

Lectures: Tuesdays and Fridays 11:30–12:20 in KTH B124

Tutorials: T01 - Mondays 9:30–10:20 in TSH 122
T02 - Mondays 16:30–17:20 in TSH 122

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Course Description

- Religious Studies/Arts & Science 3L03 is a half-year course in which students read widely from the major religious traditions of Classical India.
- We read literature from Hindu, Buddhist and Jain texts covering a time span of about 3500 years (c1500 BCE to contemporary times).
- Students are introduced to the historical, religious and linguistic contexts of the texts they are reading.
- In this iteration of the course, we will focus on the themes of asceticism and renunciation in Indian literature. We will focus on these theme by asking one basic question: Is it better to remain engaged in the world—to involve one’s self with family and society; or, is it better to renounce the world—to leave everything behind in pursuit of spiritual liberation? In order to answer this primary question, it is also necessary to ask two related questions. How do the traditions we are studying understand renunciation? That is, what does it mean to renounce the world? And, what, if any, are the differences between renunciation and asceticism?

Course Objectives - Upon completion of this course:

- Students will become familiar with the important themes of asceticism and renunciation in the classical religions of South Asia.
- Students will become familiar with the various ways in which asceticism and renunciation are treated by different traditions at different times.
- Students will become familiar with some of the important ways in which the terms are understood by different traditions at different times.

Avenue to Learn and Turnitin.com

- In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn (A2L). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for McMaster email accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss these with the course instructor.
- In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

Required Texts (Available at the Campus Store)

- Religious Studies/Arts & Science 3L03 Custom Courseware

Evaluation

- *1 Midterm Test (15%)* – Students will write one in-class test designed to measure acquisition and understanding of course content.
- *Final Exam (25%)* – At the end of the term, students will write an exam during the regular examination period. Like the midterm test, the exam is intended to measure acquisition and understanding of course content.
- *Asceticism/Renunciation Reflection Paper/Report (10%)* – Students will submit a 750–1000 word reflection paper/report on the topic of asceticism and/or renunciation. Further instructions can be found on pages 9–11 of this syllabus.
- *Discussion Board Posts (10%)* – Students will respond to selected readings before those readings are discussed in class. You are required to post five times during the term. Each of your posts will be graded. You are allowed to post more than 5 times, but the mark cannot exceed 10/10. Further instructions can be found on page 11 of this syllabus.
- *Essay (30%)* – Each student will hand in a 1750–2250 word formal essay (about 6–8 double-spaced pages in 12-point font) on a topic of the student’s choice. Further instructions, including suggested topics can be found on pages 11–13 of this syllabus.
- *Participation (10%)* – Regular preparation, attendance and participation are essential for the acquisition of any new knowledge. The teaching assistant will determine this portion of your mark at her discretion. She may require additional

activities (e.g., tutorial presentations, brief reports, leading discussion, etc.) as part of this mark.

Late Submissions/Missed Tests

- Essays and reflection papers handed in late will be penalized at a reducing rate of 3% (first day late), 2% (second day late) and 1% (each additional day late) unless acceptable documentation is provided.
- A midterm test missed as the result of a documented absence may be written at a later date.
- An exam missed as the result of a documented absence must be written during the deferred exam period.

Note on Late Submissions

- Given that all assignments have been provided to students on the first day of classes and thus ample time has been granted to complete them, no extensions will be granted without documentation.

Student Accessibility Services

- Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone (905)525-9140 x28652 or email sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

University/Faculty/Department Statements:

1. Course Modification Warning

- The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check **their McMaster email** and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

2. Statement on Academic Integrity

- You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.
- Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit

with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

- It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>
- The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2. Improper collaboration in group work. 3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

3. The McMaster Student Absence Form

- The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 3 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 25% of the course grade). Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation. If you are absent for more than 3 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 25% or more of the final grade, you MUST visit your Faculty Office. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.
- For Arts & Science students: In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work." Please also see the MSAF statement on our website (<http://artsci.mcmaster.ca/forms-requests/>) and direct any questions or concerns to Shelley Anderson or Rebecca Bishop in the Arts & Science Program Office as appropriate.

