Philosophy 213: Asian Philosophy
Summer 2015 / 2nd Session 7/20-8/12 / MTWThF 10-11:50
Instructor: Russell Duvernoy / russelld@uoregon.edu
Office: 413 Knight Library/ Office Hrs: Tues/Thurs. 9-9:50 A.M.

Course Description: This course in Asian philosophy will focus specifically on Buddhism. We will begin with a basic introduction of the story of the Buddha and the core concepts at the center of the tradition. Our focus will be on the internal consistency of these concepts and the extent to which their logic departs from conventional Western habits of thought. We will then turn to trace some of the development of Buddhist philosophy, focusing specifically on the Mahāyāna tradition and the work of the philosopher Nāgārjuna. This will lead us to a brief consideration of the way that Nāgārjuna’s ideas influence the eventual development of Zen or Chan Buddhism in China and Japan.

Our primary methodology in the course will be philosophical rather than historical or cultural. This means that our goal will be in exploring the concepts and arguments of the traditions and philosophers we study. Given the enormously vast and complex field of Asian philosophy at large, such a study is necessarily selective and partial and by no means an exhaustive survey.

As a final guiding theme, we will frequently discuss and consider how the philosophical frameworks we will be studying influence the practices and choices of ethical lives.

Course readings will involve a mixture of original source texts and contemporary discussions of these concepts.

Texts:


Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

Course Goals: At the conclusion of this course, students should:

- Have a better understanding of the basic metaphysical commitments involved in Buddhist philosophy.
- Be able to articulate some of the central challenges in understanding concepts in Buddhist philosophy from a Western perspective.
- Have a more thoughtful awareness of the relationship between conceptually mediated concepts and the practices of Buddhist traditions.
- Be able to discuss the relevance of these philosophical traditions to contemporary life, especially in terms of ethical issues of engagement.

**Policies and Expectations:**

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions. More than 2 unexplained absences will have a significantly negative impact on your grade.

**Reading:** The reading for this course is of primary importance. Students must do the reading! This can’t be stressed enough. Since our approach will be dialogical and philosophical, students will need to come prepared to participate in class discussion and this means that they need to have thoughtfully completed the reading.

This will be a particular challenge due to the compressed nature of a summer course. To that end, I have attempted to keep the reading load as reasonable as possible. But students should be prepared to spend at least an hour a day on the reading for the course.

**Assignments:** Student work for the course will consist of the following: (1) Subject quizzes (10%); (2) Two short response papers (30%); (3) Midterm exam (20%); (4) Take home final exam. (30%) (5) Attendance and Participation (10%)

(1) Subject Quizzes: There will be 5 unannounced, short in class quizzes which will cover basic topics from that day’s reading assignment. The lowest score on these quizzes will be dropped. There are no make-up quizzes. (10%)
(2) Response Papers: Students will choose one reading and write a short (3-4 pages) paper in which they explain the central argument of the reading and offer a brief critical response. (15% each)
(3) Midterm exam: This will cover main themes, arguments and philosophers. It will include multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and one essay question. (20%)
(4) Take home final exam: The final exam will be take home essay questions. Students answer 2 out of 3. (30%)
(5) Attendance and Participation: completion of the reading and participation in class discussion is essential to earning full participation credit. (10%)

**Technology:** Cell phones must be turned off and lap-top computers should be silent.

**Late work/Make Up:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class and will only be accepted late in the case of documented emergencies or uncontrollable circumstances. Late papers will be marked down 5 points for every day late and will not be accepted after 3 days past the due date. There are no make-ups for the midterm unless you know in advance that you will be unavoidably absent on the day the exam is scheduled. In such cases, you must see me before to arrange an alternative.

**Intellectual safety, Discussions:** During discussions, students will be expected to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect.
Grade: Student grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:

- Subject Quizzes: 10%
- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Response Papers: 15% each, 30%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final Essay: 30%

Plagiarism/Intellectual Honesty: All written work must be yours and yours alone. Any instances of plagiarism or intellectual dishonesty will result in an automatic failure and will be reported to the university administration. For more information, please review the following website as to how to ensure against committing plagiarism: http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html

Additionally, information on policies with regard to academic misconduct can be found here: http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx

Accessibility / Accommodations: All students will be provided with fair and equal access. If you encounter obstacles to full participation, please make arrangements to meet with me to discuss these obstacles. In addition, you may contact the Accessible Education Center at http://aec.uoregon.edu/. Please submit all disability accommodation requests in compliance with University of Oregon policy. Contact the Disability Office for information.

