

## **RELG 548: Indian Buddhist Philosophy: Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra***

Winter 2021

Mondays 12:30-2:30

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Office hours: Thursdays 1-2:30 or by appointment (all held on zoom)

### **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 seminar is designed to facilitate a close study of the key concepts contained Śāntideva's 8<sup>th</sup> century CE masterpiece the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*. We will examine Śāntideva's development of *bodhicitta*, *prajñā*, and the ethical system enjoined upon the *bodhisattva*, in addition to the structure and literary qualities of the text itself.

### **Method**

This semester, the course is being taught remotely. Classes will be synchronous, as in order for a seminar to be effective, we must devote substantial time to student presentations and discussion. Lectures will all be recorded and made available on MyCourses, which will permit students to review 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.

### **Prerequisites**

One or more of: Mahāyāna Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, or permission of the instructor.

### **Required Texts:**

Students are required to have a copy of Crosby and Skilton's translation of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (BCA):

Śāntideva. *The Bodhicaryāvatā*. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton, trans. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 (1995).

Other translations will be useful references throughout the course, in addition to versions in other languages (Tibetan, Sanskrit, etc.), but this is the translation that we will be using as our base line reference throughout the course. Please order a copy online.

I will make as much of the rest of the reading material available on MyCourses as legally possible. If you wish to purchase all the books we will be reading, please do so. Otherwise these are all available as e-books through McGill's library:

Clayton, Barbra. *Moral Theory in Śāntideva's Śikṣāsamuccaya: Cultivating the Fruits of Virtue*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Dalai Lama. *Transcendent Wisdom: a Commentary on the Ninth Chapter of Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*. trans. Alan Wallace. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1988

Gold, Jonathan C. and Douglas S. Duckworth, ed. *Readings of Śāntideva's Guide to Bodhisattva Practice*. New York: Columbia UP, 2019.

Mrozik, Suzanne. *Virtuous Bodies: the Physical Dimensions of Morality in Buddhist Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

We will also read two chapters from this dissertation, available online through McGill's library:

Stenzel, Julia. *The Buddhist Roots of Secular Compassion Training: a Comparative Study of Compassion Cultivation in Indian and Tibetan Mahāyāna Sources with the Contemporary Secular Program of Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT)*. Dissertation, McGill University, 2018.

The following articles, chapters and texts are also required and will be posted on MyCourses:

Asanga. "The Chapter on Ethics" *Asanga's Chapter on Ethics With the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-pa, the Basic Path to Awakening, the Complete Bodhisattva*. Mark Tatz, trans. Lewiston: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1986.

*The King of Aspiration Prayers of Noble, Excellent Activity*. Pamela G. White trans.

Tatz, Mark. "Introduction" *Asanga's Chapter on Ethics With the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-pa, the Basic Path to Awakening, the Complete Bodhisattva*. Lewiston: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1986.

Williams, Paul. "On Altruism and Rebirth", "The Absence of Self and the Removal of Pain" *Altruism and Reality: Studies in the Philosophy of the Bodhicaryāvātāra*. Richmond: Curzon Press, 1998. p. 29-51, 104-176

#### **Evaluation:**

Short Assignments:	33%
Presentations (2):	33%
Research Essay:	34%

**Short Assignments:** Students must post short reflections (300-500 words) on the readings and seminar discussion to the discussion board on MyCourses 10 times throughout the semester. They must be posted within 24 hours of the seminar during which the readings were discussed. It is my hope that this will stimulate ongoing discussion among our group and keep us substantially engaged with the material.

**Presentations:** each student will give two presentations during the course of the semester. Presentations will be no less than 20 minutes long, and based on the readings assigned for the day. After the presentation, students are responsible for facilitating class discussion for a further 25 minutes. Grades will depend on content, delivery, and quality of discussion afterwards (you must therefore come prepared with questions for discussion).

**Research Essay:** the research essay, due Thursday April 15, will be on a topic designed by *you*. It can focus on a particular aspect of Śāntideva's text or thought, uses of his work in Buddhist traditions, a development of your presentation... in short, on anything we touch on throughout the class. A short proposal (maximum 1 page) outlining your topic is due on Friday, April 2, together with a bibliography of outside sources (readings will be drawn from relevant course material *plus* at least three outside sources). The proposal/bibliography will be worth 5% of the total paper grade. The final paper will be approximately 13-15 pages long (4000-4500 words).

#### **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

### **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/](http://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**

I remind everyone of their responsibility in ensuring that this video and associated material are not reproduced or placed in the public domain. This means that each of you can use it for your educational (and research) purposes, but you cannot allow others to use it, by putting it up on the Internet or by giving it or selling it to others who may also copy it and make it available. Please refer to McGill's [Guidelines for Instructors and Students on Remote Teaching and Learning](#) for further information. Thank you very much for your help with this.

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings:**

#### **M 11/01: Introduction to Śāntideva and the BCA**

#### **M 18/01: Śāntideva and the Supreme Worship**

Śāntideva BCA entire text, with a focus on vii-29  
Samantabhadra's Wishing Prayer  
Gold *Readings* "Introduction" 1-22

#### **M 25/01: Bodhisattva Ethics**

Śāntideva BCA 30-62  
Tatz "Introduction" and "Chapter on Ethics" (Asanga) 1-89

#### **M 01/02: Bodhisattva Ethics**

Clayton 1-118

#### **M 08/02: Bodhisattva Ethics**

Mrozik 1-129

#### **M 15/02: Cultivation**

Ohnuma *Readings* "Bodies and Embodiment in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*" 114-131  
Dunne *Readings* "Innate Human Connectivity and Śāntideva's Cultivation of Compassion" 235-252  
Huntington *Readings* "Ritual Structure and Material Culture in the *Guide to Bodhisattva Practice*" 132-145  
Finnigan *Readings* "Śāntideva and the Moral Psychology of Fear" 221-234

#### **M 22/02: Cultivation**

Śāntideva 63-104  
Stenzel (Dissertation) "Compassion and the Roots of Tonglen Meditation in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*" and "Compassion Cultivation in Tibetan Traditions" 111-183

**(M 01/03 – Reading Week, no class)**

**M 08/03: Cultivation**

Garfield *Readings* "Seeing Sentient Beings" 192-208

Goodman *Readings* "Śāntideva's Ethics of Impartial Compassion" 209-219

Gyatso *Readings* "Seeing from All Sides" 99-112

Williams "On Altruism and Rebirth" 29-51

**M 15/03: Cultivation**

Williams "The Absence of Self and the Removal of Pain" 104-176

**M 22/03: Big Picture**

Harrison *Readings* "Śāntideva: the Author and his Project" 27-41

Carpenter *Readings* "Reason and Knowledge on the Path: a Protreptic Reading of the *Guide*" 45-58

Kachru *Readings* "On Learning to Overhear the 'Vanishing Poet'" 60-77

**M 29/03: Wisdom**

Duckworth "The Middle Way of the Bodhisattva"

Kapstein "An Intoxification of Mouse Venom"

Dalai Lama 17-54

BCA 103-132

**(M 05/04 – Easter Monday, no class)**

**M 12/04: Wisdom**

Dalai Lama 55-114

**Th ("M") 15/04: Wrap up!**