

The College of the Humanities: Religion Program
Early Buddhism (RELI 3420)

Instructor: Christopher Jensen

Office: 2A54 Paterson Hall

Office Hours: W 14:30-16:30 (or by appointment) Classroom: TBA

Email:¹ christopher.jensen@carleton.ca

Class Schedule: Wednesday 8:35 - 11:25

Course Description

Emerging into the renunciant religious milieu of early South Asian religion in the middle of the first millennium BCE, the early Buddhist religion proposed a novel approach to the problem of samsaric existence, including not only specific doctrinal teachings concerning the nature of reality and the role of human beings within it, but also a variety of specific meditative practices and a novel approach to the formation and regulation of religious communities. Within several centuries, and thanks to the patronage of rulers and economic elites, this new religious movement came to be broadly disseminated throughout the Indian subcontinent, and eventually into Central and Southeast Asia. To explore the origins, development and growth of Buddhism as a trans-national religion, we will consider such issues as early Buddhist philosophy, psychology and practice, with an emphasis on the Pali Canon, as well as other key textual corpora.

In this student-directed course, you will be encouraged to bring your own intellectual curiosity and particular research interests to bear in our investigation of early Buddhism (and, potentially, the Theravada tradition that grew from it). Throughout the course, you will propose, respond to, and refine your own personal inquiry questions, which will not only guide your engagement with course readings, but will also be used in the process of collaborative syllabus development. Some potential topics could include: Buddhist ritual, the role of religious experience in early Buddhism, interactions between early renunciant communities and/or between monks and laypeople, Buddhist perspectives on gender, and human / animal relations in Buddhist thought and practice.

Given that 3420 will be conducted as a seminar, you will be responsible for regularly coming to class,² doing the assigned readings (~ 30-40 pages a week), and being prepared to discuss these materials with your classmates. The weekly lectures and discussions will then lead into a series of scaffolded assignments (including a project proposal, annotated bibliography, presentation, and final paper) that will allow you to explore a specific facet of Early / Theravada Buddhism that you find compelling. All evaluations are based on your participation and submitted work, and there are no midterms or finals.

Learning Objectives

Academic

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

- Comprehend the main beliefs, practices, and historical developments associated with early Buddhism (defined broadly);
- Engage with relevant academic approaches to these topics;

¹ As per Carleton University policy, all communication between students and professors should be conducted via our Carleton email accounts.

² See note about attendance below (in the *Evaluation* section).

- Apply this knowledge in class and in course assignments;
 - This, in turn, will prepare you for further research in the field and independent study, as well as to engage with discussions of Buddhism in the news and pop culture.

Practical

By the end of the course, students will have practiced and received feedback on:

- Engaging in fruitful academic discussions;
- Writing reflection papers;
- Formulating broad research questions and gradually refining them over the course of a semester;
- Proposing, planning, and writing a research paper;
- Fostering their own intellectual creativity and engagement;
- Reading primary sources (in translation).

Textbook

All class readings will be posted on Ares or the course website. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings, which includes bringing them with you to class (whether in hard copy or electronically) and writing a weekly passport on them (as described below).

Anatomy of a Class Session

Each class, I will make use of approximately the first hour to introduce key topics, concepts and terminology, and to answer student questions. The remainder of the class will be carried out in standard seminar format, using student-selected questions and comments from class passports (described below) to promote discussion on assigned readings. Each class meeting will also involve reading and discussing at least one primary text (in translation). These primary sources will be either displayed (via PowerPoint) or distributed as handouts in class.

Evaluation

Student performance in the course will be evaluated as follows:

- Participation and Class Passport (20% cumulative)
 - Students must come to each class prepared with a short summary of that day's assigned reading(s). These passports will be used to collaboratively lead class discussion. These assignments will be graded on a four-point scale, and will be used to gauge your participation in the course. The rubric I will use for grading the passports can be found on cuLearn.
 - Note #1: you can submit these passports online via cuLearn, but you will only receive credit for that week's assignment if you were present in class.
 - Note #2: given that our class is so heavily dependant upon discussion and participation, attendance is critical. If you miss more than four class sessions (i.e., approximately one-third of the class), and/or fail to hand in more than four passports, you will automatically fail the course.³

³ This is, of course, barring extenuating circumstances. Any extended absence from class needs to be supported by medical or other relevant documentation.

