

PHIL 2700: *Asian Philosophy*
Fall 2014
Carleton University

Meeting time: Thursdays, 6:05-8:55 pm

Instructor: Gordon Davis
Office: Paterson Hall, 3rd floor ('3A', not 3!)... room 3A48 (in the Philosophy Dept.)
Office hours: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00, or by appointment
Email: Gordon.Davis@carleton.ca

IMPORTANT NOTE re. EMAIL: You will be expected to check your 'cumail' account at least twice a week. As well as being good general practice (for receiving university messages), I will be sending out announcements to your cumail address, sometimes drawing attention to material on CuLearn.

REQUIRED READING:

1. Charles Goodman, *Consequences of Compassion: An Interpretation and Def. of Buddhist Ethics* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), available for purchase at Haven Books (at the corner of Seneca & Sunnyside, a block from Carleton)
2. Handouts (provided in class) with excerpts from the *Rig Veda*, *Upanisads* and the *Mahabharata*; and excerpts from S. Radhakrishnan (commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*)
3. *Dhammapada*, available online at <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.intro.than.html>
4. Other short Buddhist texts ...including excerpts from the *Pali Nikayas*:
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.063.than.html>... ("Malunkyovada Sutta")
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html> (on the four noble truths);
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/various/wheel186.html#theravada> (on impermanence);
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.059.than.html> (on anatta/no-self)
5. M. Siderits, "The Buddha" at <http://plato.stanford.edu>
6. Primary source on Mahayana philosophy: *Lankavatara Sutra* (Suzuki translation, url TBA)
7. S. Nagatomo, "Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy" at <http://plato.stanford.edu>
8. Course notes posted on CuLearn (required for tests)

* Depending on which essay topic you choose, other readings will also be required (as specified in material relating to the various essay topics)... See also: list of library reserve books at:

<http://catalogue.library.carleton.ca/search/r>

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

It would be impossible to cover *all*, or even all the major, ancient traditions of Asian philosophy, in a single course. Most of our attention will be directed to the tradition that has had the longest and widest reach throughout Asia: the Buddhist philosophical tradition. However, the Indian, Sri Lankan and Tibetan segments of this tradition require familiarity with Hindu philosophical ideas; and the Chinese, Korean and Japanese segments require familiarity with Taoist ideas. Some brief discussion of Taoism will be offered;

and meanwhile a more extended examination of the Hindu tradition will occupy our attention early in the course. (One tradition that will be much more briefly mentioned in this course, and only if there is time, is the Confucian tradition.)

The primary philosophical themes of the course will be selfhood (sometimes addressed in terms of ‘personal identity’, a live philosophical issue in contemporary philosophy) and the various themes of ethics, including personal happiness and soteriology (e.g. ‘nirvana’) as well as moral debates, both general and particular. It is particularly in connection with morality and ethics that stark differences between Asian and Western philosophical approaches emerge. Another inevitable theme is the relationship between philosophy and religion – actually, a set of themes and problems, such as how we are to define the categories of religion and philosophy, how one can inform the other (if at all), how knowledge and wisdom may take different forms in each sphere, as well as particular questions such as: Is Buddhism mainly a religion or a philosophy? Is being a Buddhist philosopher necessary (or even sufficient) for being a Buddhist, or for being a proponent of Buddhist ‘dharma’? Similar questions arise in other traditions such as Hinduism and Taoism, and shed light on another running theme of the course – the scope for explaining the differences of emphasis, method and content between Asian and Western philosophical traditions.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS:

(Please note that the order and/or timing of topics or readings may change – particularly due to visits by guest speakers, which will be announced asap. So long as no changes have been announced, the readings indicated below should be done *prior* to the date under which they appear; they will be discussed that day.)

Week 1 (Sept. 4) Introduction / Guiding themes / Background (Vedic religion in India; Taoism in China)

Week 2 (Sept. 11) Conceptions of divinity in ancient Hinduism / Concept of ‘Atman’

Readings: Excerpts from *Rig Veda*, *Upanisads* and the *Mahabharata* (handouts provided)

Week 3 (Sept. 18) Hindu Ethics, Soteriology and Social Philosophy

Readings: Excerpts from S. Radhakrishnan (commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*) and *Mahabharata*

Week 4 (Sept. 25) Early Buddhism in the context of Upanisadic Hinduism

Rdg: M. Siderits; Buddha’s first sermons (readings under # 4 & 5 on p. 1 above); **Goodman, ch. 1**

Week 5 (Oct. 2) The Role(s) of Metaphysics and Ethics in Early Buddhism and in Theravada

Rdgs: **Charles Goodman, *Consequences of Compassion***, chs. 1-3; *Dhammapada*; Siderits

Week 6 (Oct. 9) Comparing Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism (metaphysics and ethics)

Rdg: **Charles Goodman, *Conseq. of Compassion***, chapters 1 & 4 (and Suzuki’s intro. to L.S.)