4. McMaster E-mail Communication Policy

- Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of McMaster University that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

5. Department of Religious Studies Assignment Submission Policy

- Staff in the office of the Department of Religious Studies will neither date-stamp nor receive papers and other assignments.

Course Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic and Reading</i>	<i>Assessment Component</i>
1 Sept. 6	<i>Course Introduction</i>	
Sept. 9	<i>Course Orientation: Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion</i>	
2 Sept. 13	<p><i>Course Orientation: Introduction to the Course Questions</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p>1. Kallistos Ware, “The Way of the Ascetics: Negative or Affirmative?” in Wimbush, Vincent and Richard Valantasis. 2002. <i>Asceticism</i>, pp. 3–15, available as an electronic resource at Mills: http://catalogue.mcmaster.ca/catalogue/Record/1964453</p> <p>2. Mahatma Gandhi, <i>An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth</i>, pp. 47–50, 134–137, 171–179, 223–228, 267–278, available as an electronic resource at Mills: http://catalogue.mcmaster.ca/catalogue/Record/1436235</p>	
Sept. 16	<p><i>The Idea of Asceticism and Renunciation; Introduction to Vedic Religion and the Vedic Worldview</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p>1. Wendy Doniger, <i>The Rig Veda</i> (CP, pp. 1–14)</p>	
3 Sept. 20	<p>**Tutorials Start Monday, September 19**</p> <p><i>The Problem of Renunciation in late Vedic and early Classical sources</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p>1. Patrick Olivelle, “Ascetic Withdrawal or Social Engagement” in Donald Lopez, Ed. <i>Religions of India in Practice</i>, (CP, pp. 15–22)</p>	Discussion Post 1
Sept. 23	<p><i>One Orthodox Solution: Varṇa-āśrama-dharma</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <p>1. from <i>The Laws of Manu</i>, chapters 2, 3, 6, available as an electronic resource: http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/manu.htm</p>	

<p>4 Sept. 27</p> <p>Sept. 30</p>	<p><i>The Power of Asceticism</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from J. A. B. van Buitenen, <i>The Mahābhārata</i> (CP, pp. 23–25)</p> <p>2. from I. V. Peterson, <i>Arjuna's Asceticism</i> (CP, pp. 27–35)</p> <p><i>A Second Orthodox Solution: The Synthesis of the Bhagavadgītā</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from <i>The Bhagavadgītā</i>, chapters 2–6 (download PDF file from A2L)</p>	<p>Discussion Post 2</p>
<p>5 Oct. 4</p> <p>Oct. 7</p>	<p><i>Synthesis of Weeks 1–5</i></p> <p>**Class Cancelled - Instructor Away**</p>	<p>Reflection Paper</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>**Midterm Break**</p>	
<p>7 Oct. 18</p> <p>Oct. 21</p>	<p><i>Introduction to Buddhism: The Paradigmatic Life of the Buddha</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from E. H. Johnston, <i>Acts of the Buddha</i>, chapters 2–5, available as an electronic resource: http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Texts-and-Translations/Buddhacarita/</p> <p><i>The Buddha makes his Case for the Homeless Life</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from Maurice Walshe, <i>The Long Discourses of the Buddha: "The Fruits of the Homeless Life," "A Bloodless Sacrifice," and "The Great Lion's Roar"</i> (CP, pp. 37–55)</p>	<p>Discussion Post 3</p>
<p>8 Oct. 25</p>	<p><i>Buddhist Narratives of Renunciation: Jātaka Tales</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from Peter Khoroché, <i>Once the Buddha was a Monkey:</i></p>	<p>Discussion Post 4</p>

