

PHIL 2700 A Asian Philosophy

Instructor: Melanie Coughlin, PhD (she/her/elle)

Class Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 10:05 a.m. – 11:25 a.m. online

Office Hours: One-on-one drop-in time on Wednesdays 11:35 a.m. - 12:25 p.m. in the course’s Zoom Meeting Room and other times can be reserved at melanie-coughlin.youcanbook.me or by email

Email: melanie.coughlin@carleton.ca

Course Modality: Online synchronous course with flexible asynchronous options

Course Catalogue Description: An examination of South Asian and East Asian philosophical texts, from the period of the Upanishads and early Buddhism in India to modern philosophical movements. Historical sources may include Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Confucian or Taoist texts, with a focus on metaphysical, epistemological or ethical themes. Prerequisite(s): second-year standing. Lectures three hours a week.

Table of Contents (hyperlinked)

Course Description for PHIL 2700 Winter 2024	2
Learning Outcomes for PHIL 2700 Winter 2024	2
Schedule of Modules, Topics, Readings, and Deadlines	2
Course Essentials Module (January 8 – January 9)	2
Module 1 Self and Liberation (January 10 – January 28)	3
Module 2 Non-Self and Compassion (January 29 – February 27)	3
Midway Review Module (February 26 – February 27)	4
Module 3 Spontaneity and the Way (February 28 – March 17)	4
Module 4 Non-Duality and Experience (March 18 – April 25).....	5
Assessment	6
Instructor’s Policies	7
Lateness	7
Appeals.....	7
Originality	7
Questions.....	7
Online Study Supports.....	8
Human Rights Concerns.....	9

Course Description for PHIL 2700 Winter 2024

Together we will think about the nature of the self and the kinds of relationships we ought to have with others. We will do this by discussing the connections between theories of self and ethical theories in the work of historically influential Asian philosophers. We will focus on exciting historical moments where questions about the true nature of the self and the right kind of life were debated in Vedic Philosophy, South Asian Buddhist Philosophy, Daoist philosophy, and East Asian Buddhist Philosophy. We will practice essential skills through supported activities on context-sensitive reading and evidence-based writing. By completing this course, you will learn advanced communication skills useful for developing, considering, and expressing informed points of view.

Learning Outcomes for PHIL 2700 Winter 2024

1. Define key terms in the history of Asian philosophy
2. Faithfully interpret theories of self by Asian philosophers
3. Faithfully interpret ethical theories by Asian philosophers
4. Situate these theories within historical debates between Asian philosophers
5. Apply these theories to present-day multimedia representations of Asian philosophy

Schedule of Modules, Topics, Readings, and Deadlines

Course Essentials Module (January 8 – January 9)

Task: Get oriented in PHIL 2700

Materials: Course Outline

Instructor Profile page

Course Questions discussion

Introduce Yourself and Find a Study Buddy discussion (optional)

Learn: Introduction to Asian Philosophy lecture (Mon Jan 8)

Practice: Community Guidelines worksheet (Mon Jan 8)

Module 1 Self and Liberation (January 10 – January 28)

1.1 Interpretation in Vedic Philosophy

Task: Interpret the Chariot analogy in the Katha Upanishad

Materials: *Katha Upanishad* [excerpt] (Olivelle 1998)

Instructor's Reading Guide for the Katha Upanishad

Learn: "Introducing the Katha Upanishad" lecture (Wed Jan 10)

Check-In: Module 1.1 Quiz (Sun Jan 14)

Practice: "Interpreting the Katha Upanishad" worksheet (Mon Jan 15)

1.2 Critique in Vedic Philosophy

Task: Engage with Shankara's Critique of Dualism

Materials: *Shankara's Commentary on the Katha Upanishad* [excerpt] (Shastri 1928)

Learn: "Shankara's Critique of Dualism" lecture (Wed Jan 17)

Check-In: Module 1.2 Quiz (Sun Jan 21)

Practice: "Engaging with Shankara's Critique" worksheet (Mon Jan 22)

