

**Senate Curriculum Committee
Report to Senate
June 2017**

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A. Items That Do Not Require Senate Approval

1. Department of Religious Studies

Special Topics Proposal:

RELG 2683 Special Topics Zen Masters
(documentation pp. 6-9)

Approved by the SCC.

2. Department of Gerontology

a) Request to change an existing course title and course Calendar description for *GERO 1013. Introduction to Gerontology*

New course title and course Calendar description:

GERO 1013. Introduction to Gerontology I

This course introduces the subject of population aging from a multidisciplinary perspective. Topics to be discussed include: the status of aging in Canada and the world, ethnicity, social change, gerontological theory and the physical and psychological aspects of growing older.

Rationale: The revised title and new course Calendar description reflect updated themes with a greater focus on Aging in Canada.

b) Request to change an existing course title and course Calendar description for *GERO 1023. Multidisciplinary Issues in Aging*

New course title and course Calendar description:

GERO 1023. Introduction to Gerontology II

This course examines the various factors that impact growing older in Canadian society. Topics to be discussed include: health care, pensions, housing, transportation, family life, social support and death and dying.

Rationale: The revised title and new course Calendar description reflect updated themes with a greater focus on Aging in Canada.

c) Request to change the course Calendar description, correct an error in the cross-listing and modify prerequisites for *GERO 2673. Adult Development and Aging (PSYC)*

New course Calendar description, corrected cross-listing and revised prerequisites:
GERO 2673. Adult Development and Aging (PSYC 2673)

The course provides an introduction to psychological aspects of aging faced by young, middle-aged, and older adults as they adapt to life events. Topics of study include: theories on personality and its development across the lifespan; the impact of aging on intelligence, memory, creativity, and learning; changes with age in social roles and

relationships; and the development of meaning and spirituality in mid - and later life.
Prerequisites: *GERO 1013, GERO 1023* or *PSYC 1023*.

Rationale: The new course Calendar description, corrected course cross-listing and revised prerequisites update and identify specific themes relevant to this area of study.

d) Request to change the course Calendar description for *GERO 3023. Aging and Health*

Revised course Calendar description:

GERO 3023. Aging and Health

Various aspects of aging and health are addressed in this course. Topics considered include: theories of biological aging; normal vs. pathological physical changes that accompany the aging process; various chronic conditions that affect quality of life in later life; the implications of physical aging for medication use and nutritional status among older adults; and the impact of an aging population on the provision of acute care, long-term care, and home care for older adults. Prerequisite: *GERO 1013* and *GERO 1023*.

Rationale: The revised course Calendar description reflects updated material and topics relevant to this course.

e) Request to change the course Calendar description for *GERO 3033. Aging and Spirituality*

Revised course Calendar description:

GERO 3033. Aging and Spirituality

This lecture-seminar course examines the phenomenon of spirituality and its relationship to the process of aging. There are two main themes explored in the course. First, we attempt to understand the meaning of spirituality itself by discussing a range of spiritual and religious traditions. And second, we consider the practical and ethical issues that arise from an explicit acknowledgement of human spirituality in research and practice in gerontology.

Rationale: The revised course Calendar description has been revised to simplify and clarify the content of the course.

f) Request to change the course Calendar description and add new prerequisites for *GERO 3073. Narrative Gerontology*

Revised course Calendar description with the addition of two new prerequisites:

GERO 3073. Narrative Gerontology

This seminar-style course considers the theoretical and practical implications for gerontology of the metaphor of *life as story*. Against the background of the narrative turn across the human sciences and of specific practices in geriatric care like life review and reminiscence, the course explores the narrative complexity of autobiographical memory in particular and of identity development in general. Through readings, assignments, and classroom activities, students are encouraged to consider the narrative dynamics of

their own identity development and to appreciate the complexity of the storytelling-story listening exchanges that are pivotal to providing narrative care with older adults. Limited enrolment. Prerequisites: *GERO 1013* and *GERO 1023*.

Rationale: The revised course Calendar description updates and identifies new themes central to this topic area. The new prerequisites ensure that students have taken introductory courses in the discipline.

g) Request to change the course Calendar description for *GERO-3123. Counselling Older Adults*

Revised course Calendar description:

GERO 3123. Counseling Older Adults

This course considers several important aspects of counseling, broadly defined, as they impact on work with older adults. Topics include: an overview of counseling theories and strategies; the range of emotional, developmental, spiritual, and interpersonal issues for which older adults might seek or need counseling (e.g., substance abuse, elder abuse, bereavement, depression); the benefits of alternative therapeutic modalities (music therapy, pet therapy, etc.); and the value of reminiscence and life review - or narrative care - in working with older adults. This course is most relevant to those preparing to work professionally in the field of aging. Limited enrolment. Prerequisites: *GERO 1013* and *GERO 1023*.

