MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM
RELG 344 – TTh 10:05-11:25

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Office hours: on zoom by appointment

Land Acknowledgement:
McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We honour, recognize and respect these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

Course Description
This course is designed to give students an introduction to some of the history, practices and doctrinal/philosophical elaborations associated with the vast movement known as 'Mahāyāna Buddhism'.

Method
This semester, the course is being taught remotely. Lectures will be mostly synchronous, in order to allow me to devote substantial time to discussion and addressing student questions. Lectures will all be recorded and made available on MyCourses, which will permit students to re/view them when they have time and access to adequate internet. I respect the reality that not all students are in the same time zone this semester, and even those who are may not be able to access a computer or a quiet space during class time. I strongly encourage you to participate in the synchronous classes, but there is no penalty for not doing so.

Prerequisites
RELG 252 (Hinduism and Buddhism) or 253 (Religions of East Asia) or permission of the instructor.

Required Texts:
I will make as much of the reading material available on MyCourses as legally possible (bibliography to be posted soon).

Evaluation:
Each student's performance in this course will be evaluated on the basis of a number of written assignments. There will be two essay-based take-home assignments (due **February 18** and **April 13**; 1000-1250 words) worth 35% each. The essays will be based on a set of questions to be distributed between 2 weeks and 10 days before the due date.

The last 30% of the grade will be based a series of 11 short written responses to be written throughout the semester, and posted in the Discussions section of MyCourses. One response – a summary of the day's readings – will be 300-400 words; and 10 responses will be 150-200 words in length. The longer one is a summary of the main points and arguments of one of the assigned readings for a particular class day. You will sign up for these in advance and will have to post your summary by class time on the assigned date of the reading. The remaining 10 will be responses to your fellow students' summaries and must a) show that you have done the readings yourself in addition to having read your classmate's summary; and b) use a respectful tone even if critiquing someone's summary. The short responses are due within a week of the lecture in question. You will only be graded for one response per lecture (ie. you will not get separate grades for multiple responses to a single topic).

VI. SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS

Date	Lecture Topic	Readings
Th 07/01	Introduction to RELG 344	Syllabus
T 12/01	Introduction to 'The Great Vehicle': compassion and wisdom	Williams, "Introduction" pp. 1-44 Lotus Sutra, "Introduction" p. 1-21
Th 14/01	Wisdom in a Buddhist context; Introduction to Perfection of Wisdom; Abhidharma and the Heart Sūtra	Williams, "The Perfection of Wisdom" pp. 45-62 The Heart Sūtra http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.048.than.html
T 19/01	Wisdom in a Buddhist Context: Heart Sūtra	The Heart Sūtra (mycourses) http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.048.than.html (cont'd)
Th 21/01	Discussion	
T 26/01	Nāgārjuna and the Prasangika Madhyamaka	Williams, "Madhyamaka" pp. 63-83 Nāgārjuna "Dedicatory Verse"
Th 28/01	Nāgārjuna and the Prasangika Madhyamaka	Nāgārjuna "An Analysis of Conditions"
T 02/02	Nāgārjuna and the Prasangika Madhyamaka	Nāgārjuna "An Analysis of the Skandhas" "An Analysis of the Noble Truths"
Th 04/02	Nāgārjuna and Two Truths	"An Analysis of the Noble Truths" continued
T 09/02	Yogācāra: an introduction to mind and consciousness	Lusthaus, Dan. http://www.acmuller.net/yogacara/articles/intro.html
Th 11/02	Yogācāra: an introduction to mind and consciousness	Lusthaus, Dan. http://www.acmuller.net/yogacara/articles/intro.html Samdhinirmocana Sūtra ch. 6 (Three Natures)
T 16/02	Guest Lecture: "Life in a Zen Monastery" (Jiun Varant Arslanian)	
Th 18/02	Buddha Nature **FIRST TAKE-HOME DUE**	Williams "The Tathāgatagarbha" pp. 103-128
T 23/02	Trikāya	Williams, "On the Bodies of the Buddha" 172-186
Th 25/02	Discussion: the Supreme Continuum	Readings from the Uttaratantra
TTh 02-04/03	READING WEEK	
T 09/03	Bodhisattvas: Tārā	Lopez "A Prayer Flag for Tara" "Praise to Tārā with Twenty-One Verses of Homage" (https://read.84000.co/translation/toh438.html)

Th 11/03	Karuṇā/Upāya: its place in Mahāyāna; the concept of 'Bodhisattva'	Williams "The Path of the Bodhisattva" 187-208
T 16/03	The Bodhisattva Ideal	Śāntideva "The Excellence of Bodhicitta"; "Confession"; "Taking Hold of Bodhicitta"
Th 18/03	The Bodhisattva Ideal	Śāntideva "Meditative Concentration"
T 23/03	Lojong	Chekawa Yeshe Dorje. "Seven-Point Mind Training" 39-41 Shamar Rinpoche. "The Second Point: Train in the Two Bodhicittas" (p. 75-97)
Th 25/03	Discussion: Exchange of Self and Other	
T 30/03	Lotus Sūtra	22-82 (Expedient Devices, Parable)
Th 01/04	Lotus Sūtra	"The Gateway to Everywhere of the Bodhisattva He Who Observes the Sounds of the World" (311-319) "Buddhist Practice and the Lotus Sutra in China" (132-148)
T 06/04	Lotus Sūtra	"The Lotus Sutra and Self-Immolation" 107-128; "The Former Affairs of the Bodhisattva Medicine King" p. 293-302
Th 08/04	Lotus Sūtra:	"Bodily Reading of the Lotus Sutra" (186-205)
T 13/04	Wrap-up Discussion Day **SECOND TAKE-HOME DUE**	

Late Essays: Please contact me *in advance* if you *must* submit an essay late. Reasons for late submissions of essays must be university approved. Late essays (without prior arrangements) will be downgraded *1⁄2 grade per day* (eg. a B+ paper will be downgraded to a B). If an essay is turned in after the beginning of the class when it is due, it will also be downgraded the 1⁄2 grade. Week-end days are included in deductions.

E-mail Correspondence:
(1) I will only check messages between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. This means that if you e-mail me on Friday night, do not expect a response until Monday morning at the very earliest. Similarly, if you e-mail me the night before something is due, you can be assured that you will not receive an answer in time to meet the deadline.
(2) Use a respectful, professional tone in your e-mail (avoid language like "Hey" or "Hi Miss").
(3) Include Course Number in Subject Line, plus your full name & Student Number in the body of the message.

Reassessment of Course Work
Requests for reassessments must be made within 10 working days of the date of return of the graded materials. Grades may be lowered or raised, or they may remain the same, as a result of the reassessment. The grade obtained on the reassessment takes precedence over the original grade.

Policy on Academic Integrity
McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and

consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

Policy on Language
In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Policy on Copyright and Recordings
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