Course Description:
Buddhism has played an important role in shaping the imagination of the “Orient” in modern Europe and North America, providing a mirror to rethink both oneself and the other. Ideas connected to Buddhism have been a source of inspiration in a variety of cultural debates and for many different causes, ranging from philosophical nihilism to the call for freedom of the American Beat generation. In this course, we will analyze different examples of this process, and broaden the discussion to issues such as religion and modernity, cultural difference and appropriation, and how religion can shape gender and racial identity.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

➢ Master skills in **critical reading and analysis** of a variety of sources ranging from historical documents, philosophical and literary texts, and apply these skills in **building clear arguments**.

➢ By discussing ideas and images about Buddhism and East-West definitions, students will also **develop and express informed opinions** about cultural difference, stereotypes and appropriation, that take into consideration both historical contexts and social issues of race discrimination, migration, and gender in modern religion.

Books for purchase:
All assigned readings are in article form and will be available online in PDF through the canvas site as soon as activated. Further reading suggestions for students who are interested in learning more about the topics discussed will be shared online during class.
Course Schedule and Weekly Readings:

1. June 23rd. Introduction to the course: Buddhism and Christianity, mirror image and opposite.
   
   Readings:
   - pages from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Anti-Christ*
   - preface and introduction from *The Gospel of the Buddha*, by Paul Carus

   
   Readings:
   - Friedrich Max Müller, "The Real Significance of the Parliament of Religions"
   - Shaku Sōen’s speech and response to Barrows
   - Anagarika Dharmapala, "Buddhism and Christianity"

   
   Readings:
   - Nyogen Senzaki, selected poems
   - Duncan Williams, "Muddy Waters"
   - Jan Willis, interview
   - Charles Johnson "Dr. King's Refrigerator"

   
   Readings:
   - Alan Watts, "Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen"
   - Timothy Leary, "The Buddha as Drop-Out"
   - Jack Kerouac, short passages from *The Dharma Bums*
   - Gary Snyder, "Smokey the Bear Sutra"

   
   Readings:
   - Robert Sharf, "Is Mindfulness Buddhist? (and why it matters)"
   - Ron Purser, "Beyond McMindfulness"
   - Amod Lele, "In defense of McMindfulness"

6. July 28. Buddhism for this world and for other worlds: The Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism in the Western imagination.
   
   Readings:
   - Donald Lopez, "The Prison", chapter from *Prisoners of Shangri-La*
   - The 14th Dalai Lama Nobel Prize Lecture