

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE

FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 10212S

Date of Senate Approval 04/05/12

Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 92: Add new course, ANTH 380, Zen Anthropology

Effective Date: Fall 2012

1.Add: On page 262, new course **ANTH 380, Zen Anthropology**

380 Zen Anthropology (3)

Zen and Anthropology are different practices. Zen is a type of religion from one part of the world; Anthropology is a kind of science from another. But there are remarkable family resemblances between them. Both are, in a sense, methods for learning about the nature of human reality. Both ask practitioners to pay attention to the here and now. Both ask us to be accepting of other forms of life. Both recognize that reality changes, and that one of our tasks as human beings is to try to understand those changes and come to terms with them. Drawing on Zen and Anthropological texts, the seminar explores what these different methods teach us about ourselves. Even years Fall.

Impact:

The course has been taught twice as a special topics course, so adding it as a permanent part of the curriculum will have no adverse impact on the departmental resources. It will formally add an elective course to the major, and a course without prerequisites for non-majors.

Rationale:

The class has been a popular class in previous years, filling as an upper-level elective though offered routinely at 8 a.m. It does a couple of different things within the anthropology curriculum: it offers students an anthropologically motivated look at Zen Buddhism; it also asks what insights or practices Zen offers anthropology, specifically anthropological method; and it offers students insights into the value of their own mindfulness as they go about their everyday life. The "Zen" here refers to a method, a way of cultivating awareness, useful in life as well as in ethnographic fieldwork, which is the core activity in the discipline of Cultural Anthropology. Students read both Buddhist and Anthropological texts with the aim of cultivating in their own ethnographic work an awareness of the concepts they bring to their fieldwork and an openness to discovering the culture of others on their terms rather than our own.