Rationale: The revised course Calendar description contains new themes reflecting advances in this area of study.

h) Request to change the course title and course Calendar description for *GERO-3673. Challenges to Adult Development and Aging*

Revised course title and course Calendar description:

GERO 3673. Advanced Studies in Adult Development

This course is an in-depth study of the markers and challenges that occur during middle to late adulthood. Topics of study include: menopause, retirement, relocation, loss of spouse, caring for an ailing parent or spouse as well as pathological changes such as depression, substance abuse, terminal illness and dementia. Emphasis is placed on changes in response to these influences and on the individual's coping strategies. Prerequisite: *GERO 2673* or *PSYC 2673*

Rationale: The revised course title and Calendar description reflect actual course content.

i) Request to change the course Calendar description and prerequisites for *GERO 4023. Advanced Seminar in Gerontology*

Revised course Calendar description and modifications to prerequisites:
GERO 4023. Advanced Seminar in Gerontology

This course is intended for students in the final semester of the programme. It consists of a multidisciplinary lecture-seminar format. Selected topics in aging research and intervention are discussed, including those that highlight the positive potential of the aging experience, e.g., the potential for creativity, wisdom, and continued personal growth. The purpose of this course is to ensure that students have a comprehensive background in the field of aging. Prerequisites: *GERO 1013*, *GERO 1023* and an additional 18 credit hours of courses.

Rationale: The revised course Calendar description reflects new and specific themes included in the course content. The change in prerequisites allows students to enroll after completing introductory courses in the discipline and an additional 18 credit hours of courses.

Approved by the SCC.

II. DOCUMENTATION (pp. 6-9)

Department of Religious Studies

Course proposal for: *RELG 2683 Special Topics Zen Masters*

1. Type of proposal: Special Topics Course, to be offered only once in Fall 2017.

2. Course name and proposed number: *RELG 2683 Special Topics Zen Masters*

3. Calendar description

This course invites students to examine the figure of the Zen Buddhist master as a literary and performative figure. In addition to a broad overview of the historical development of Zen Buddhism, students will use the case study of the Zen master to explore questions of power, authority, and gender.

4. Theme or Category Grouping. None

5. Impact on Programme Requirements. None

6. Cross-listing. None

7. Rationale for the course

This course allows students to study important questions in religious studies from a new cultural perspective. Thus far, Zen has not been an explicit topic of discussion in the course offerings at St. Thomas, so this course will not compete with any other class.

In exploring this important school of Buddhism, students will be able to think through enduring questions in the study of religion, such as “what is (spiritual) authority?” and “what are the ways in which texts can exert power?” They will also gain insight in the development of a tradition that is one of the pre-eminent representatives of East-Asian spirituality today. The course thus builds on existing courses, such as RELG-2183. Religion and Politics and RELG-2193. New Religious Movements: Cults in the New Age.

Because St. Thomas, as described in the “Goals of a Liberal Education” (<http://w3.stu.ca/stu/aboutstu/goals>) stresses the importance of self-development as well as critical skills, critical engagement with a tradition often seen as spiritual (such as Zen) both familiarizes students with foreign cultural practices while emphasizing their role as independent explorers of knowledge.

8. Instructor’s name: Professor Ben Van Overmeire, Dept. of Religious Studies

9. Course description

“What is the sound of one hand clapping?” “What was your name before you were born?” Though this course might not give you the correct answer to such mysterious questions, it will

explore the characters that ask them: Zen Buddhist masters, whose adventures are first recounted in documents over a thousand years old, but whose spiritual descendants remain teaching today. We will try to understand why these people ask their students such strange questions, and how this fits into the larger context of East-Asian thought, history, and cultural influence.

Our exploration will start with a consideration of early precursors to Zen masters in China and India (the Daoist sage called Zhuangzi and the Buddhist trickster Vimalakirti). Then, we will move to consider the diversity of masters, moving from the beginnings of Zen to the high points of the school during the Tang, Sung, and Yuan dynasties. In the final part of the course, we will move on to consider the spread of Zen to Korea and Japan and then to the West.

Rather than provide a mere historical overview of the development of Zen (a partial objective of this course), our focus will be on the Zen master as literary and performative figure: how does one embody a Zen master? How does a master exert authority on others? Why and how are these stories about Zen masters so mysterious and yet fascinating? Throughout, our discussion will be framed not only by recent scholarship on Zen Buddhist history but also by critical theory on (spiritual) power and authority (work by Michel Foucault and Friedrich Nietzsche, among others).

