

The College of the Humanities – Religion Program

RELI 4852A / 5852F

Buddhism in the Modern World

Professor: Angela Sumegi Class hours: Tuesdays 8:30 – 11:30p.m.
Office: 2A53 Paterson Hall Class Location: 2A46 PA
Office phone: 520-2600 ex 2107 E-mail: angela.sumegi@carleton.ca
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar course for graduate and 4th year students will engage students in the examination of Buddhist and Buddhist-inspired movements in contemporary societies. We will explore the modern Buddhist involvement with environmentalism, religious reform and secular humanism, psychotherapy and personal well-being, as well as issues relating to Buddhism and the State. Students can choose their presentation topics from a wide range of Buddhist traditions and movements manifest in places such as China, Bhutan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Taiwan, and Canada/USA. A primary goal of the course is to query stereotypes and dichotomies arising out of the reception of Buddhism in the western world such as traditional versus modern, native versus convert, socially engaged versus apart from the world, Buddhism as a religion versus a ‘way of life’, etc. The readings focus on the complexity of the ways in which religious systems and their adherents continually negotiate their place and function within local and global societies. Prior exposure to Buddhist philosophy is helpful but not mandatory as the course concentrates on cultural and socio-political issues. Necessary information relating to Buddhism as a religion will be provided in class discussion and in readings.

Required Reading:

- 2012, David McMahan, ed., *Buddhism in the Modern World* (Routledge)
Available from Haven Books
43 Seneca St, Ottawa, 613-730-9888. Hours: 10a.m. – 6 p.m.
 - Additional weekly readings will be available via links and PDFs through the ARES system of the Carleton library
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

All Students: Participation: 20% based on weekly reading response papers, 10x2%

Response Papers – due from the second class on

Since the success of a seminar course depends on class participation and discussion, students will be asked to submit a typewritten double-spaced 1-2 page response to the assigned readings for the week, identifying the main argument or point of each reading for that week, and *one critical question* that you have regarding it. These questions can arise from points you did not understand, points that could be considered further, or points on which you disagree with the author, etc. Since these questions are intended to facilitate discussion, students are asked to bring two copies to class, one for yourself and one for me. Eleven responses are required, the best ten will be counted or you may miss one submission without penalty. Response papers will not be returned to you. If I think that you are not getting the idea, I will let you know. If you submit a response paper outside of the class, it will count for 1%.

For students registered in 4852A:

One Critical Review and Class Presentation: 20%

Beginning with the third class, each student will be responsible for writing a critical review (3-5 pages, double-spaced) of the readings for one session, presenting it to the class, and leading discussion on it. At the beginning of term, each student will sign up for one class presentation. The critical review will be essentially a more formal and expanded version of the response paper, and will take the place of the response paper on that day. It should include an introductory paragraph, a summary/description of the thesis and main points of the readings, your critical questions/comments, and concluding paragraph. If you can weave the readings together, relating them to each other, then so much the better. You will be graded on your presentation as well as the review paper and these papers will be returned to you in class.

Term paper proposal: 10% Due November 11th in class

The 2-3 page essay proposal should include: a working title, thesis statement or organizing question, outline of the plan for the paper, and a working bibliography.

Term paper: (12-15 pages) 50% Due either in class Dec. 4th or the last day of classes December 8, in the Religion drop box outside 2A 39 Paterson Hall.

For students registered in 5852F:

Two Critical Reviews and Class Presentations: 20%

Beginning in the third week of classes, each student will be responsible for writing a critical review (3-5 pages, double-spaced) of the readings for one session, presenting it to the class, and leading discussion on it. At the beginning of term, each student will sign up for two class presentations. The critical review will be essentially a more formal and expanded version of the response paper, and will take the place of the response paper on that day. It should include an introductory paragraph, a summary/description of the thesis and main points of the reading, your critical questions, and concluding paragraph. If you can weave the readings together, relating them to each other, then so much the better. You will be graded on your presentation as well as the review paper and these papers will be returned to you in class.

Term paper proposal: 10% Due November 11th in class

The 2-3 page essay proposal should include: a working title, thesis statement or organizing question, outline of the plan for the paper, and an annotated bibliography.

Term paper: (15-18 pages) 50% Due either in class Dec. 2nd, or the last day of classes December 8, in the Religion drop box outside 2A 39 Paterson Hall.

COURSE READINGS

Course readings will be discussed at the first class and are subject to change according to the interests of the class.

Sept. 9 – Course introduction (no reading)

- Sign up for presentations

Sept. 16 (Response papers required from here on)

Online:

- Martin Baumann, “Global Buddhism: Developmental Periods, Regional Histories, and a New Analytical Perspective” *Journal of Global Buddhism* 2 (2001): 1-43
- Robert Sharf, “Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience” *Numen*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Oct., 1995), pp. 228-283

Sept. 23

From the Text

- Modern Buddhist Conjunctures in Southeast Asia (p. 10 – 28)

Online

- “In Defence of the Nation: the cult of Nang Thoranee in Northeast Thailand”
Chap. 9 in *Buddhism, Power and Political Order* edited by Ian Harris p. 168-181

Optional

- “Exile and Return: The Reinvention of Buddhism and Buddhist Sites in Modern India” *South Asian Studies* Vol. 26, No. 2, September 2010, 193–217

Sept. 30

From the Text

- Buddhism in Modern Sri Lanka (p. 30-45)

Online

- “The Contemporary lay meditation movement and lay gurus in Sri Lanka”
Religion 33 (2003) 23–55

Optional

- Richard Gombrich, “Is the Sri Lankan War a Buddhist Fundamentalism?” Chap. 2
in *Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka*

Oct. 7

From the Text

- Buddhists in Modern Japan (p. 50-65)

Online

- Ian Reader, “Buddhism in Crisis? Institutional decline in Modern Japan”, *BSRV*
28.2 (2011) 233-263

Optional

- Mark Rowe, “Where the Action Is: Sites of Contemporary Soto Buddhism”,
Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 31/2:357-388

Oct. 14

From the Text

- Buddhism in China and Taiwan (p. 70-85)

Online

- Scott Pacey, “A Buddhism for the human world: interpretations of *Renjian Fojiao* in contemporary Taiwan”, *Asian Studies Review*, 29, March, 2005. pp. 61–77.

