

RELI 283: The Buddhist Tradition: India, Nepal & Tibet



What does it mean to say that everything is “empty”? How do Buddhist prayer flags work? Are Tibetan monasteries quite what most people think? Buddhism is a global religious tradition that has been shaped by social, historical, political and economic trends, and that has evolved in dynamic dialogue (and sometimes bitter tension) with specific philosophical, geographical and cultural environments. This course introduces students to the diverse beliefs, practices, cosmologies and societies associated with Buddhism in India, Nepal and Tibet. We begin with an extended inquiry into Buddhist history and teachings, focusing on major Buddhist doctrines and their philosophical implications. Following this, we turn to ethnographic case studies of contemporary Buddhist societies, using monastic training and village practices, respectively, to explore the cultural dynamics of Himalayan Buddhist life. The class concludes by exploring recent struggles over the future of Buddhism in Tibet and the Tibetan diaspora, and the complex ethical dilemmas that contemporary events pose.

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Tuesdays & Thursdays
11:00AM-12:15PM

**General Education
Requirements: Fulfills
PH, BN**