<p>Oct. 28</p>	<p>"The Tigress," "The Hare," and "Viśvamṭara" (CP, pp. 57–71)</p> <p><i>Buddhist Narratives of Renunciation: The Story of Śroṇa Koṭīkaraṇa</i></p> <p>Read: 1. Joseph LaRose, "The Story of Śroṇa Koṭīkaraṇa" (download PDF file from A2L)</p>	
<p>9 Nov. 1</p> <p>Nov. 4</p>	<p><i>Midterm Test during class time</i></p> <p><i>Nuns' Tales: The Acceptance of Women into the Community</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from I. B. Horner, <i>The Book of the Discipline</i>: "The Lesser Division X" (CP, pp. 73–75)</p> <p>2. from Thanissaro Bhikkhu, "Therīgāthā" http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/thig/thig.13.01.than.html http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/thig/thig.14.01.than.html</p> <p>3. from Rhys-Davids, "Psalms of the Sisters" http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/pos/pos15.htm</p>	<p>Midterm Test</p>
<p>10 Nov. 8</p> <p>Nov. 11</p>	<p><i>How Hard is the Homeless Life? Rules and Regulations;</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from I. B. Horner, <i>The Book of the Discipline</i>: "Defeat" (CP, pp. 77–87)</p> <p>2. Gregory Schopen, "Deaths, Funerals, and the Division of Property in a Monastic Code" (CP, pp. 89–104)</p> <p><i>Modern Narratives of Buddhist Renunciation</i></p> <p>Read: 1. William Dalrymple, "The Monk's Tale" (CP, pp. 105–119)</p>	<p>Discussion Post 5</p>
<p>11 Nov. 15</p>	<p><i>Introduction to Jainism: The Paradigmatic Life of Mahāvīra</i></p>	<p>Discussion Post 6</p>

<p>Nov. 18</p>	<p>Read: 1. from Hermann Jacobi, “The Kalpa Sūtra,” available in five consecutive files as an electronic resource: http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2281.htm http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2282.htm http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2283.htm http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2284.htm http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2285.htm</p> <p><i>Jain Stories of Renunciation – The Working of Karma</i></p> <p>Read: 1. Friedhelm Hardy, “The Story of King Yaśodhara” (CP, pp. 121–131)</p>	
<p>12 Nov. 22</p> <p>Nov. 25</p>	<p><i>Jain Stories of Renunciation – Family Ties</i></p> <p>Read: 1. Phyllis Granoff, “Durgilā” (CP, pp. 133–140)</p> <p>2. Phyllis Granoff, “The Prince Who Loved Sweetmeats” (CP, pp. 141–143)</p> <p>3. Phyllis Granoff, “Sundarī” (CP, pp. 145–147)</p> <p><i>Jain Stories of Renunciation – Obstructions to Proper Practice</i></p> <p>Read: 1. Phyllis Granoff, “Maheśvaradatta” (CP, pp. 149–150)</p> <p>2. Phyllis Granoff, “Kuberadatta and Kuberadattā” (CP, pp. 151–153)</p>	<p>Discussion Post 7</p>
<p>13 Nov. 29</p>	<p><i>Jain Ascetic Practices and their Benefits</i></p> <p>Read: 1. from Hermann Jacobi, “The Ācārāṅga Sūtra,” available in three consecutive files as an electronic resource: http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2261.htm http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2262.htm http://www.sacred-texts.com/jai/sbe22/sbe2263.htm</p>	<p>Essay</p>

Dec. 2	2. from Joseph LaRose, “The Aupapātika Sūtra” (download PDF file from A2L) <i>Modern Narratives of Jain Renunciation</i> Watch: “The Last Life of Nirmala”	
14 Dec. 6	<i>Last class – Catch Up, Review and Exam Preparation</i>	

1. Asceticism/Renunciation Reflection Paper (Options 1 & 2) or Report (Option 3)

750–1000 words, 10% of final grade

Due: Thursday, October 6 at 23:59 in the appropriate dropbox on A2L as a PDF file

Purpose: To reflect critically on aspects of asceticism and renunciation by drawing on your own experience, by reflecting on Gandhi’s “experiments with truth,” or by researching a particular ascetic practice. Be sure to include some consideration of religion (even if only on moral values) when writing up your assignment.