- Project Proposal (15%)
 - Students will prepare a proposal for their final project, describing its scope, methods, potential sources, and a general reflection on how it speaks to course themes and personal research interests.
 - A grading rubric and detailed instructions will be provided by Jan. 29th
 - **Due: Feb. 12th**

- Annotated Bibliography (15%)
 - Students will prepare an annotated bibliography of the sources they intend to employ in the course of preparing their final project. If their chosen project is not a standard research paper, the bibliography should also include academic sources related to methods from an appropriate field (e.g., for a curatorial project, I would want to see some methodological readings from art history sources).
 - A grading rubric and detailed instructions will be provided by Mar. 6th
 - **Due: Mar. 11th**

- Research Progress Presentation (10%)
 - Students will present the preliminary results of their final projects to the class, answering questions and receiving feedback.
 - A grading rubric and detailed instructions will be provided by March 20th
 - **Due: (in class) April 1st**

- Final Project (40%)
 - Students will prepare a final project that demonstrates their engagement with a specific topic related to our course materials (more details below).
 - **Due: April 25th**

Final Project

The final project builds on the personal inquiry questions that students have been honing through readings, class discussion, and prior assignments. This project can take a number of forms:

- A 10 page (~ 3000 word) research essay.
- An audio/video presentation of this material, whose written script is at least 2600 words in length and which cites sources in an academically-responsible fashion.
- A web-resource (e.g., a module for a high school course introducing your topic), wherein your contributions account for a minimum of 3000 words of original content.
- Other modes of engagement with your question (e.g., social action, artistic project), supplemented with a 3000 word summary report, would also be acceptable, provided that you have prior approval.
- A provisional version of your project will be presented in our final class session, in order to provide an additional opportunity for written feedback (from the instructor) and in-class discussion (with your fellow students).

Tentative Schedule

As mentioned above, I am adopting a student-directed approach in instructing this class. As such, we will be developing the second half of our syllabus collaboratively, based on interests that have emerged during the first half of the course.

- Week 1 – Introduction and Orientation / Samsaric Religion (Jan 8th)
 - Patrick Olivelle, “Introduction” to *The Upanishads*, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996).
- Week 2 – *Buddha*: Earliest Evidence of Buddhism and the traditional Buddha biography (Jan. 15th)
 - Lars Fogelin, *Archeology of Early Buddhism* (CH. 3 → “Buddhism in Early Historic Period South Asia”), pp. 35-55.
 - Hirakawa Akira, “The Life of the Buddha,” *History of Indian Buddhism*, pp. 20-37.
- Week 3 – *Dharma*: Early Buddhist Teachings (The Sutra Literature) (Jan. 22nd)
 - Rupert Gethin, “Four Truths,” *The Foundations of Buddhism*, pp. 59-84.
 - Thanissaro Bhikku (trans.), *Uposatha Sutta*, accessible online at: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.5.05.than.html>
- Week 4 – *Sangha* → Making Buddhist Communities (The Vinaya Literature) (Jan. 29th)
 - Gregory Schopen, “Vinaya,” *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert Buswell, 885-889.
 - Shayne Clarke, “Locating Humour in Indian Buddhist Monastic Law Codes: A Comparative Approach,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37 (2009), pp. 311-330.
 - Ute Huesken, “Gender and Early Buddhist Monasticism,” pp. 215-230.
- Week 5 – Religious Practice in Early Buddhism (Feb. 5th)
 - John Strong, “The Establishment and Character of the Early Buddhist Community,” *Buddhisms: An Introduction*, pp. 161-198.
- Week 6 – Buddhist Vernacular Literatures: Narrative and Poetry (Feb. 12th)
 - Sarah Shaw (trans.), *The Jatakas: Birth Stories of the Bodhisatta*, (Selection from) “Introduction” (pp. xix-lii) + “The Hair-Standing-On-End Story” (pp. 66-74)
 - **In-class Syllabus Development Exercise**
 - **Project Proposal Due**
- **Week 7: Midterm Break (No classes)**
- Week 8 (Feb. 26th): Subject and readings TBA
- Week 9 (Mar. 4th): Subject and readings TBA
- Week 10 (Mar. 11th): Subject and readings TBA
 - **Annotated Bibliography Due**
- Week 11 (Mar. 18th): Subject and readings TBA
- Week 12 (Mar. 25th): Subject and readings TBA
- Week 13 (Apr. 1st): Wrap-Up + Student Presentations (Final Project Research Progress)
- **April 25th – Final Projects Due**

(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: _____.
- Likewise, the ability to participate productively in a seminar-based class depends on arriving in the classroom prepared. We expect the following (from both the instructor and our fellow students): _____.
- Our policy on using computers / smart devices in class is: _____.
- Our course's policy on late assignments is every student has seven “grace days” for their assignment submissions. These grace days can be split between assignments or used for a single assignment. They cannot be applied to passports. Any assignment submitted after all grace days have been expended will be subject to a 10% / day late penalty. Assignments over 5 days late (after the full use of grace days) will not be accepted.
 - One exception: I am required by the university to submit all final grades by May 7th, so you may use no more than four grace days on the final project in order to allow me time to grade them. Last day the final assignment will be accepted: **April 29th**



University Regulations for All College of the Humanities Courses

Copies of Written Work Submitted

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

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

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 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).

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Grading System at Carleton University

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Drop Box is outside of 300 P.A.

Religion 2A39 Paterson Hall (613)520-2100

Religion@cunet.carleton.ca

Drop box for RELI and SAST 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

[CUKnowHow Website](#)

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