

The College of the Humanities: Religion Program  
*Buddhism (RELI 2410A)*<sup>1</sup>

Instructor: Christopher Jensen

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Office: 2A54 Paterson Hall

Class Schedule: MW 13:05-14:25

Office Hours: M 14:25-15:25 (or by appointment) Classroom: 210 Tory Building

### Course Description

When Buddhism entered China along the Silk Roads just after the turn of the Common Era it was popularly referred to in Chinese as “the teaching of images.” This label speaks to the fact that when pilgrims, merchants and proselytizers brought Buddhism from its home in South Asia, through Central Asia, and into East Asia, they often did so through images. For example, consider the small devotional buddhas that show up in tombs and caches all over East Asia, and the colossal buddhas that are carved into mountainsides and painted in caves across the landscape of the continent. The prevalence of such images, along with early decorated scrolls and paintings, suggests that visual tools were as or more important to the transmission of Buddhism in East Asia than were textual ones. And yet the study of Buddhism is largely a study of texts—no doubt a legacy of the Victorian “discovery” of Buddhism in libraries and scriptoriums. In order to counter the dominance of textual authority in the modern study of Buddhism, this class will provide you with a rare opportunity to learn Buddhism as so many millions did in pre-modern times: through images.

To address this topic, we will cover the following themes: 1) Buddhas; 2) The Buddhist Cosmos; 3) Devotion; and, 4) Practice – an overview that will incorporate examples from India, China, Japan, Tibet and Southeast Asia. The final weeks of class will consider Buddhist iconography in the context of practice / worship spaces and will include two field trips. You will also have had the opportunity to engage with students taking a similar class at another Canadian university, allowing you to consider potential variations in localized Buddhist practice in contemporary Canada.

Though the class is visually oriented, it will still demand that you do readings at home. Readings will be approximately **30-40 pages a week**, and will include both primary and secondary texts.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: this course was developed in collaboration with Dr. Stephanie Balkwill, who prepared the original draft version of the present syllabus.

<sup>2</sup> As per Carleton University policy, all communication between students and professors should be conducted via our Carleton email accounts.

## Learning Objectives

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

- Identify and describe key Buddhist doctrines and deities;
- Comment on regional variations in Buddhist thought, practice and art;
- Understand the benefits of using art and material culture as historical sources;
- Apply concepts from lectures, classroom discussions and readings, through the analysis of an Ottawa Buddhist practice / worship site.

In addition, the course's assessments and assignments will help students to:

- Summarize, analyze, and discuss academic arguments;
- Develop a familiarity with Buddhist primary sources (both visual and textual [in translation])
- Engage in thoughtful academic discussions;
- Refine their skills at writing reflective essays;
- Develop visual literacy in the domain of Buddhist art.

## Textbook

All readings will be accessible via our course's cuLearn page or library reserve (via ARES). It is your responsibility to bring either print-outs or digital versions of the readings to class, as **every class session** will involve the discussion of these materials.

## Office Hours Policy

I have scheduled this course's office hours immediately after our Monday class session. You are welcome to ask me questions after class, during the walk back from our classroom to my office, or in my office thereafter. If I need to cancel my office hours for a given week, I will notify the class via cuLearn. If the scheduled time-slot does not fit your schedule, feel free to email me to schedule an alternate meeting time.

## Assessments

*Participation – Reading Quizzes (10%)*

*Midterm Assignment (20%)*

*Visual Literacy Quizzes (4 x 10% = 40%)*

*Final Project (30%)*

### *Participation (10%)*

Your participation in each given week will be assessed via pop quizzes, which will be written during class on Tuesday or Thursday (or both). These quizzes will gauge your engagement with and comprehension of assigned readings. They will also help you to better prepare for your final project, as we will discuss the correct responses (and any other related questions) immediately following the completion of the quizzes. Given that one of the goals of this assignment is to encourage students to both read ahead and attend classes, there will be **NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES**.

Midterm Assignment (20%) – Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>

For this assignment, you will independently choose an object with a Buddhist theme from contemporary popular culture and you will interpret that object – with attention to the Buddhist teachings discussed in class and assigned readings – in approximately 1200 words (4 pages). Further guidelines will be given for this assignment on **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**. This assignment will be submitted online via cuLearn.

