formed by religious beliefs and practices, especially Buddhism. Classroom lectures and discussions will focus mainly on Buddhist concepts and ideals, both fundamental and those particular to Japan. Understanding particular religious practices will be heightened by a field study trip to Nishi-Hongwanji, a World Heritage Site in Kyoto and the central site of Jodo-Shinshu (Shin Buddhism), and also by a field study practicum meditation session at a Zen temple in Hikone. Ideals of Buddhist architecture, in particular the harmony of art and nature, will be revealed in a field study tour of two National Treasure Buddhist temples in the mountain heights of Shiga. A study tour to local manufacturers of Buddhist household altars will further deepen students’ appreciation of the functions and significance of Buddhist beliefs in daily life.

Food for thought will further be provoked by considerations of the evolving or changing nature of what Buddhist themes of enlightenment and the meaning of life and death mean to different generations, as revealed in selected scenes from films and anime. Another lecture considers the influence of Buddhism on works of Japanese poetry and literature.

The primary goal and learning objective of this course is to stimulate students to consider how and where Japanese culture and society have been affected by religion, especially Buddhism. This will be accomplished through classroom lectures and discussions, practical observations and investigations at several religious sites and one site manufacturing religious ritual objects, and participation in one major religious practice (silent sitting meditation).

Through attending classes regularly, participating in discussions actively, and engaging with the content of this course fully, both intellectually and through physical experiences, by the end of the course students should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the following key items:

- What are the primary concepts, beliefs and ideals of Buddhism, and what did particular Japanese Buddhist leaders contribute to the religion
- Where can expressions of Buddhist thought be observed in Japanese lifestyles
- Other aspects of Japanese culture and society as they reveal themselves and become relevant to the students’ personal and academic lives
Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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**Class 4:** October 14 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: Hoyu Ishida, Professor  

**Class 5:** October 16 Friday 1:00 - 6:00. Instructor: Hoyu Ishida, Professor  
Topic: Field study. Instruction in *zazen* sitting meditation at Seiryoji 清凉寺 a Soto Zen temple in Hikone, followed by a practice session of *zazen*. Also a visit to the attached Ryotanji 龍潭寺 Temple, the Family Temple of the Ii family, the former Lords of Hikone.  
http://maps.google.com/?ie=UTF8&ll=35.282771,136.266459&spn=0.002886,0.005869&z=18

**Class 6:** October 21 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: John Rippey, Professor  
Topic: The satoyama and traditional Japanese conceptions of nature, as seen in Edo period haiku and writings by Matsuo Basho and Kobayashi Issa, with some consideration of Buddhist influences on their lives and literary work. Readings: a selection of poetry and prose by Basho and Issa. Readings: Will be available at least a week before the class.

**Class 7:** October 28 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: Hoyu Ishida, Professor  
Topics: Introduction to Mahâyâna Buddhism and Japanese Kamakura Buddhism (Part IV). The Bodhisattva ideal in Mahâyâna Buddhism—Self-benefiting and benefiting-others.  
Readings: Ishida *Salvation for Oneself and Others*. Ishida *Nietzsche and Samsara*.  
*Reading Report due today by email.*

**Class 8:** November 4 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: Hoyu Ishida, Professor  
Topic: Time-Space Interformation in Eastern Philosophy, with emphasis on Buddhism and particularity and universality of world religions. (Part I)  

**Class 9:** November 11 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: Walter Klinger, Associate Professor  

**Class 10:** November 18 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: Shinsuke Omoya, Professor  
Topics: Post-war Japanese design. History and craftsmanship of Buddhist household altars in Hikone.  
**Class 11:** November 21 Saturday 1:00 - 6:00. Instructor: Shinsuke Omoya, Professor

Topic: Field study. Tour & Appreciation of craftsmen’s workshops making Buddhist altars in the vicinity of Hikone, including 4 hours lectures, explanations and discussion.

