



Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - Exchange programme Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - 2024-2025

Exchange

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam offers many English-taught courses in a variety of subjects, ranging from arts & culture and social sciences, neurosciences and computer science, to economics and business administration.

The International Office is responsible for course approval and course registration for exchange students. For details about course registration, requirements, credits, semesters and so on, please [visit the exchange programmes webpages](#).

Living Chinese Buddhism

Course Code	G_BATRSAL095
Credits	6
Period	P2
Course Level	300
Language Of Tuition	English
Faculty	Faculty of Religion and Theology
Course Coordinator	dr. J. Reinke
Examiner	dr. J. Reinke
Teaching Staff	dr. J. Reinke
Teaching method(s)	Seminar, Lecture

Course Objective

Students will

- Learn about the modern history of Chinese Buddhism, one of the largest Buddhist traditions worldwide, and its contemporary state globally.
- Explore Buddhism through a lived religion approach, focusing on how it is practiced and experienced in everyday life.
- Practice critically reading and analyzing academic articles from religious studies, history, and the social sciences related to Chinese Buddhism.
- Gain an understanding of key issues within scholarly discourse regarding contemporary and modern Chinese Buddhism.
- Learn about and experience how Chinese Buddhism is practiced in the Netherlands, providing a local context for understanding its global manifestations and contemporary relevance.

Course Content

While Buddhist traditions such as Japanese Zen, Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism, and Southeast Asian Theravada are well-known in the Netherlands, Chinese Buddhism remains relatively unknown, despite its immense historical influence and having the largest number of followers worldwide.

This course focuses on Chinese Buddhism, specifically the Mahayana tradition as it developed in central Asia and China, and is practiced in the People's Republic of China, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and increasingly globally. The course will provide a brief introduction to its historical development, but the central focus will be on understanding Chinese Buddhism through a lived religion lens.

We will adopt a multidisciplinary approach, combining historical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives to examine how Chinese Buddhism is lived and practiced today. Topics covered include history, modernization, and globalization; different schools and practice lineages; the roles of laity and monasticism; cultural practices like tea culture and vegetarianism; and societal issues such as gender dynamics.

Through this exploration, students will gain insights into the diverse dimensions of Chinese Buddhism and its contemporary significance in various cultural and national contexts, including China, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, the US, and even the Netherlands.

Additional Information Teaching Methods

This course consists of lectures and group discussions. Students are required to read and prepare all assigned readings. For each class, students must prepare a 1-page summary of the readings along with two discussion questions. These summaries and questions must be uploaded to Canvas by midnight the evening before the class.

Attendance of at least 80% is required to pass the course.

The course includes an excursion to a Buddhist temple, providing students with firsthand experience and practical

exposure to Chinese Buddhism in a local context.

Method of Assessment

Class assignments (summaries of the readings and questions) (60%), group presentation (40%).