1.3 Representing Vedic Philosophy

Task: Apply Shankara's theories to a present-day representation

Materials: *Amar Chitra Katha: Nachiketa and Other Tales* [excerpt] (1979)

Prepare: "Theory in 'Nachiketa and Other Tales'" workshop (Wed Jan 24)

Submit: Module 1 Assignment (Sun Jan 28)

Module 2 Non-Self and Compassion (January 29 – February 27)

2.1 Interpretation in South Asian Buddhist Philosophy

Task: Interpret the first two discourses of the Buddha

Materials: "Setting the Dhamma Wheel in Motion Discourse" (Bodhi 2000)

"The Characteristic of Non-Self Discourse" (Bodhi 2000)

Instructor's Reading Guide for the Buddha's first two discourses

Learn: "Introducing 'Setting the Dhamma Wheel in Motion'" lecture (Mon Jan 29)

"Introducing 'The Characteristic of Non-Self'" lecture (Wed Jan 31)

Check-In: Module 2.1 Quiz (Sun Feb 4)
Practice: "Interpreting the Buddha's first two discourses" worksheet (Mon Feb 5)

2.2 Critique in South Asian Buddhist Philosophy

Task: Engage with Shantideva's Critique of Non-Self
Materials: *Way of the Bodhisattva* [excerpt] (Shantideva 2008)
Learn: "Shantideva's Critique of Non-Self" lecture (Wed Feb 7)
Check-In: Module 2.2 Quiz (Sun Feb 11)
Practice: "Engaging with Shantideva's Critique" worksheet (Mon Feb 12)

2.3 Representing South Asian Buddhist Philosophy

Task: Apply Shantideva's theories to a present-day representation
Materials: "A Monk's Guide to Chanting" [excerpt] (Keomahavong 2021)
Prepare: "Theory in 'A Monk's Guide to Chanting'" workshop (Wed Feb 14)
Submit: Module 2 Assignment (Tues Feb 27)

N.B., This module's schedule overlaps with the Review Module due to Winter Break

Midway Review Module (February 26 – February 27)

Task: Reflect on Course Experience
Materials: Course Essentials Module
Module 1
Module 2
Prepare: "Midway Review" discussion (Mon Feb 26)
Submit: Course Experience Midway Survey

Module 3 Spontaneity and the Way (February 28 – March 17)

3.1 Interpretation in Daoist Philosophy

Task: Interpret Section 2 of the Zhuangzi
Materials: "Section 2: Discussion on Making All Things Equal" (Zhuangzi 2013)
Instructor's Reading Guide for Section 2 of the Zhuangzi

Learn: "Introducing Section 2 of the Zhuangzi" lecture (Wed Feb 28)
Check-In: Module 3.1 Quiz (Sun Mar 3)
Practice: "Interpreting Section 2 of the Zhuangzi" worksheet (Mon Mar 4)

3.2 Critique in Daoist Philosophy

Task: Engage with Zhuangzi's Critique of Role-Based Ethics
Materials: *The Analects* [excerpt] (Confucius 2006)
Learn: "Zhuangzi's Critique of Role-Based Ethics" lecture (Wed Mar 6)
Check-In: Module 3.2 Quiz (Sun Mar 10)
Practice: "Engaging with Zhuangzi's Critique" worksheet (Mon Mar 11)

3.3 Representing Daoist Philosophy

Task: Apply Zhuangzi's theories to a present-day representation
Materials: *Zhuangzi: The Way of Nature* [excerpt] (Thai 2019)
Prepare: "Theory in 'The Way of Nature'" workshop (Wed Mar 13)
Submit: Module 3 Assignment (Sun Mar 17)

Module 4 Non-Duality and Experience (March 18 – April 25)

4.1 Interpretation in East Asian Buddhist Philosophy

Task: Interpret Linji's Tenth Discourse
Materials: "Discourse X" (Linji 2009)
Instructor's Reading Guide for Linji's Tenth Discourse
Learn: "Introducing Linji's Tenth Discourse" lecture (Mon Mar 18)
Practice: "Interpreting Linji's Tenth Discourse" worksheet (Wed Mar 20)
Check-In: Module 4.1 Quiz (Sun Mar 24)

