Lectures: Mondays and Thursdays 15:30-16:20 in CNH B107

Tutorials: T01 - Thursdays 16:30-17:20 in KTH B101
T02 - Tuesdays 09:30-10:20 in KTH 106
T03 - Thursdays 13:30-14:20 in KTH B101
T04 - Fridays 08:30-09:20 in KTH B101

Instructor: Joseph LaRose
Office: UH B126B
Office hours: Thursdays from 12:30-14:00 and by appointment
Email: laroseja@mcmaster.ca
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 x23109

TA: Christopher Handy
Office: UH B120
Office Hours: By appointment
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TA: Andrew Case
Office: UH B123
Office Hours: Wednesdays 14:30-15:20
Email: caseat@mcmaster.ca

Course Description

• Religious Studies/Arts&Science 3UU3 is a half-year course in which students read widely from a variety of Buddhist traditions in East Asia.

• We read Buddhist texts covering the 2000 year history of Buddhism in East Asia.

• Students are introduced to the historical, religious and social contexts of the traditions they are studying.

• This iteration of the course will examine the Buddhism of East Asia topically. We will start by looking at history and tradition in both South and East Asia. We will then consider topics such as authority, belief, practice, gender, death and modernity. Using these terms, we will develop an appreciation for their importance both to the study of East Asian Buddhism and to the academic study of religion.

Course Objectives - Upon completion of this course:

• Students will become familiar with a wide range of texts drawn from the 2000 year history of Buddhism in East Asia.

• Students will become familiar with a variety of topics within the 2000 year history of Buddhism in East Asia.

• Students will become familiar with the academic study of religion, especially as it pertains to the religions of Asia.
Evaluation

- **1 Midterm Test (20%)** – Students will write one in-class test designed to measure acquisition and understanding of course content.
- **Final Exam (30%)** – 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.
- **Discussion Board Posts (5%)** – Students will respond to selected readings before those readings are discussed in class. You are required to post five times during the term. These posts will be marked on a completion basis. You are allowed to post more than 5 times, but the mark cannot exceed 5/5. Further instructions can be found on page 7 of this syllabus.
- **Paper One (15%)** – Each student will hand in a 1000 word paper (+/- 50 words) on a topic of the student’s choice. Further instructions, including suggested topics, can be found on pages 8 of this syllabus.
- **Paper Two (20%)** – Each student will hand in a 1500 word paper (+/- 100 words) on a topic of the student’s choice. Further instructions, including suggested topics, can be found on pages 9–11 of this syllabus.
- **Attendance, preparation and participation (10%)** – Regular preparation, attendance and participation are essential for the acquisition of any new knowledge. The teaching assistants will determine this portion of your mark at their discretion. They may require additional activities (e.g., tutorial presentations, brief reports, leading discussion, etc.) as part of this mark.

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](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)
• Please check the A2L page for this course regularly. I will use A2L to provide reminders and to focus your attention on particular aspects of the readings.

Required Texts (Available at the Campus Store)


Late Submission/Missed Tests

• Papers handed in late will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day unless acceptable documentation is provided.
• A midterm test missed as the result of a documented absence may be written at a later date.

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 his/her 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) (http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 5 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 30% 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 5 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 30% 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: If you are absent for more than 5 days, have missed academic work worth 30% or more, or exceed one request per term, you must see Shelley Anderson or Rebecca Bishop in the Arts & Science Program office (C-105). You will be required to provide supporting documentation.

4. Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

- Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic and Reading</th>
<th>Assessment Component</th>
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| 1    | **Course Introduction and Orientation**  
     | *Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion*  
     | *Read: no reading* |  |
| 2    | **Tutorials start this week**  
     | *History and Tradition (India)*  
     | *Read: no reading*  
     | *History and Tradition (India)*  
     | *Read: Lotus Sutra, 3–44* |  |
| 3    | *History and Tradition (China)*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 22–48*  
     | *History and Tradition (China)*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 223–237* | Discussion Post 1 |
| 4    | *Authority and Doctrine*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 238–263*  
     | *Authority and Doctrine*  
     | *Read: Lotus Sutra, 47–92* | Discussion Post 2 |
| 5    | *Legitimation and Power*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 270–289*  
     | *Legitimation and Power*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 497–507, 515–533* | Discussion Post 3 |
| 6    | *Legitimation and Power*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 672–697*  
     | *Legitimation and Power*  
     | *Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 698–718* | Paper 1 |
| 7    | **Reading Week – No Classes** |  |
| 8    | *Belief and Practice*  
     | *Read: Lotus Sutra, 179–216, 287–294*  
<pre><code> | **Midterm Test During Class Time** | Midterm Test |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read/Watch/Read Notes</th>
<th>Discussion/Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 2</td>
<td>Belief and Practice&lt;br&gt;Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 264–270</td>
<td>Post 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 5</td>
<td>Belief and Practice&lt;br&gt;Watch: To the Land of Bliss (in-class video)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 9</td>
<td>Belief and Practice&lt;br&gt;Read: Lotus Sutra, 257–283</td>
<td>Post 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 12</td>
<td>Death and Decline&lt;br&gt;Read: Hojoki, 29–78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 16</td>
<td>Death and Decline&lt;br&gt;Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 719–736</td>
<td>Post 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 23</td>
<td>Modernity and Conflict – <em>The Persecution of Buddhism in Japan</em>&lt;br&gt;Read: no reading</td>
<td>Paper 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 30</td>
<td>Modernity and Conflict – <em>The Cultural Revolution in China</em>&lt;br&gt;Read: no reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 2</td>
<td>Modernity and Conflict – <em>China and Tibet</em>&lt;br&gt;Read: no reading</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 6</td>
<td>Last class – Catch Up, Review and Exam Preparation</td>
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Discussion Board Posts

150–200 words each, 5% of final grade, discussion post grades will accumulate until one of the following two circumstances obtain:

1. there are no more opportunities to post
2. your mark reaches 5/5

Due: There are six opportunities to post to the discussion board (weeks 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11). Your posts must be added to the appropriate dropbox on A2L by 12:30pm on the Monday starting each week, i.e., three hours before Monday's class.