For your essays to be graded, you must first write the Indiana University Plagiarism Test (accessible at <https://www.indiana.edu/~plag/test.html>) and upload your certificate of completion to cuLearn.

Visual Literacy Quizzes (40%), dates as per Course Schedule (below)

In total, there will be four Visual Literacy Quizzes, one for each theme that we will survey throughout this class. These quizzes will be taken online, through cuLearn, and will take 30 minutes to complete and will be available from Wednesday to Friday after we have finished a given theme. You cannot pause the quizzes so you must be prepared and move quickly! These quizzes will require that you identify images and correctly interpret their meaning. These quizzes are intended to demonstrate your ability to synthesize Buddhist visual culture with terms, themes, concepts, figures and dates from lectures, class discussion and readings. There will be one, optional, practice text scheduled that I strongly advise you to take advantage of.

Final Assignment: Video Abstract (10%), Final Paper (20%) – Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> / Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>

To complete this assignment, the instructor will be organizing fieldtrips to local Buddhist temples during the last two weeks of class, in lieu of one of the classes per week. You must attend at least one of the scheduled fieldtrips, wherein you must view and record the visual program at the temple / practice site and interpret it, drawing on your learning from the semester. This final paper should be around 1500 words (5 pages) and will be submitted via cuLearn.

In addition, after visiting one (or more) Buddhist sites, you will create and post a 5-minute video abstract of your paper to a (private) file-sharing site, where we will be sharing our videos with students taking a similar class at a different Canadian institution. Your final paper must include reference to your colleagues' abstracts regarding Buddhist visual repertoires in their city, giving you the opportunity to comment on regional variations in Canadian Buddhism.

Further guidelines for the video abstract, the site visits, and the final paper will be given in class on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

## Course Schedule

### Background and Introductions

#### **Week 1 and 2 (Sept. 5, 10 & 12): Buddhism 101**

##### Readings:

- Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 15-56 (Chapters 2, 3, 4). (Available online through library)

#### **Week 3 (Sept. 17 & 19): Why is Art Important for the Study of Buddhism?**

##### Readings:

- Marilyn Rhie, “Buddhist Art for the World” in *The Buddhist World*, edited by John Powers, (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 261-281.
- Charles Lachman, “Art” in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 37-55.

##### Assignments:

Practice (i.e., optional) Visual Literacy Quiz (Background and Introductions) available on cuLearn from Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> @ 14:25 until Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> @ 17:00.

### Theme: The Buddha(s)

#### **Week 4 (Sept. 24 & 26): Buddha Biography**

##### Readings

- Selection from “Sutra 1: The Great Origin” in *The Canonical Book of the Buddha’s Lengthy Discourses*, translated by Shohei Ichimura, (Moraga, CA: BDK America, 2015), pp. 17-42.
- Selection from *Buddhacarita: In Praise of Buddha’s Acts*, translated by Charles Willemsen, (Moraga, CA: BDK America, 2015), pp. 93-105.

#### **Week 5 (Oct. 1 & 3): Buddhas of the Past and Present**

##### Readings:

- Reiko Ohnuma, “Jātaka” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), pp. 400-401.
- Leela Aditi Wood, “Jātaka, Illustrations of” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), pp. 401-402.
- “The Story of the One who Taught Forbearance” in *The Jātakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, translated by Sarah Shaw, (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 108-113.
- “The Story of the Hare” in *The Jātakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, translated by Sarah Shaw, (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 114-121.
- David K. Jordan, “A Jataka Tale Retold: Prince Vessantara,” (2014). Accessed online at: <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/scriptorium/fortwo/Jataka.html>

Assignments:

Visual Literacy Quiz #1 (The Buddha[s]) available on cuLearn from Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 14:25 until Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> @ 17:00.