Optional

- Charles B. Jones, “Transitions in the Practice and Defence of Chinese Pure Land Buddhism”, Chap. 5 in *Buddhism in the Modern World* edited by Heine and Prebish

Oct. 21

From the Text

- Tibetan and Himalayan Buddhism (p.90-108)

Online

- Dan Smyer Yü, “Globalization, performance religion, mindscaping the eco-Buddhist Tibet” Chap. 8 in *The Spread of Tibetan Buddhism in China* (p.173-196)

Optional

- Fernanda Pirie, “Secular morality, village law, and Buddhism in Tibetan societies”. *J. Roy. Anthropol. Inst. (N.S.)* 12, 173-190

Oct. 28 FALL BREAK

Nov. 4

From the Text

- Modernist Interpretations of Buddhism in Europe (p.114-131)
- The North American Buddhist Experience (p.138-150)

Online:

- B. Alan Wallace, “The Spectrum of Buddhist Practice in the West”, Chap. 2 in *Westward Dharma: Buddhism Beyond Asia* (p. 34-48)

Nov. 11 - Term paper proposal due in class

From the Text

- Buddhism, Politics, and Nationalism (p.178-192)

Online

- Yoshiko Ashiwa, “Positioning Religion in Modernity: State and Buddhism in China” in *Making Religion, Making the State: the Politics of Religion in Modern China* edited by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David Wank p. 43-73

Optional

- Johan Elverskog (2006) “Two Buddhisms in Contemporary Mongolia”, *Contemporary Buddhism: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 7:1, 29-46,

Nov. 18

From the Text

- Socially Engaged Buddhism (p.196-211)
- Buddhist Ethics: A Critique (p. 216-229)

Online

- Susan Darlington, “The Good Buddha and the Fierce Spirits: Protecting the Northern Thai Forest”. *Contemporary Buddhism*, Vol. 8, No. 2, November 2007, p. 169-184

Optional

- Tara Doyle, ““Liberate the Mahabodhi Temple!” Socially Engaged Buddhism, Dalit-style.” Chap. 10 in *Buddhism in the Modern World* edited by Heine and Prebish

Nov. 25

From the Text

- Buddhism and the powers of the mind (p.234-251)
- Buddhism and gender (p.258-269)

Online

- Vanessa Sasson, “Peeling Back the Layers: Female Higher Ordination in Sri Lanka” *BSRV* 27.1 (2010) 77-84

Optional

- Richard Gilpin, “The Use Of Theravada Buddhist Practices And Perspectives In Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy”, *Contemporary Buddhism*, Vol. 9, No. 2, November 2008 p. 227-249

Dec. 2 - Research Paper due in class or in the Religion drop box by Dec. 8

From the Text

- Buddhism and Science (p.274-286)
- Buddhism, Media and Popular Culture (p.306-320)

Online

- Ann Gleig, “From Buddhist Hippies to Buddhist Geeks: The Emergence of Buddhist Postmodernism?” *Journal of Global Buddhism* Vol. 15 (2014): 15-33

REGULATIONS COMMON TO 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.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “*substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.*”

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)
A = 85-89 (11)	B- = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)
A- = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)

F	Failure. Assigned 0.0 grade points
ABS	Absent from final examination, equivalent to F
DEF	Official deferral (see “Petitions to Defer”)
FND	Failure with no deferred exam allowed -- assigned only when the student has failed the course on the basis of inadequate term work as specified in the course outline.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean.

WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

The last date to withdraw from **FALL TERM** courses is **DEC. 8, 2014**. The last day to withdraw from **FALL/WINTER (Full Term)** and **WINTER** term courses is **APRIL 8, 2015**.

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me 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. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by **Nov. 7, 2014** for the Fall term and **March 6, 2015** for the Winter term. For more details visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/

PETITIONS TO DEFER

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 a deferral of examination/assignment. If you are applying for a deferral due to illness you will be required to see a physician in order to confirm illness and obtain a medical certificate dated no later than one working day after the examination or assignment deadline. This supporting documentation must specify the date of onset of the illness, the degree of incapacitation, and the expected date of recovery.

If you are applying for a deferral for reasons other than personal illness, please [contact](#) the Registrar’s Office directly for information on other forms of documentation that we accept.

Deferrals of assignments must be supported by confirmation of the assignment due date, for example a copy of the course outline specifying the due date and any documented extensions from the course instructor.

Deferral applications for examination or assignments must be submitted within **5 working days** of the original final exam.

ADDRESSES: (Area Code 613)

College of the Humanities 520-2809	300 Paterson
Greek and Roman Studies Office 520-2809	300 Paterson
Religion Office 520-2100	2A39 Paterson
Registrar's Office 520-3500	300 Tory
Student Academic Success Centre 520-7850	302 Tory
Paul Menton Centre 520-6608/TTY 520-3937	501 Uni-Centre
Writing Tutorial Service 520-2600 Ext. 1125	4 th Floor Library
Learning Support Service 520-2600 Ext 1125	4 th Floor Library