**Class 12:** November 25 Wednesday 12:00 - 7:00. Instructors: Yoshiyuki Tomishima and Hoyu Ishida, Professors

Topic: Field study. Tour & Appreciation of Saimyōji 西明寺 and Kongōrinji 金剛輪寺 two national treasure Buddhist temples in the mountains of Shiga Prefecture, including 3 hours lectures, explanations and discussion on temple architecture and statues.

Reading: **Tomishima National Treasures of Japan: Shiga.**

http://maps.google.com/?ie=UTF8&ll=35.183332,136.285245&spn=0.001445,0.002934&z=19

**Class 13:** December 2 Wednesday 1:10-3:40. Instructor: Hoyu Ishida, Professor

Topics: Time-Space Interformation in Eastern Philosophy, with emphasis on Buddhism and particularity and universality of world religions. (Part II) Course Wrap up

*Final class for JCMU students. *Final Paper and Reflection Paper due today by email in order to meet the JCMU deadline for submitting grades.
Course Readings

*This syllabus and some of the course readings are available for download from http://www.office.usp.ac.jp/~klinger.w/class/jcmu/CourseReadings.html
*Books are listed with their USP library call number.


Eades, Carla; Nishiyama Yuriko; and Yanase Hiroko. 2008. Introduction to Japanese Craftsmanship: Making A Hikone Butsudan. 9 pdf files.


Ishida Hoyu. 2010. “Genjôkôan”: Some Literary and Interpretative problems of Its Translation. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (15), 1-18.

_____. 2009. “Zazen-shin,” Admonition Concerning Sitting-Meditation. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (14), 1-20.

_____. 2007. The Seventh Step in This World of Duhkha: To Be in the World but Not of the World. *Asian Humanities (Fall Issue)*, 151-162.

_____. 2005. The Unity of Polarity in Shinran’s Religious Experience—That Which Is Empty and False & That Which Is Unsurpassed—. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (10), 41-52.


_____. 2003. Ontological Implications of Pure Land in the Contemporary World. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (8), 15-28.

_____. 2002. A Bodhisattva Ideal in the Here and Now. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (7), 33-54.

_____. 2001. Shinjin and Satori in the Here and Now—Flower Yet Fall As People Lament. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (6), 43-68.

_____. 1999. The Lineage of Zen: The Historian and the Believer. *Academic Reports of the University Center for Intercultural Education, the University of Shiga Prefecture* (4), 65-78.


**Assignments**

25% - **Reading Report:** Each student should submit a three-page review/commentary on one or more of these nine readings:

- **Rahula** *What the Buddha Taught* *excerpt: Chapters 2-5.*
- **Suzuki** *Zen and Japanese Culture* *excerpt: pp. 21-28.*
- **Ishida** Genjōkōan.
- **Ishida** *The Seventh Step in This World of Dukkha.*
- **Ishida** Salvation for Oneself and Others.
- **Ishida** Nietzsche and Samsara.
- **Ishida** Otto’s Theory of Religious Experience.
- **Ishida** Shinjin and Satori in the Here and Now.
- **Ishida** Zazenshin: Admonition for Sitting-meditation.

Due: **October 28** by email to both Prof. Ishida at hoyuishidajl@gmail.com and Prof. Klinger at klinger.w@office.usp.ac.jp

*Please write “JCMU-USP (Your Name)” in the Subject Line of your email.

40% - **Final Paper:** The Final Paper should be about 8 to 10 A4 double-spaced typed pages, covering a topic or topics relating to the readings, lectures or field trips. This paper is an academic research paper and is not for your personal evaluations, critiques, or comments about the course contents, the lecturers’ performance, etc. Students are encouraged to visit instructors during office hours or by appointment for further guidance.

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The paper should be in computer file format and be emailed to both Prof. Ishida at hoyuishidajl@gmail.com and Prof. Klinger at klinger.w@office.usp.ac.jp no later than **December 2 at 17:00** (on the final lecture day) in order to meet the JCMU deadline for submitting grades. *Please write “JCMU-USP (Your Name)” in the Subject Line of your email. Papers found to have been plagiarized will be returned.