**Theme: The Buddhist Cosmos**

**Week 6 (Oct. 8 & 10): The Buddhist Universe**

Readings

- Damien Keown, “Cosmology and Rebirth” in *The Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Damien Keown and Charles S. Prebish, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 245-250.
- “How Our World Began: The *Agganna Sutta*” in *The Norton Anthology of World Religions (Vol. 1)*, edited by Jack Miles, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), pp. 774-781.
- Charles Orzech, “Saving the Burning Mouth Hungry Ghost” in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 278-283.
- (Excerpt from) *Maha-parinibbana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Total Unbinding*, translated by Thanissaro Bhikku, (1998), accessed online at: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.16.5-6.than.html>

**Week 7 (Oct. 15 & 17): Mahayana Buddhism – The Buddhist Universe, but BIGGER!**

Readings:

- Damien Keown, *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 57-69.
- (Selections from) *The Lotus Sutra*, translated by Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama, (Moraga, CA: BDK America, 2007), pp. 223-232, 295-302.
- (Selections from) Robert Campany, *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012), pp. 63-67, 101-131, 148-152. 205-206.
- “Miracle Tales of the Bodhisattva Jizō” in *Sources of Japanese Tradition (Vol. 1) – Second Edition*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 184-187.

Assignments:

Visual Literacy Quiz #2 (The Buddhist Cosmos) available on cuLearn from Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> @ 14:25 until Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> @ 5pm.

Midterm Assignment: Due Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> on cuLearn by 23:55.

**\*\*\* MIDTERM BREAK – October 22-26 \*\*\***

## Theme: Devotion

### **Week 8 (Oct. 29 & 31): “Heavens and Hells”**

#### Readings:

- “Hymns Based on Gathas in Praise of Amida Buddha” in *The Collected Works of Shinran*, translated by Dennis Hirota, accessible online at: <http://shinranworks.com/hymns-in-japanese/hymns-of-the-pure-land/hymns-based-on-gathas-in-praise-of-amida-buddha/>
- (Selection from) Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), pp. 196-219.
- Luis O. Gomez, “Introduction to the Shorter Sutra” in *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996), pp. 3-13.
- “The Smaller Sutra on Amitāyus” in *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, translated by Hisao Inagaki, (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2003), pp. 91-95.

### **Week 9 (Nov. 5 & 7): Devotees and Patrons**

#### Readings:

- (Selection from) Lars Fogelin, *Archeology of Early Buddhism*, (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2006), pp. 66-73.
- Amy McNair, “The Rhetoric of Expenditure” in *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), pp. 51-74.
- Dorothy C. Wong, “Women as Buddhist Art Patrons During the Northern and Southern Dynasties” in *Between Han and Tang: Religious Art and Archaeology of a Transformative Period*, edited by Wu Hung, (Beijing: Wenwu, 2000), pp. 535-559. Accessible online at: <http://www.virginia.edu/art/pdf/wong-articles/7.pdf>

#### Assignments:

Visual Literacy Quiz #3 (Devotion) available on cuLearn from Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 14:25 until Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> @ 17:00

## Theme: Practice

### **Week 10 (Nov. 12 & 14): Mandala and Ritual Practices**

#### Readings

- (Selection from) *The Vairocanaṅghisambodhi Sutra*, translated by Rolf W. Giebel, (Moraga, CA: BDK America, 2005), 17-38.
- (Selection from) John Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism (Revised Edition)*, (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2007), pp. 262-267.
- Miya Tsugio, “Pictorial Art of the *Lotus Sutra* in Japan,” in *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, edited by George Joji Tanabe, Willa Jane Tanabe, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1989), pp. 75-94.

**Week 11 (Nov. 19 & 21): Materiality**

Readings:

- (Selection from) John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 52-69.
- Justin Thomas McDaniel, "Liberation Materiality: Thai Buddhist Amulets and the Benefits of Selling Sacred Stuff," *Material Religion* 11:3 (2015), pp. 401-403.
- Gregory Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," *History of Religions* 31:1 (August 1991), pp. 1-23.

Assignments:

Visual Literacy Quiz #4 (Practice) available on cuLearn from Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> @ 14:25 until Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 17:00.

**Reading Visual Repertoires:**

**Week 12 (Nov. 26 & 28): Reading Buddhist Sites (Part One) + Site Visit #1**

Readings:

- Sonya Lee, "Transmitting Buddhism to a Future Age: The Leiyin Cave at Fangshan and Cave-Temples with Stone Scriptures in Sixth-Century China" *Archives of Asian Art* 60 (2010), pp. 43-78.