Please do not attach documents – enter your posts directly onto the discussion board.

Purpose: To have students prepare for class and tutorial by reading and reflecting on some of the assigned material. Ideally, this exercise will help you focus your interests and lead to a viable essay topic.

Grading: The discussion posts will be marked on a completion basis. In other words, each post will receive 1 mark as long as it fulfills the following three criteria:

1. it is at least 150 words long (include a word count)
2. it is relevant to the week’s assigned readings
3. it is more than a summary of the reading

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. The engagement that you demonstrate can take many forms and the above suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive.

You may comment on any one of the readings for the weeks noted above, or you may comment on more than one.

Your posts must be more than a summary of the reading. You may assume that your reader is familiar with the events of the story. You may use brief quotations or refer to certain events in the reading, but do so only to further the comments that you make.
Paper One

1000 words (+/- 50 words), 15% of final grade
Due: Wednesday, February 11 at 23:59 in the appropriate dropbox on A2L as a 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 argument.

Formal Requirements: double spaced, numbered pages, 12 point font; word count at end of document; do not include a title page (title, name and student number on upper right of first page), in-text citations of all non-original material, bibliography at end of document.

You are welcome to devise your own topic in consultation with your TA or instructor. Your topic should be of some relevance to the study of East Asian Buddhism.

Suggested Topic. Please consider the following readings:

“The Introduction of Buddhism” (Sources of East Asian Tradition, pp. 223–237), particularly “Admonitions of the Fanwang Sūtra” (pp. 234–237)

“Schools of Buddhist Practice” (Sources of East Asian Tradition, pp. 264–289), particularly “The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch” (pp. 273–279)


For this paper, please consider the phenomenon of apocrypha, especially as it applies to the assimilation of Buddhism to China. Please think about the following questions: Does apocrypha have a role in the adaptation of a religious tradition to a new setting? Does apocrypha occupy a secondary status relative to non-apocryphal texts? Should it occupy a secondary status? Or, should apocrypha be regarded on equal footing with non-apocryphal texts?

In preparing your paper, please make sure to take a stand on the questions asked. In other words, your paper should be argumentative, not descriptive. You should not need to do much, if any, additional research for this paper. However, your argument should take into consideration all of the suggested readings.
Paper Two

1500 words (+/- 100 words), 20% of final grade
Due: Wednesday, March 25 at 23:59 in the appropriate dropbox on A2L as a 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 argument.

Formal Requirements: double spaced, numbered pages, 12 point font; word count at end of document; do not include a title page (title, name and student number on upper right of first page), in-text citations of all non-original material, bibliography at end of document.

You are welcome to devise your own topic in consultation with your TA or instructor. Your topic should be of some relevance to the study of East Asian Buddhism.

Suggested Topic 1 of 3. Please consider the following readings:

“Zen Buddhism” (Sources of East Asian Tradition, pp. 782–800)


For this paper, please consider the phenomena of religious experience, especially as it applies to Zen Buddhism. Please think about the following questions: If the experience of Zen is immediate, as Suzuki puts it, can it ever be adequately described? Are there limits to Sharf’s critique of Suzuki? In other words, is there some sort of authentic religious experience that remains despite Sharf’s historical situating of the rhetoric of Zen immediacy? Even further, are there limits to what the academic study of religion can capture and describe?
In preparing your paper, please make sure to take a stand on some aspect of the questions asked. In other words, your paper should be argumentative, not descriptive. You should not need to do much, if any, additional research for this paper. However, your argument should take into consideration all of the suggested readings.

**Suggested Topic 2 of 3.** Please consider the following readings:

“Shinto in Medieval Japan” (*Sources of East Asian Tradition*, pp. 801–14), particularly the editor’s introduction (pp. 801–806)


For this paper, I want you to think about the term *religion*. How should we think about this term? How should we define this term? Is a tradition defined primarily by its doctrinal positions, or by its practices? How should we think about the history of religions and the relationships between traditions?

In preparing your paper, please make sure to take a stand on some aspect of the questions asked. In other words, your paper should be argumentative, not descriptive. You should not need to do much, if any, additional research for this paper topic. However, your argument should take into consideration all of the suggested readings.

**Suggested Topic 3 of 3.** Please consider the following readings:

Lotus Sutra, especially pp. 179–185.

Vimalakirti Sutra, especially pp. 123–131. Access this text at:
(http://www.bdk.or.jp/pdf/bdk/digitaldl/dBET_Srimala_Vimalakirti_2004.pdf)


For this topic, please consider the issue of gender in East Asian Buddhism. What role does the term play in the two Buddhist sūtras? To what extent is the term a rhetorical strategy that is useful for thinking through the texts’ other concerns? To what extent do you think that the use of the term demonstrates concern for the lesser position of women in the Classical world?

In preparing your paper, please make sure to take a stand on some aspect of the questions asked. In other words, your paper should be argumentative, not descriptive. You should not need to do much, if any, additional research for this paper topic. However, your argument should take into consideration all of the suggested readings.