AR9066W  Crossing the Street: Understanding Buddhism and Our Buddhist Neighbours

Offered: 2017: Intensive – August/September
[Unit offered alternatively as DM9066W]

This unit provides an introductory inquiry into Buddhist thought and practice as well as its implications for cross-cultural engagement with our neighbours from Buddhist background. The life of Buddha Siddhartha Gautama, the basic tenets, and socio-historical development of Buddhism will provide a foundation for understanding the various traditions and expressions of Buddhism in the world today. Particular attention will be paid to understanding the spiritual world and daily life of Buddhists in various contexts, as well as historical and current barriers and bridges that can inhibit or facilitate understanding, positive interaction and fruitful encounters with Buddhist neighbours.

Upon successful completion of this unit, it is expected that students will be able to:
1. Outline the historical development, central tenets and practices of Buddhism.
2. Understand the geographical spread of Buddhism as well as articulate the cultural worldviews and structures found within the various streams of Buddhist traditions.
3. Identify the significant Buddhist concepts, themes and practices that have influenced or been adopted, transformed or rejected by the local cultures it has encountered.
4. Participate in authentic interreligious dialogue and communication that reflects an understanding and contributions of both the Buddhist and Christian worldviews.
5. Discern spiritual practices, structures and teaching appropriate to a Buddhist context.
6. Critique the historical interactions with Buddhists that have led to misunderstandings and lack of response.

Prerequisites: 30 points in Foundational Studies

Class Time: 6 days (2 x 3 days)

Assessment: Book/paper report (500 words) (10%)
Initial interview reflection (500 words) (10%)
Research project (1,500 words) (20%)
Secondary interview reflection (500 words) (10%)
Essay (3,000 words) (50%)

Faculty: Ian Dicks, Paul Gravitas

Recommended Reading: See next page
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* = set texts recommended for purchase