Formal Requirements:

1. double spaced
2. numbered pages
3. 12 point font
4. word count at end of document
5. no title page (title, name and student number on upper right side of first page)
6. in-text citations of all non-original material
7. bibliography at end of document
8. Turabian format for citations and bibliography (see guide on A2L)
9. document submitted as a PDF in appropriate dropbox on A2L

Choose one of the following three options:

1. Experiment for one week with some kind of ascetic or renunciatory behaviour. For example, choose a vegetarian diet, or if a vegetarian already, become a vegan (see vegan.org). Or, abstain completely from the use of certain language in your daily discourse. Choose a suitable day or days and undertake a vow of silence (includes instant messaging). Try going to bed at 9pm and waking up at 4am for a week. Use your imagination! There are any number of relatively simple behaviour changes you can undertake. You should feel free to modify any of the above or come up with your own. There is no need to get approval from either your TA or me. ****Please refrain from undertaking any behaviour that may be detrimental to your health and/or well-being!****

You should take the next few days to decide what you would like to do. Once you have made your decision, make a promise – look at yourself in the mirror, or find a friend/parent/roommate, and make your decision formal, or even public, in some way. You may want to keep a journal of your experiment(s). This can be a record of a single day or it may consist of entries from several days. When you are done, write about the experience (use your journal entries in your paper if you want to). Was it difficult? In what ways? How did others react to your behaviour? You may want to undertake the same behaviour change with a friend. If you do form a “community of renouncers,” do you think that being part of a community made a difference? If you were not able to keep your vow, why? What do you think would have made it easier to undertake/complete? Did your asceticism/renunciation accomplish anything, i.e., did it have a defined goal? Was this goal personal or communal? If you were given a do-over, would you have done anything differently?

When you write up your reflection paper, you should consider some of the ideas that are expressed in the Kallistos Ware reading from September 14. His paper introduces some of the basic ideas about asceticism and renunciation that we will return to throughout the course. This paper should be the only work you cite.

2. Consider Gandhi’s rationales for asceticism and the practices he undertook in light of the presentation of asceticism in the Kallistos Ware reading. Although written to be part of a cross-cultural examination of asceticism, the Ware reading is clearly written from a Western and Christian perspective. Do you think this bias makes this reading inapplicable to Eastern, non-Christian asceticism? What sorts of comments do you think that Ware might have about Gandhi’s practices? And what might Gandhi say about Ware’s presentation of asceticism? You may want to consider whether there the two presentations of asceticism share any features. Are they working towards the same goals? Do they use the same methods? If not, how do they differ? For this option, these two readings should be the only ones you cite.

3. Choose a renunciatory/ascetic practice from any South Asian religious tradition and write a report. The practice you choose may be from any time period, including contemporary. In your report, describe the practice (What is done? How is it done? Who does it? Where is it done?), account for its origins and continuation (Why is it done? What benefits does it produce for the individual/community?), consider how it may have changed over time and/or space (Is it practiced differently now than 2000 years ago? Is it practiced differently in North America than in Asia? How so? Why so?). This option requires thorough research into a particular practice as well as careful documentation of sources (i.e., citations and full bibliography of sources).

2. Discussion Board Posts

150–200 words each (minimum 5 submissions), 10% of final grade

Due: 9:00 a.m. Monday in Weeks 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 in the appropriate discussion boards on A2L. Please do not attach documents – enter your posts directly onto the

discussion board. Each post will be graded out of 2. You may continue to submit posts until a) you reach a mark of 10, or b) there are no more opportunities to post.

Purpose: To have students prepare for class by reading and reflecting on assigned material before it is discussed in class or tutorial. That is, you will be posting on material that will be discussed in class later that week. Ideally, this exercise will help focus your interests and lead to a viable essay topic.

In your posts, you should aim to demonstrate some sort of engagement with the readings. For example, you might write about something new you learned in lecture that is reflected in the primary sources; you might write about something that you thought you knew that changed as a result of your reading; you might write about an idea that you find interesting that you think bears further investigation. You may also comment on other students' posts. The engagement that you demonstrate can take many forms and the above suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive.

I would advise you to strenuously avoid summarizing the reading. Please assume that your reader is familiar with the assigned reading. You may use brief quotations or refer to certain events in the reading, but do so only to further the comments that you make.

3. Essay/Project

1750–2250 words, 30% of final grade

Due: Wednesday, November 30 at 23:59 in the appropriate dropbox on A2L as PDF file

Purpose: To have students carry out research on a particular topic related to the course content; to have students articulate that research in a coherent, well written argument.

