

The College of the Humanities: Religion Program
Buddhism Beyond India (RELI 3422A)

Instructor: Christopher Jensen

Office: 2A54 Paterson Hall

Office Hours: M 13:00-14:00 (or by appointment)

Email:¹ christopher.jensen@carleton.ca

Class Schedule: Thursday 8:35 - 11:25

Classroom: Southam 413

Course Description

Buddhism originally arose in the South Asian cultural context, and thus shared many beliefs and practices with other local religious traditions, such as belief in karma, cyclical time, and a pantheon of indigenous deities (both Vedic and otherwise), and the practices of renunciation, image veneration, and meditation (among many others). Even the distinctive elements of the early Buddhist tradition, such as the doctrines of non-self (*anatman*) and the view of liberation as “becoming extinguished” (*nirvana*), as well as its novel forms of meditation practice, developed in response to this cultural framework. As a result, when pilgrims and traders began to transmit Buddhist images, texts and practices beyond the boundaries of India around the turn of the Common Era, it became clear that many aspects of the tradition challenged, or even directly contradicted, local religious standards – a particularly acute problem in China and Japan. This initial interaction led to a centuries-long process of cross-cultural negotiation, which was accomplished via textual translation, commentarial activities, the production of indigenous scriptures, the creation of images and icons, and the development of new ritual forms. As a result of this process, both Buddhist and East Asian culture(s) were irrevocably transformed.

In this student-directed course, you will be encouraged to bring your own intellectual curiosity and particular research interests to bear in our discussion of the transmission of Buddhism to East Asia, and the subsequent evolution of new and distinctive doctrines, iconography, and practices within these geographical and cultural contexts. 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 for investigation could include: poetry, material culture, sacred space, pilgrimage, self-immolation, gender and sexuality, medicine, fortune telling, and miracle stories.

Learning Objectives

Academic

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

- Comprehend the main beliefs, practices, and historical developments associated with Buddhism in China and Japan, from the earliest historical interactions to the present day;
- Define key terms related to Chinese and Japanese Buddhism;
- Engage with relevant academic approaches to these topics;
- 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 Chinese and Japanese cultural materials (e.g., films, novels, news reports) in a more nuanced fashion.

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

Practical

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

- Presenting academic articles to their classmates and leading discussions;
- Writing reflection papers;
- Formulating broad research questions and gradually refining them over the course of a semester;
- Fostering their own intellectual creativity and engagement;
- Reading primary sources (in translation).

Textbook

All class readings will be posted on Ares. 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).

Anatomy of a Class Session

Each class, I will make use of the first thirty to forty-five minutes 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, with students taking turns leading discussions on assigned readings (~ two per class session). These discussions will draw inspiration from each student's personal inquiry questions. The rubric for grading discussion / participation will be determined collaboratively in our first class. Each class meeting will also involve reading and discussing at least one primary source (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 (15% cumulative)
 - Each class, you will submit a one-paragraph summary of that day's assigned reading, as well as two discussion questions related to issues you found challenging, unclear, or that otherwise piqued your curiosity. These assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis, and will be used to gauge your participation in the course. You **must** save copies of these documents, as you will be using them as part of your final project.
 - 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.²

² This is, of course, barring extenuating circumstances. Any extended absence from class needs to be supported by medical or other relevant documentation.

- Leading Class Discussions (5% x 3 = 15%)
 - Over the course of the semester, each student will be responsible for leading class discussion on the day's assigned reading three times, briefly summarizing its contents and context, discussing how the reading spoke to their own personal inquiry questions, and fostering the subsequent conversation via discussion questions. The grading rubric for these presentations will be posted on cuLearn.

- Reflection Papers (10% x 4 = 40%)
 - Students will write four reflection papers (2-3 pages apiece) over the course of the semester (due as per the schedule outlined below) detailing their responses to the week's readings, lecture materials, in-class discussions, and activities, and relating them back to their own particular inquiry questions.
 - It is recommended that all students take detailed notes during classes, ideally keeping a separate page / file open containing their on-going inquiry questions. When it comes time to write each paper, you will be responsible for reflecting on how the prior weeks' course content allowed you to modify or answer your current inquiry questions, and whether they prompted any new ones. Your "Class Passports" will also help you keep track of these developments.
 - A full grading rubric will be posted to cuLearn one week prior to the first due date.

- Learning Portfolio (30%) (Due: April 27th)
 - Students will synthesize presentation notes, annotated primary sources, reflection papers, and "Class Passports" into a curated portfolio, demonstrating the evolution of their understanding of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism (as well as their critical engagement with it) over the course of the semester.
 - While you will be presenting a preliminary version of this project in our final class, you will then have an additional three weeks to revise your portfolio based on the feedback that you received on your presentation.
 - Full instructions and grading rubric will be posted to cuLearn one month prior to the due date.

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 / Introduction to Buddhism
 - Jan 10th – Campany, "On the Very Idea of Religions," *History of Religions* 42:4 (May 2003).

- Week 2: The Rise of the Mahayana
 - Jan. 17th
 - Paul Williams, "Introduction" to *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, Second Edition, (New York: Routledge, 2009).
 - Carl Bielefeldt, "Expedient Devices" in *Readings of the Lotus Sutra*, edited by Stephen F. Teiser and Jacqueline I. Stone, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

- Week 3: Introductions: China and Japan
 - Jan. 24th
 - **China:** Tsukamoto Zanryu, “The Special Shape of Chinese Buddhism: What Molded Its Character” in *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*, translated by Leon Hurvitz, (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1985).
 - **Japan:** Mori Mizue, “Ancient and classical Japan: the dawn of Shinto” in *Shinto: A Short History*, edited by Inoue Nobutaka, translated and adapted by Mark Teeuwen and John Breen, (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
 - **Reflection Paper #1 Due**

- Week 4: Earliest Interactions
 - Jan. 31st
 - **China:** Mario Poceski, “The Spread and Flourishing of Buddhism in China,” *Introducing Chinese Religions*, (New York: Routledge, 2009).
 - **Japan:** “Prince Shōtoku and his Constitution” in *Sources of Japanese Traditions: From Earliest Times to 1600 (2nd Edition)*, compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

- Week 5: East Asia in India's Shadow – Buddhist Geography
 - Feb. 7th
 - **China:** Stuart Young, “Introduction” to *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs in China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015).
 - **Japan:** Allan G. Grapard, “Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religions,” *History of Religions* 21:3 (Feb., 1982).

- Week 6: The Decline of the Dharma – Buddhist Chronology
 - Feb. 14th
 - **China:** David Ownby, “Chinese Millenarian Traditions: The Formative Age,” *The American Historical Review* 104:5 (Dec. 1999), 1513-1530.
 - **Japan:** James Dobbins, “Pure Land Buddhism and the Medieval Experience” in *Letters of the Nun Eshinni: Images of Pure Land Buddhism in Medieval Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).
 - **In-class Syllabus Development Exercise**
 - **Reflection Paper #2 Due**

- **Week 7: Midterm Break (Class Cancelled – Feb. 21st)**

- Week 8 (Feb. 28th): Topic and Readings TBA

- Week 9 (Mar. 7th): Topic and Readings TBA
 - **Reflection Paper #3 Due**

- Week 10 (Mar. 14th): Topic and Readings TBA

- Week 11 (Mar. 21st): Topic and Readings TBA

- Week 12 (Mar. 28th): Topic and Readings TBA
 - **Reflection Paper #4 Due**
- Week 13 (Apr. 4th): Topic and Readings TBA
 - “Elevator Pitch” Presentations of Learning Portfolios

(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 _____.



University Regulations for All 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).

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 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.](#)