Week 7 (Oct. 16) The Bodhisattva Ideal in Mahayana Buddhism

Rdg: **Charles Goodman, *Conseq. of Compassion***, chapters 4-5; excerpts from *Lankavatara Sutra*

Week 8 (Oct.. 23) Ways of comparing Buddhist ethics with Western moral philosophy

Rdg: **Charles Goodman, *Conseq. of Compassion***, chapters 4-5 (and review of chapter 2)

READING WEEK BREAK: *** no class on Oct. 30

Week 9 (Nov. 6) Mahayana and Vajrayana: How Buddhist Soteriology Reconnected with Hindu Ideas

Rdg: **Charles Goodman, *Conseq. of Compassion***, chapter 6

Week 10 (Nov. 13) The Selfhood Debate, Cosmology and the Free Will Debate: Ethical Implications

Rdg: **Charles Goodman, *Conseq. of Compassion***, chapters 8-9

Week 11 (Nov. 20) Modern Western Invocations of Buddhist Philosophy

Rdg: Excs. from S. Batchelor (t.b.a.) & H. Hesse, *Siddhartha* (at www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2500)

Week 12 (Nov. 27) Chan / Zen Buddhism (China, Japan and the West)

Rdg: S. Nagatomo, “Japanese Zen Buddhist Philosophy” at <http://plato.stanford.edu>

Week 13 (Dec. 4) Review and Discussion of Essay Topics

Optional Final Essay due by midnight (via email) on December 21

EVALUATION (w/ weight of assignments as percentage of total mark):

- Almost all of the evaluation will be based on in-class tests. But I realize that some people have a strong preference for essays over tests. The only essay component is therefore optional, and comes in the form of a take-home essay, due at the end of the exam period. Some classes late in the term will be devoted to discussing essay topics, and essay style, etc. To enable some students to compensate for test results, the essay will be worth a lot: 50 % ... however, the mark for it would get incorporated into final grade calculation only if it improves your mark as based on test results.

Participation and attendance	10 % (Details TBA in class)
Test # 1	30 % (on ideas and social structures in the Hindu tradition)
Test # 2	30 % (on the Theravada tradition of Buddhist philosophy)
Test # 3	30 % (on the Mahayana tradition of Buddhist philosophy)
Optional final essay	50 % (Topics, t.b.a., based on Goodman’s book, <i>Consequences of Compassion</i> , the main required course reading)

The main components of essay evaluation include the following: clarity of thesis statement (and other ‘signposting’), logical and effective use of interpretation and argument, due consideration of objections (with effective replies), balanced essay structure, effective use of relevant readings (with full and consistent citations), sensitive interpretation of primary texts, effective writing style (including basics such as grammar and spelling, as well as clarity in wording and phrasing), and originality in thesis and/or arguments.

More will be said in class about these expectations and their role in how essays are evaluated. A point to be emphasized here, though, concerns ‘originality’. There are two different senses in which essays should be ‘original’. In one sense, ‘originality’ involves coming up with ideas and arguments that are novel (or outside the norm for this level); this can be quite difficult, and those earning the highest marks generally do well on this score, while good essays may show only a modest degree of originality in this sense. In another sense, an essay is ‘original’ when it is a student’s own work – i.e. own composition – and when any ideas in it that derive from the work of others are duly credited in citations of these sources. In this sense, ‘originality’ is not a component of the mark, but is simply an absolute minimum requirement. If any part of an essay – apart from explicit quotations – is not original *in this sense*, the student has committed the serious offence of *plagiarism*.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON PLAGIARISM:

According to the Undergraduate Calendar’s definition (in section 14 of “University Regulations”), it constitutes *plagiarism* “to use and pass off as one’s own idea or product work of another without expressly giving credit to another.” It is the responsibility of each student to understand this definition, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding/abetting plagiarism by other students. Penalties for plagiarism are decided by the Dean’s office, and can range from an automatic zero on the assignment to suspension or expulsion from the university.