Canvas: Class hand-outs, documents (such as this syllabus), and readings will be posted on Canvas. Students must bring a copy of the reading to class on the date it is scheduled to be discussed.

Lecture Topics/Reading Schedule/Assignments:

Week 1: Early Buddhism and Basic Themes
M 7/20 Introduction to Buddhism:
Reading assignment: Buddha on SEP (Canvas)/ Siderits Ch. 1. /(roughly 16 pages total)

T 7/21 Four Noble Truths and Three Jewels:
Reading Assignment: Siderits, Chap. 2: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 // Thich Nhat Hanh “The Three Gems” (Canvas) (26 pages total)

W 7/22: No Self and Dependent Origination
Reading Assignment: Siderits, Chap. 3: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 up to p. 43, 3.5 / Thich Nhat Hanh “Feelings and Perceptions” (Canvas)/ (28 pages)

Th 7/23: No Self and Dependent Origination, cont.
**Reading Assignment:** Siderits, Chp. 3: 3.6, 3.7 up to pg. 60, 3.8 / E/G Chpt 37: Joanna Macy “The Ecological Self” (16 pages)

**F 7/24: Images of Enlightenment and Practice**  
**Reading Assignment:** Thich Nhat Hanh “Heart of Practice” 51-53(Canvas) / “Buddhism in a World of Change” Sulak Sivaraksa (Canvas) (13 pages)

**Week 2: Two-Fold Truth and the Bodhisattva Ideal (Mahayana and Zen)**

**M 7/27: Mahayana Buddhism**  
**Reading Assignment:** Siderits, Chpt. 7, Chp. 9: 9.1, 9.3, 9.4 up to 192, 9.6 and 9.7 (21 pgs)

**T 7/28: Nagarjuna and the Two Fold Truth**  
**Reading Assignment:** E/G Chp. 2 Nāgārjuna’s ‘Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way’(Garfield) // Selections from Engaging Buddhism Jay Garfield “Dependent Origination” (Canvas) (18 pgs)

**W 7/29: Perspectives and Dependent Origination**  
**Hand In: Final Due date for First Response Paper (15%)**  
**Reading Assignment:** E/G Chp. 7 Dōgen’s “Mountains and Waters as Sutras” (Graham Parkes)/ E/G Chp. 22 Dogen’s Genjōkōan (17 pages)

**Th 7/30: Perspectives and Dependent Origination**  
**Reading Assignment:** “In Indra’s Net” Joanna Macy (Canvas) (10 pages)

**F 7/31: Images of Enlightenment and Practice**  
**Reading Assignment:** E/G Chp. 35: Essentials on Observing and Violating the Fundamentals of Bodhisattva Precepts (Park) (9 pages)

**Week 3: Buddhist Ethics and Engaged Buddhism**

**M 8/3: Midterm 1st half of class 20% // Intro to Buddhist Ethics**  
**Reading Assignment:** Siddertis, Chp. 4: 4.1, 4.3, 4.4 (13 pages)

**T 8/4: The Bodhisattva Ideal**  
**Reading Assignment:** / E/G Chp. 36: William Edelglass: “Thich Nhat Hanh’s Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism” (9 pgs total)

**W 8/5: Buddhism and the Contemporary World: Gender**  
**Reading Assignment:** E/G/ Chp. 38: Karma Lekshe Tsomo “Buddhist Feminist Reflections” (10 pages)

**Th 8/6: Buddhism and the Contemporary World: Gender**  
**Reading Assignment:** Kate Wheeler “Bowing, Not Scraping” from Buddhist Women on the Edge (Canvas)(10 pages)
F 8/7: Images of Enlightenment and Practice
Hand in: Final Due date for 2nd Response Paper (15%)
Final essay prompts handed out
Reading Assignment: “Call me by my True Name” Thich Nhat Hanh (Canvas) (9 pages)

Week 4: Ethics, cont.

M 8/10: Buddhism and the Contemporary World: Action
Reading Assignment: “Buddhism and Social Action: An Exploration” Ken Jones (Canvas) (17 pages)

T 8/11: Buddhism and the Contemporary World
Reading Assignment: excerpts from Dalai Lama A Policy of Kindness (Canvas) (23 pages)

W 8/12: Final Discussion and Wrap-up
Reading Assignment: continue Dalai Lama
Hand in: Final essays due by 12 midnight 30%