Religious Studies
Buddhist Lifestyle Project
Mentor: Pierce Salguero

Requirements:

- Daily journal-keeping
- Weekly group meditation session on campus
- Purchase and read:
  Introducing Buddhism, ISBN #9780415550017
  Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain, ISBN# 9780345479891
  The Buddha Walks into a Bar, ISBN# 9781590309377

Learning outcomes:

- Develop experiential knowledge of Buddhist culture and lifestyles
- Compare different modes of presenting Buddhist ideas, morals, and philosophies
- Reflect upon how different representations of Buddhist ideas and practices fit with one's personal embodied experience

This assignment asks you to participate personally in particular aspects of Buddhist life, practice, and/or tradition for the duration of the semester. (This does NOT mean you have to take on Buddhist beliefs, and you should not do anything for this project that you do not feel comfortable with or that conflicts with your own faith.) Begin by writing a ½- to 1-page plan for what you will be doing over the course of the semester, choosing at least 2 facets of Buddhist practice from the list below.

Required activity:

- **Meditation practice**. All students enrolled in this option must start and maintain a daily meditation practice. You must also attend one of the group meditation sessions at the Spring House per week. For support in your practice, you may additionally wish to use the Buddhify2 app (for iOS or Android) or connect with a local meditation group (such as the Won Buddhism group in Glenside).

Possible additional activities:

- **Buddhist discipline**: Follow the Five Precepts and the Bodhisattva Precepts strictly for the entire semester.
- **Strict vegetarianism:** Avoid animal flesh in any form for the semester. Also avoid

- **Visit a temple:** There is a list of Buddhist temples in the area on personal.psu.edu/cps14. Choose one or several to visit 5-6 times throughout the semester, in order to observe/participate in the group chanting/meditation sessions and other activities of the community.
- **Renunciation & retreat.** As monastic Buddhism tends to emphasize renunciation and simplicity, you can take a solemn vow to maintain "noble silence" for the week of Spring Break (i.e., no speaking, no touching another person, no looking at anyone in the eye, no electronic devices of any kind including cell phone and computers, and no TV/movies/music or other entertainment). Spend the extra time you gain from unplugging doing additional meditation, taking quiet walks, and reading about Buddhism.
- **Yoga practice.** Yoga, while originally a Hindu practice, has been integrated into the regular practice of many Buddhist communities. Attend a weekly yoga class.
- **Service project**. As Buddhism emphasizes charitable giving of money and time in the pursuit of good karma, you can engage in a service project that helps other people in your community or beyond.
- **DIY**. If you do not see a project here that you are interested in pursuing, you can combine aspects of each or design your own—as long as it is directly connected with Buddhist ideas and practices in the readings.

ASSIGNMENT: Whichever projects you decide to complete, you will be reading selections from the books listed above on a weekly basis. For this project, you are also required to keep a daily journal of your experiences reflecting on how your practice is affecting your mental state, your thoughts and emotions, and/or your reactions to events. Your journal entries should continually reflect on Buddhist philosophical principles (such as suffering, impermanence, and non-self), and how these related to your daily experiences. The final journal entry should be a summary of how well you achieved your goals, the difficulties and/or successes you encountered, how you feel about your experiences, and what you learned in the process. You will be graded on how well you use in your self-reflection the Buddhist principles discussed in this class and in the readings.