4.2 Critique in East Asian Buddhist Philosophy

Task: Engage with Linji's Critique of Buddha-Nature
Materials: *Lankavatara Sutra* [excerpt] (Suzuki 1956)
Learn: "Linji's Critique of Buddha-Nature" lecture (Mon Mar 25)
Practice: "Engaging with Linji's Critique" worksheet (Wed Mar 27)

Check-In: Module 4.2 Quiz (Sun Mar 31)

4.3 Representing East Asian Buddhist Philosophy

Task: Apply Linji's theories to a present-day representation

Materials: "John Dunne" interview [excerpt] (Mind & Life 2021)

Prepare: "Theory in Mind & Life's interview of John Dunne" lecture (Mon Apr 1)
"Module 4 Assignment Support" discussion (Mon Apr 8)

Submit: Module 4 Assignment (Thurs Apr 25)

N.B., since the Module 4 Assignment is submitted on the Take-Home Exam schedule, deferrals need to be arranged through the Registrar's Office

Assessment

Quizzes 2.5% x 8 = 20%

The quizzes provide immediate, specific, and automated feedback on how well you are grasping the core course content. There are two quizzes each in Modules 1-4. Each quiz is based on the part of the module (including the assigned readings) in which the quiz is located. The time taken to complete each quiz is not monitored and you have a second chance to improve your score. The quizzes are due by the end of the part of the module in which they appear, and course participants are generally encouraged to complete them as you go along in the course. This will ensure timely feedback to support the creation of accurate assignments.

Assignments 20% x 4 = 80%

The assignments invite you to apply what you have learned about theories of self and ethical theories in the work of Asian philosophers to present-day multimedia representations of Asian philosophy. All multimedia have been augmented for accessibility: transcripts for audio material and image descriptions for visual material are all provided upfront. This year the multimedia resources include: a comic book representation of Vedic philosophy, a video about chanting early Buddhist discourses, a comic book representation of Daoist philosophy, and a podcast interview about the interface between styles of Buddhist meditation and cognitive science. All assignments must include quotations from and page references to the assigned readings. **The format for these assignments is flexible, which means they can be completed as written, audio, video, website, eportfolio pages, and so on, depending on which modality best allows you to express your learning.** Reach out if you want more guidance on a specific format. All assignments are due by the end of the module in which they appear, and course participants are generally encouraged to complete the assignments as you go along in the course to guarantee timely feedback. The final assignment will be due on the last day of the exam period, and so any extension on the final assignment will require a deferral from the Registrar's Office.

Instructor's Policies

Lateness

Flexibility is a key value in this course. For most course participants, it will be easiest to submit everything according to the suggested deadlines. Submitting according to this schedule will allow for timely progression of knowledge and skills. This schedule has also been designed to secure feedback in a timely manner, especially when it comes to using feedback from early assignments to improve your grades on later assignments. If you cannot submit according to the schedule, then I cannot guarantee timely feedback, but you will still get the same amount of feedback as other students so long as you submit before the end of classes. If there is any difficulty submitting with the Brightspace portal, course participants can also submit assignments by e-mail.

Appeals

Students are welcome to meet with me to discuss why an assignment received the grade that it did, or how to do better on the next assignment, but grades cannot be changed through a synchronous meeting. If a student judges any mark to be unfair, then appeals can be made within a month after the release of the mark. Unless the mistake is a calculation error, the grade appeal must include a paragraph written or video testimonial made by the student to explain why a better mark is justified with reference to the relevant grading rubric (detailed rubrics can be reviewed within the assignment submission links).

