Course Code | BSTD 307
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Course Title | Buddhism & Development (Focus: Environment)
Semester, Year | Fall, 2024
Schedule: class day & time | Monday and Wednesday 9:45am-11:15am
Optional Readings | TBD

**Course Description**

This course, Buddhism & Development, focuses on environmental development issues. It explores the intricate relationship between Buddhism, development, and environmental ethics. Commencing with an overview of basic Buddhist concepts and their connection to environmental ethics, students will engage with topics such as Buddhist cosmology, karma, ahimsa, mindfulness, interconnectedness, compassion, and the application of these principles to environmental ethics. The course features Himalayan Buddhist perspectives—the significance of sacred spaces, place-based deities, and contemporary environmentalism within Buddhist communities—to encourage critical analysis and deepen understanding of the entanglement of Buddhism and the environment. The highlight of the course will be an eight-day field trip to the Langtang National Park to witness the stunning natural beauty of a prominent "hidden land" (beyul) in the high Himalaya in which students will have the opportunity to conduct ethnographic field work related to Buddhism and the environment. The second half of the course focuses on current issues such as overpopulation, development, consumption, and the global environmental crisis. Emphasis will be placed on Engaged Buddhism and contemporary Buddhist environmental activism, historical Buddhist perspectives and contemporary case studies, and the role of nature in contemplative practices. Hopefully, this class will stimulate group discussions on Buddhism's role in addressing issues related to development and environmental crises, and deepen an interpersonal relationship with the natural world.
Learning Outcomes

- Understand the fundamental Buddhist concepts related to environmental ethics, including *karma*, nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), interconnectedness (*pratītyasamutpāda*), and compassion.
- Analyze the intricate relationship between Buddhism, development, and environmental ethics, considering perspectives from Himalayan Buddhist traditions and contemporary environmentalism within Buddhist communities.
- Apply Buddhist principles to critically evaluate current issues such as overpopulation, development, consumption, and the global environmental crisis.
- Engage in reflective and contemplative practices inspired by Buddhist teachings to deepen personal connections with nature and develop a sense of environmental responsibility.
- Consider individual and collective roles to address current issues such as overpopulation, development, consumption, and the global environmental crisis.
- **(Optional)** Conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Langtang National Park, integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experiences to investigate the intersection of Buddhism and the environment in a real-world setting.

Course Requirements

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<tr>
<th>How do I succeed in the course?</th>
<th>Success is determined by being engaged during class discussion, finishing all required reading assignments, giving detailed presentations, and producing a thoughtful, well-written final paper that integrates Buddhist thought with contemporary global issues discussed in class.</th>
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### Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Weekly reflection essays</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Class presentations</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Final field work research paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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