10. Evaluation system

1. Moodle Responses 25%
On the evening before class (12am at the latest), you will be responsible to post a 300-word reading response on Moodle ending in a question meant to provoke class discussion. Before every session, I will select the best questions. Part of your grade in this category will depend on how many of your responses and questions are selected over the semester. In class, we will discuss what the elements of a “good” question are. Responses can be based both on *how the readings enrich or apply to your life* or *how the readings help you understand the religious, cultural, and historical phenomenon that is “Zen Buddhism.”*
2. Participation: 25%
Part of the grade will depend on whether you participate in class, and on the quality of your contributions. Quality does not mean quantity: you should not feel the need to speak every class or every second. Thoughtful responses and comments are the best, as they allow you to engage with the material more deeply.
3. Performance: 10%
In groups, students will perform a Zen dialogue of their choice from the course readings. Through this assignment, you will gain insight into the traditional ritual usage of these dialogues.
4. Midterm 10%
As you’ll notice very quickly, over time Zen Buddhists have developed a specialized vocabulary and a refined notion of lineage. It is important to understand both of these when talking about this religious school. The midterm will therefore quiz you on famous patriarchs and concepts as they appeared in the readings. This will be a multiple-choice exam.
5. Field Trip report 5%

I will organize a trip to a nearby Zen Center where we will meditate and get a chance to talk to a living Zen master. Before this trip, we will generate questions based on what we've read. Then, you will write a two-page report on what you found.

6. Blogging Assignment 10%

At the beginning of the semester, you will choose one contemporary Zen master from a list. You will then explore the work of this master, as well as secondary literature about this person. Every four weeks, you will write a blog post exploring how the critical perspectives introduced in the course influence your reading of these figures. You will also be responsible to substantially comment on at least 2 other blog posts by your colleagues. This assignment will allow you to apply what we've learned to a new topic, as well as see your thinking and writing in dialogue with that of others.

7. Final Presentation 15%

Based on the Zen master you've analyzed in the blog, the last week of class will feature 20-minute presentations, where you summarize your findings on the Zen master you've worked on.

11. Possible course texts and other materials

Titles followed by an asterisk are available at the HIL.

- Addiss, Stephen, et al. (eds.). *Zen Sourcebook: Traditional Documents from China, Korea, and Japan*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008.*
- Kerouac, Jack. *The Dharma Bums*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2006.*
- Kraft, Kenneth (ed.). *Zen: Tradition and Transition*. New York: Grove, 1988.*
- McRae, John. *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism*. Berkeley: UC Press, 2003*
- Watson, Burton. *The Zen Teaching of Master Lin-Chi: a Translation of the Linji Lu*. Boston: Shambala, 1993.

12. Bibliography

Titles followed by an asterisk are available at the HIL.

Caplow, Zenshin Florence, and Reigetsu Susan Moon, eds. *The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2013.

Chadwick, David. *Crooked Cucumber*. New York: Broadway Books, 1999.

Cole, Alan. *Fathering Your Father: The Zen of Fabrication in Tang Buddhism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Foulk, Griffith. "The Form and Function of the Kōan Literature: A Historical Overview." *The Koan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*. Eds. Steven Heine and Dale Wright. New York: Oxford, 2000. 15-45.*

Goldberg, Michael. *A Zen Life*. DVD. 2008.

- Graham, Angus C. *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book*. Indianapolis : Hackett Pub. Co. 2001
- Hsieh, Ding-Hwa. "Images of Women in Ch'an Buddhist Literature of the Sung Period." *Buddhism in the Sung*. Eds. Peter Gregory and Daniel Getz. Honolulu: Hawai'i UP, 1999. 148-187.
- Jackson, Roger R. "Upāya." *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. Ed. Robert Buswell. New York: Macmillan, 2003. 871-2.*
- Jorgensen, John. "Chan School." *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. Ed. Robert E. Buswell. Vol. 1. New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004. 130-137.*
- Keel, Hee-Sung. *Chinul: The Founder of the Korean Son Tradition*. Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1984. 1-31.*
- Macey, David. *Michel Foucault*. Critical Lives. London: Reaktion, 2004. 7-26.*
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: Norton, 2010.*
- Robbins, Derek. "The Socio-Genesis of the Thinking Instruments." *Bourdieu and Culture*. London: SAGE, 2000. 25-41.*
- Shahar, Meir. *The Shaolin Monastery: History, Religion, and the Chinese Martial Arts*. Honolulu: Hawai'i UP, 2008. 55-109.*
- Sharf, Robert. "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism." *History of Religions* 33.1 (1993). 1-43.*
- Suzuki, Shunryu. *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*. New York : Weatherhill 1983.*
- Takuan, Sōhō. *Sword of Zen: Master Takuan and his Writings on Immovable Wisdom and the Sword Taie*. Trans. Peter Haskel. Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press, 2013.*
- Thurman, Robert A.F. *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*. University Park : Pennsylvania State University Press 1976
- Waddell, Norman (trans.) *Wild Ivy: The Spiritual Autobiography of Zen Master Hakuin*. Boston: Shambhala, 1999. 1-62.