Formal Requirements:

1. double spaced
2. numbered pages
3. 12 point font
4. word count at end of document
5. no title page (title, name and student number on upper right side of first page)
6. in-text citations of all non-original material
7. bibliography at end of document
8. Turabian format for citations and bibliography (see guide on A2L)
9. document submitted as a PDF in appropriate dropbox on A2L

Your topic should be related to the central questions of the course. Furthermore, it should be focused on one or more of the religious traditions of South Asia. If you are unsure of how to formulate your topic, or if you are unsure of the viability of your topic, please see either your teaching assistant or me.

Basic Essay Format:

Your essay should have a title that accurately describes the topic you have chosen. Your opening paragraph should introduce the topic and outline your argument (including your thesis statement). Logically organized body paragraphs, in which you provide and discuss evidence in support of your argument, should follow. Your essay should end with a concluding paragraph that recapitulates the argument of your paper.

There should be a bibliography that lists all the works you cite in your essay. You must cite any quotations taken from primary and secondary sources. As well, any idea that is not your own, e.g., an idea that you paraphrase in your own words, must be properly cited. There is a Turabian citation guide on A2L. Please use this guide for your citations and your bibliography.

****If you are in any way unsure of how or when to cite sources, please consult either your teaching assistant or me.****

Suggested Essay Topics

You are free to formulate your own essay topic. If you choose to formulate your own essay topic, please avoid vague or overly broad topics. Limit your topic to something that can be covered in 1750–2250 words. You should avoid phrases like “Buddhists say X” - Which Buddhists? At what time? Where? The following topics are only suggestions. Each topic has been broadly constructed. You will need to focus more narrowly on a sub-topic within the larger suggested topic. Each topic will require further reading and research.

1. Read J. E. Llewellyn’s “The Autobiography of a Female Renouncer,” pages 462–472 in *Religions of India in Practice* (on reserve at Mills). Consider the issue of female asceticism/renunciation within the religious traditions of South Asia. You may choose to focus on one tradition only, or you may choose to compare this issue across more than one tradition. Do the traditions treat women’s renunciation similarly or not? What are the reasons for this?

2. Read “The Story of Śroṇa Koṭīkaraṇa” (download PDF from A2L). How are renunciation and asceticism depicted in this Buddhist text? What are the rewards? Why are the various characters that Śroṇa Koṭīkaraṇa meets in their various circumstances? How do the fates of these characters affect Śroṇa Koṭīkaraṇa?

3. Read “Cullavagga VII,” pages 253–290 in *The Book of the Discipline* (on reserve at Mills). This text purports to describe schism in the early Buddhist community. One of the reasons for the schism is the role of asceticism and ascetic practices. Consider the place of asceticism and ascetic practices in different Buddhist traditions. You may want to consider the work of Gregory Schopen when you construct your argument.

4. Read the “Second Lecture, called The Destruction of Karman,” pages 249–261 of *Jaina Sutras*, volume 2 (on reserve at Mills). Why is this text so concerned with the concept of karma?

5. In two of the South Asian traditions we have considered, the traditional founder engaged in ascetic and/or renunciatory practices. To what extent have these traditional lives been paradigmatic for the traditions? To what extent do later followers try to emulate the lives of the founder? Or, are the examples of the founders understood to be too difficult to try to emulate? If so, why?

6. Is there some sort of essential relationship between South Asian religions and asceticism/renunciation? Or is it this relationship a product of a particular time and place? How do historically later religious traditions such as Islam and Sikhism regard asceticism and renunciation?

Some general questions to consider:

If there is some sort of essential relationship between South Asian religions and asceticism/renunciation, how far does this relationship extend? Does it begin or stop at certain points in history? Did this relationship change over time? Does it extend to all South Asian religions? If there is some sort of essential relationship between South Asian religions and asceticism/renunciation, is it unique to South Asian religions or is this relationship a part of religion in general (the world’s major religions)?

Is there something essentially religious about renunciation/asceticism? For example, what differentiates religious fasting from going on a diet? Is yoga done for its health benefits the same as yoga done to prepare the body for meditation? If a scientific researcher concludes that mindfulness-based stress reduction is ineffective, are there any implications a Buddhist who meditates?