

Winter 2016
Carleton University

PHIL 4320/5320 Buddhist Ethics

Instructor: Pragati Sahni

Office: River Building, Room 1401R-E.

Email: TBA

Meeting time: Wednesdays, 11:35 a.m. – 2:25 p.m. Paterson Hall, Room 3A36

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

Moral themes are considered an integral part of Buddhism. This seminar intends to explore textual evidence to understand the nature of moral reflection in Buddhism. Selections from primary Pali texts in translation will be copiously read along with recent views and expositions of scholars of Buddhist studies to trace the framework of morality. Metaphysical and soteriological issues will be discussed as they arise in relation to ethics. The seminar will examine and assess the application of Buddhist morality to some modern day ethical dilemmas. The challenges of applying ancient principles to contemporary issues will be reflected upon.

Resource List etc

There is no single textbook prescribed in this seminar. Selected portions of several original texts (in translation) from the Pali Canon will be read and selected themes will be discussed and supplemented by contemporary writings of scholars. Discussions will travel back and forth between the texts and scholarly arguments to invoke questions and arguments. Towards the end of the course a deeper understanding of Buddhist ethics and its challenges is envisaged.

Some readings in this course are easily available on the internet. Others are in books that will be reserved in the library. Handouts for still others will be provided in class if needed. Readings not mentioned may be added if required.

Primary Readings (to be reserved in the library)

Dhammapada, Trans. Narada Mahathera, New York: Paragon, 1954.

Dīgha Nikāya, Trans. Maurice Walshe as *The Long Discourses of the Buddha*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987.

Jātaka (Together with its Commentary), Trans. by various hands under the editorship of E. B. Cowell as *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990.

Majjhima Nikāya, Trans. I. B. Horner as *The Middle Length Sayings*, London: PTS, 1954-9.

Samyutta Nikāya, Trans. C. A. F. Rhys Davids and F. L. Woodard as *The Book of Gradual Sayings*, London: PTS, 1917-30.

Sutta-Nipāta, Trans. V. Fausboll as *The Sutta-Nipāta: A Collection of Discourses*, in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. X, ed. F. Max Muller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1881.

Theragāthā, Trans. K. R. Norman as *Elders' Verses: Theragāthā*, London: Luzac, 1969

Therīgāthā, Trans. Charles Hallisey as *Therīgāthā: Poems of the First Buddhist Women*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015

Vinaya Piṭaka, Trans. I. B. Horner as *The Book of Discipline*, London: PTS, 1938-66

(A few of the selected readings are also available on <http://www.accesstoinsight.org>. Some texts are reprints and the years of publication thus may vary.

Other readings and their sources are mentioned in the schedule of classes)

Assessment Criteria

Evaluation will be based on attendance and participation (10%), two in-class tests (30% each) and a final essay (30%). The tests will take place (tentatively) in the fifth week and the tenth week and the essay will be due on the last day of the exams. Some time will be allotted to the discussion of essay topics (including format, presentation, word limit and referencing) in the latter half of the course. Though only 10% is assigned to attendance and participation, it goes without saying that the benefit of engaging in both these activities will implicitly impact the quality of performance in the tests and essay.

The in-class tests will assess the understanding of issues and arguments the course has engaged with. The essay should reflect a more innovative and original application of ideas and will be graded keeping in view this aspect as well as organization and the rigour of analysis and criticism undertaken.

The policy on absenteeism and late submissions will be announced.

Tentative Schedule of Classes

Please be aware that the minor changes and adjustments in the teaching schedule may take place. Some amount of reading must be done before class and this will be assigned as we go along.

Week 1

Introduction, History, Literature

Week 2

General overview of Buddhist ethics

Readings

Selections from the *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Dhammapada*

Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000, Chs 1 and 2. (on reserve)

Week 3

Tracing morality in textual sources

Readings

Selections from the *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Majjhima Nikāya*

Week 4

Debates

Readings

Selections from the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Therīgāthā* and *Jātaka*

Damien Keown, "Karma, Character and Consequentialism," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, Fall, 1996, pp. 329-350 (available from

<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/files/2011/01/keown01.pdf>)

Charles Goodman, *Consequences of Compassion*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, Ch 3 (on reserve)

Week 5

Test 1

Challenges

Readings

Selections from *Dīgha Nikāya*

Richard H. Jones, "Theravāda Buddhism and Morality," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Sep., 1979, pp. 371-387 (available from

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1463867>)

Weeks 6-7

Suicide and Euthanasia

Readings

Selections from the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and *Samyutta Nikāya*

Martin G Wiltshire (1983) "The 'Suicide' Problem in the Pāli Canon," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 6, pp. 124-140. (available from

<https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/index.php/jiabs/article/.../2516>)

Damien Keown "Attitudes to Euthanasia in the Vinaya and Commentary," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*: Volume 6, 1999, pp. 260-270

(available from <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/files/2010/04/keown993.pdf>);

and "Suicide, Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia" *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol 13, No. 2, 1998-1999, pp. 385-405 (available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1051472>)

Weeks 8 and 9

Animals

Readings

Selections from the *Jātaka*

Christopher Key Chapple, “Animals and Environment in the Buddhist Birth Stories” Mary Evelyn Tucker and Duncan Ryuken Williams (eds) *Buddhism and Ecology: The Interconnection of Dharma and Deeds*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 131-48. (on reserve)

Paul Waldau, “Buddhism and Animal Rights” Damien Keown (ed.) *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000 pp. 81-112. (handout)

Class 10

Test 2

Vegetarianism

Readings

Selections from the *Majjhima Nikāya*

James J. Stewart “The Question of Vegetarianism and Diet in Pāli Buddhism” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* Volume 17, 2010, pp. 100-140. (available from <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/buddhistethics/files/2010/07/Stewart.pdf>)

Weeks 11 and 12

Ecology

Readings

Selections from the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Theragāthā*

Joanna Macy, *World as Lover, World as Self*, Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1991, Ch 17. (on reserve)

Ian Harris, “Buddhism and Ecology,” in Damien Keown (ed.) *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2000, pp. 113-35. (handout)

Week 13

War and peace

Readings

Selections from the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Sutta-Nipāta*

P. D. Hershock, “From Vulnerability to Virtuosity: Buddhist Reflections on Responding to Terrorism and Tragedy,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, Vol 10, 2003, pp. 22-38. (Available from <http://www.buddhistethics.org/10/hersh031.pdf>).

Department of Philosophy and Carleton University Policies (2015-16)

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
- 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:

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| Sept. 2 | Classes start. |
| Sept. 4 | Classes follow a Monday schedule. |
| Sept. 7 | Labour Day - University closed. |
| Sept. 18 | 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. 12 | Thanksgiving Day – University closed. |
| Oct. 26-30 | Fall Break – no classes. |
| Nov. 24 | Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period. |
| Dec. 7 | 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. 7 | Last day to withdraw from Fall term courses (academic purposes only). |
| Dec. 8 | No classes or examinations take place. Review classes may be held, but no new material may be introduced. |
| Dec. 9-21 | Final examinations for Fall courses, mid-terms for Fall/Winter courses. Exams are normally held all seven days of the week. |
| Dec. 21 | Take-home exams are due. |
| Jan. 6 | Winter term classes begin. |
| Jan. 19 | 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. 15-19 | Winter Break, no classes. |
| Mar. 24 | Last day for tests or examinations in courses below 4000-level before the Final Examination period. |
| Mar. 25 | Good Friday – University closed. |
| 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:

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| 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 |