15% - Reflection Paper: The Reflection paper should be about 3 to 5 A4 size typed pages, and is due **(December 2 at 17:00)** together with the Final Paper. This paper may include personal reflections from your experiences in the field study trips, critiques comparing and contrasting Buddhism and Japanese religions with your own religious beliefs or lack thereof, comments about the value and effectiveness of the course content and the instructors’ services, etc. Papers will not be graded on whether the instructors agree with your opinion or not, but on your ability in presenting your comments and ideas in a thoughtful and well-organized style. Students who are uncomfortable about making personal statements or comments may instead submit an additional academic report of the same length on a topic different from the submitted Final Paper but still relating to the themes of this course.

20% - Class Participation: Participation is vital to the quality of this course. Instructors will make a distinction between attendance and participation. The latter means the student actively engages in discussions and with the material.

### Attendance and Grading

**Attendance:** Two unexcused absences will result in a loss of half of the class participation grade (see above) making any grade higher than a “B” unlikely. Three or more unexcused absences will result in the total loss of the class participation grade making any grade higher than a “C” unlikely.

**Grading Policy:** Final grades will be calculated as follows. The Lead Instructor reserves the right to curve the final distribution if warranted.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-89%</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>A-/B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84%</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>B-/C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-74%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>C-/D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-64%</td>
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<td>D/D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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**Make-up Policy and Late Assignments:** An official medical note or a written excuse from the JCMU Resident Director are the only circumstances considered as excused absences for which make-up quizzes will be permitted or late assignments will be accepted. Make-up quizzes may be different from the original given in class. Instructors reserve the right to give partial credit for writing assignments submitted late.

### Additional Information

**Academic Integrity:** All institutions of higher education, including the University of Shiga Prefecture, the Japan Center for Michigan Universities, and each of your home institutions have statements and policies regarding Academic Integrity. You are responsible for knowing and conforming to these. Be aware that cheating of any kind is ground for a failing course grade as well as any other institutional action that may be warranted. Plagiarism (which includes paraphrasing material but not citing it) is considered a violation of the standards of academic integrity.
Course Changes: The scheduling and contents of this syllabus are tentative and subject to change. Any changes will be announced as early as possible. Instructors reserve the right to assign additional short readings or other assignments as appropriate. Any significant change to the course will be discussed with the class prior to implementing the change.

Classroom Etiquette: Students are expected to maintain the highest levels of respect for their classmates and course instructors. This respect includes being considerate during lectures and discussions as well as respecting others time by being on time for course meetings. Tardiness or lack of consideration in other ways will influence your course participation grade. All participants must observe the regulations of the temples on the Field Studies, including regulations about alcohol consumption and offensive behavior.

Dropping the Course: Students who begin the course are expected to complete it. Dropping the course due to extenuating circumstances is possible but only in accordance with the policies of JCMU and your home institution.

Special Consideration: Students needing special consideration due to disability should work with the JCMU Resident Director and their home institution’s office of disability services to obtain the proper documentation to be granted special consideration.

Studying for this Class: If you wish to learn from this class, come to class having read the day’s assignments. Lectures and field trips will make much more rewarding if you are prepared. Review your lecture notes after each class and clarify any unclear material. Come to each class with any questions you need answered concerning the lecture notes or your reading notes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Instructor</th>
<th>e-mail</th>
<th>Office Telephone</th>
<th>Office Number &amp; Office Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hoyu ISHIDA, Professor Emeritus</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hoyuishidajl@gmail.com">hoyuishidajl@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>0749-28-8504</td>
<td>A1-201 W3:40-4:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Instructors:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Shinsuke OMOYA</td>
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<td>John RIPPEY</td>
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<td>8254</td>
<td>A1-103 W3:40-4:20</td>
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<td>Yoshiyuki TOMISHIMA</td>
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<td>075-383-2932</td>
<td>Kyoto University</td>
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