Originality

It is not necessary to use sources outside of this course to produce original work and get an excellent grade in this course. All sources used must be accurately documented in a bibliography. No assignment can be graded without a complete bibliography. I cannot grade an assignment that does not have specific page references to the assigned readings. **Handing in an assignment in this class without page references is like handing in solutions to complex math problems without showing your work. That is why we practice how to use the assigned readings together in class on the weekly worksheets. Reach out for individualized support with this process when needed.** You can use sources outside of the assigned readings in addition to these, but I reserve the right to ask you to send me the PDF in full, a link to the source, or a scan of the specific page(s) of any outside source that you reference before releasing a grade for an assignment. The same policy applies to the use of non-English sources. Please keep in mind that I am more trustworthy than a random person doing something for money on the internet. I am also better able to help you than someone you know who would be willing to do your work for you. Work produced by ChatGPT and other language-prediction AI tools cannot achieve a passing grade in this course. If you are stuck for ideas and/or time, please just reach out via email, let me know what you need to accomplish the tasks required by this course, and I promise that we can figure out a way forward together.

Questions

I am committed to responding to questions posted to the Course Questions discussion topic in the Course Essentials Module or submitted by e-mail within 48 hours, Monday

to Friday. If you do not receive a response within that time frame, then there is the strong possibility of a technical error, so please check your post or re-send your e-mail. If you have a question that is not of a personal nature, then please consider posting your question under a descriptive title in the Course Questions discussion, so that others can benefit from reading it. I am regularly available for one-on-one consultations by audio or chat, see the "Online Study Supports" section below.

Online Study Supports

- I hold weekly online office hours, as well as additional scheduled-as-needed hours. Use these hours to discuss your progress and/or obstacles in the course, assignments expectations, plans, drafts, and broader questions about philosophy. Both the weekly hour and the meetings outside of the regular office hours (booked by an automated scheduler at melanie-coughlin.youcanbook.me) are one-on-one consultations. If you can make none of these, or there are no times left available on my automated scheduler, contact me by e-mail (melanie.coughlin@carleton.ca) and we can usually work out another time with a few days notice.
- Carleton's Centre for Student Academic Support has online resources to help you succeed with online workshops to improve your personal and academic skills. Go to the Centre for Student Academic Support's Online Support page to become a member of their online community.
- Fellow students and the instructor will be regularly checking the 'Course Questions' discussion where you can receive general clarification on course content, assignment expectations, and so on. Please describe your discussion topic as clearly as possible to facilitate other students' use of this important resource.
- The Academic Advising Centre advises students on a drop-in basis from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. and it is possible to arrange for meeting by phone or web. These advisors can help you manage your course load and create feasible work schedules.
- Every Carleton student has access to free counselling services, including teleconferencing ones, via EmpowerMe, which is a 24-hour, 365 days a year intake meeting and referral service. For immediate crisis support, you can contact the Ottawa Distress Centre at 613-238-3311 or the Sexual Assault Centre of Ottawa at 613-234-2266.
- Students are encouraged to contact me to discuss any obstacles the course poses, or to request any accommodation needed to better demonstrate your learning (e.g., changes to an assignment format or topic). I am committed to

adapting the course as needed so that every student can easily access the course materials and work in the ways that best demonstrate your learning.

- Students who find themselves regularly facing obstacles related to a disability and/or long-term condition (physical, mental, and/or trauma induced) but who are not registered with the Paul Menton Centre (PMC), can receive generalized support by calling the PMC at 613-520-6608, or sending an e-mail to pmc@carleton.ca. If you already have documentation of your condition, you can request an Intake Meeting. If you do not yet have documentation, you can still request a Pre-Intake Meeting to discuss what kind of documentation would be required. Documentation is not required for accommodation in this course.
- Students requiring other forms of accommodation, such as for child care, pregnancy obligations, religious obligations, surviving sexual violence, or student activities are also welcome to make this course fit your needs. Reach out and let me know how I can support you, or visit Carleton's webpage on Academic Accommodations for further information.

Human Rights Concerns

The University and all members of the University community share responsibility for ensuring that the University's educational, work and living environments are free from discrimination and harassment. If you have concerns about harassment and discrimination relating to your age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed (religion), disability, ethnic origin, family status, gender expression, gender identity, marital status, place of origin, race, sex (including pregnancy), or sexual orientation, please contact the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities at (equity@carleton.ca).