OTHER POLICIES:

*** Not permitted during classtime: cellphones, smartphones, tablets, AND not even laptops (except with special permission).

Presentation of essays: Since these will be submitted as email attachments, the word count (TBA) will matter more than the formatting (but I reserve the right to change things like font, before returning an essay).

Re. methods of citation: I accept MLA, APA or Chicago style, provided you stick to one of these; however, I will add some requirements of my own, which you must observe regardless of which style you use (TBA).

Collaboration with other students: An essay may not be submitted as the joint work of two or more students (or as a ‘group project’ of any kind). If you share ideas with others in the class, and/or proofread for one another, bear in mind that the same rules apply (as above) regarding plagiarism.

Accommodations: Apart from those regulated by the guidelines below, the ability to make up for a missed test by writing it at a later date will depend on presentation of evidence of emergency or medical condition, i.e. you must submit official documentation, signed by a professional whose contact information is provided.

Submission of essays: Essays must be attached to an email sent to Gordon.Davis@carleton.ca. To be counted as arriving on time, your essay must arrive by 11:59 PM on the due date. (*If you do not have regular internet access or you have other limitations w.r.t. computing access, such that you prefer to submit hard copies, please see me asap.*)

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2014-15)

Assignments:

Unless specifically told otherwise by their instructors, students:

- must not use a plastic or cardboard cover or paper clips
- must staple the paper (there is a stapler on the essay box)
- must include the following:
 - student name
 - student number
 - course number and section
 - instructor's name
- The Philosophy Department does not accept assignments by FAX. You may send them by courier, if necessary.
- No assignments will be accepted after the last day for handing in term work – see dates in next column.
- Assignments handed in through the essay box (just inside the glass doors, Paterson Hall, Floor 3A) must be dropped into the box by **4:15** on a regular business day in order to be date-stamped with that day's date. Assignments handed in after 4:15 or on a non-business day will be stamped as having been handed in on the next business day.
- Students are required to keep copies of their assignments. If your paper is lost at any point, you will be considered not to have submitted it if you cannot produce a copy immediately on request.

Deferrals for Term Work:

If you miss a final examination and/or fail to submit a final assignment by the due date because of circumstances beyond your control, you may apply for a deferral of examination/assignment. For deferred examinations, you must apply within 5 working days after the scheduled date of your exam. To apply for deferral of a final assignment, you must apply within 5 working days of the last scheduled day of classes. Visit the Registrar's Office for more information.

Plagiarism:

It is the responsibility of each student to understand the meaning of 'plagiarism' as defined in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendars, and to avoid both committing plagiarism and aiding or abetting plagiarism by other students. (Undergraduate Calendar Academic Regulations, section 14.3, or <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/acadregsuniv14/>)

Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

For more details visit the Equity Services website:

<http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to your professor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

For more details visit the Equity Services website:

<http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam

requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your professor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/>

Important Dates:

Sept. 4	Classes start (after Orientation events).
Sept. 17	Last day for registration and course changes in Fall and Fall/Winter courses.
Sept. 30	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from Fall term or two-term courses.
Oct. 13	Thanksgiving Day – university closed.
Oct. 27-31	Fall Break – no classes.
Nov. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Dec. 8	Last day of classes, Fall term. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for Fall term courses.
Dec. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only).
Dec. 9	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Dec. 10-21	Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses.
Dec. 21	Take-home exams are due.
Jan. 5	Winter term classes begin.
Jan. 16	Last day for registration and course changes in Winter term classes.
Jan. 31	Last day for entire fee adjustment when withdrawing from winter courses or winter portion of two-term courses.
Feb. 16-20	Winter Break, classes suspended.
Mar. 24	Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period.
Apr. 8	Last day of Fall/Winter and Winter term classes. Last day for handing in term work and the last day that can be specified by a course instructor as a due date for term work for Fall/Winter and Winter term courses.
Apr. 8	Last day to withdraw from Fall/Winter and Winter term courses (academic purposes only).
Apr. 9-10	No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced.
Apr. 11-23	Final Examinations. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week.
Apr. 23	Take-home exams are due.

Addresses:

Department of Philosophy:	3A35 Paterson Hall www.carleton.ca/philosophy 520-2110
Registrar's Office:	300 Tory www.carleton.ca/registrar 520-3500
Student Academic Success Centre:	302 Tory www.carleton.ca/sasc 520-7850
Writing Tutorial Service:	4 th Floor, Library http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/ 520-6632
MacOdrum Library	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 520-2735