**Week 13 (Dec. 3 & 5): Reading Buddhist Sites (Part Two) + Site Visit #2**

Readings:

- Stephen F. Teiser, "Picturing Life and Death as a Wheel" in *Reinventing the Wheel: Paintings of Rebirth in Medieval Buddhist Temples*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 3-49.

Assignments:

Video abstract due by Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 17:00

Final paper due by Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> @ 23:55

## (Collaboratively Designed) Course Policies

Note: We will discuss these policies in our first class meeting. I will then post a revised version of the syllabus to cuLearn.

- As your instructor, I will respond to emails within \_\_\_\_\_.
- Given that our class is predicated on discussion and the free exchange of ideas, we must endeavour to create a respectful, critical classroom. We will encourage this sort of discussion by: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Our policy on using computers / smart devices in class is:  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Our course's policy on late assignments is:  
\_\_\_\_\_.



## University Regulations for All Humanities Courses

### Copies of Written Work Submitted

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Always retain for yourself a copy of all essays, term papers, written assignments or take-home tests submitted in your courses.

### Academic Integrity at Carleton

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Plagiarism is presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own. Plagiarism includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, and material on the internet. More information can be found [here](#).

### Academic Accommodation Policy

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#### **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 the instructor 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 see the [Student Guide](#)

**Religious obligation:** write to the instructor 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 see the [Student Guide](#)

**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](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

## Grading System at Carleton University

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Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points and the percentage conversion is below. Grade points indicated are for courses with 1.0 credit value. Where the course credit is greater or less than one credit, the grade points are adjusted proportionately.

[Grading System](#)

## Course Sharing Websites and Copyright

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Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

## Statement on Class Conduct

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The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

- promote equity and fairness,
- respect and value diversity,
- prevent discrimination and harassment, and preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

## Deferred Term Work

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In some situations, students are unable to complete term work because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, which forces them to delay submission of the work.

Students who claim illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond their control as a reason for missed term work are held responsible for immediately informing the instructor concerned and for making alternate arrangements with the instructor and **in all cases this must occur no later than three (3.0) working days after the term work was due.**

The alternate arrangement must be made before the last day of classes in the term as published in the academic schedule. Normally, any deferred term work will be completed by the last day of term. More information is available [in the calendar](#).

## Deferred Final Exams

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Students who are unable to write a final examination because of a serious illness/emergency or other circumstances beyond their control may apply for accommodation. Normally, the accommodation for a missed final examination will be granting the student the opportunity to write a deferred examination. In specific cases when it is not possible to offer a deferred examination, and with the approval of the Dean, an alternate accommodation may be made. [More information.](#)

The application for a [deferral](#) must:

1. be made in writing or online to the Registrar's Office no later than **three working days** after the original final examination or the due date of the take-home examination; and,
2. be fully supported by appropriate documentation and, in cases of illness, by a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination, or by appropriate documents in other cases. Medical documents must specify the date of the onset of the illness, the (expected) date of recovery, and the extent to which the student was/is incapacitated during the time of the examination. The University's preferred medical form can be found at the Registrar's Office [forms and fees page](#).

Any questions related to deferring a Final Exam or Final Assignment/Take Home Examination should be directed to the [Registrar's Office](#).

## Withdrawal From Courses

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Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.

Important dates can be found [here](#):

## Financial vs. Academic Withdrawal

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**Make sure that you are aware of the separate deadlines for Financial and Academic withdrawal!**

Making registration decisions in Carleton Central involves making a financial and academic commitment for the courses you choose, regardless of attendance. If you do not attend – you must withdraw in Carleton Central within the published deadlines to cancel your registration. [More information](#)

## Department Contact Information

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**College of the Humanities** 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

[CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:CollegeOfHumanities@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop box for CLCV, HUMS LATN GREK Term Papers and assignments is outside 300 P.A.

**Greek and Roman Studies** 300 Paterson Hall (613)520-2809

[GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:GreekAndRomanStudies@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

**Religion** 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

[Religion@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:Religion@cunet.carleton.ca)

Drop box for RELI Term Papers and assignments is outside of 2A39 P.A.

**Registrar's Office** 300 Tory (613)520-3500

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/>

## Student Resources on Campus

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[CUKnowHow Website](#)

[Academics: From registration to graduation, the tools for your success.](#)