Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays 16:30–17:20 in KTH 104

Tutorials: T01 - Mondays 13:30–14:20 in KTH B101
T02 - Tuesdays 12:30–13:20 in UH B126G

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: Yara Farran
Office: TBD
Office Hours: TBD
Email: farranyh@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.

Required Texts (Available at the Campus Store)


**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.

• **Response Papers (10%)** – Students will respond to selected readings before those readings are discussed in class. Further instructions can be found on page 7 of this syllabus.

• **Paper Proposal (10%)** – Each student will hand in a paper proposal. Further instructions can be found on page 8 of this syllabus.

• **Paper (30%)** – Each student will hand in a 2000 word paper (+/- 200 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. Yara 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.

**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.

**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.

**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) 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. 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Introduction and Orientation</td>
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| 2    | **Tutorials start this week**  
**Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion**  
Read: no reading  
**History and Tradition (The Mahāyāna in India)**  
Read: no reading | |
| 3    | **History and Tradition - The Lotus Sutra**  
Read: Lotus Sutra, chapters 1 and 2 (3–44)  
**History and Tradition (Pre-Buddhist China)**  
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 22–40, 49–60 | Response 1 |
| 4    | **History and Tradition (Buddhism Comes to China)**  
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 223–237  
**Authority and Doctrine (The Tiantai School in China)**  
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 238–263 | Response 2 |
| 5    | **Authority and Doctrine - The Lotus Sutra**  
Read: Lotus Sutra, chapters 3 and 4 (47–92)  
**Legitimation and Power (The Chan School in China)**  
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 270–289 | Response 3 |
| 6    | **Legitimation and Power (Buddhism Comes to Korea)**  
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 497–507, 515–533  
**Legitimation and Power (The Tendai School in Japan)**  
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 672–697 | Response 4 |
| 7    | **Reading Week – No Classes** | |
| 8    | **Midterm Test During Classtime** | Midterm |
**Belief and Practice – The Lotus Sutra**

**Belief and Practice (Pureland Buddhism in China)**
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 264–270

**Belief and Practice (Contemporary Pureland Buddhism)**
Watch: To the Land of Bliss (in-class video)

**Death and Decline**
Read: Hojoki, 29–78

**Death and Decline (Pureland Buddhism in Japan)**
Read: Sources of East Asian Tradition, 719–736

**Death and Decline (Japanese Nichiren Buddhism)**
Read: no reading

**Modernity and Conflict (The Persecution of Buddhism in Japan)**
Read: no reading

**Modernity and Conflict ( Married Monks in Korea)**

**Modernity and Conflict (Japanese Temple Buddhism)**

**Modernity and Conflict – China and Tibet**
Read: no reading

**Last class – Catch Up, Review and Exam Preparation**
Response Papers

2 x 400 words, 5% each, 10% of final grade

Due: There are six opportunities to submit response papers (weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10). Your responses must be submitted as PDF files to the appropriate dropbox on A2L by 11:59pm on the Sunday before each week. Each student will have three opportunities to submit. I will use the best two submissions to determine the 10% grade.

Submission Schedule

Week 3 (due January 17 at 11:59pm) – Last Name A–L
Week 4 (due January 24 at 11:59pm) – Last Name M–Z
Week 5 (due January 31 at 11:59pm) – Last Name A–L
Week 6 (due February 7 at 11:59pm) – Last Name M–Z
Week 9 (due February 28 at 11:59pm) – Last Name A–L
Week 10 (due March 6 at 11:59pm) – Last Name M–Z

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

In your response papers, you should aim to demonstrate some sort of thoughtful, academic 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 in no way exhaustive.

Please note that there is a difference between a response paper and a reflection. Avoid personal anecdotes, e.g., “The reading reminds me of the time that my grandmother died and we all had to gather around a sing hymns.” Please also avoid facile comparisons, e.g., “When we look at the birth of the Buddha and the birth of Jesus, we see that they both had miraculous births.”

Please assiduously avoid summarizing 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.

Please submit your response papers in the form of well edited prose. All of the mechanics of writing will be considered when the responses are graded.
Paper Proposal

10% of final grade
Due: Monday, March 14 at 23:59 in the appropriate dropbox on A2L as a PDF file

Formal Requirements: double spaced, numbered pages, 12 point font; 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, Turabian style bibliography at end of document.

The purpose of the paper proposal is develop students’ topic formulation, research and argument construction skills. Although the due date for the paper proposal is March 14, students are encouraged to submit their proposals earlier.

Your paper proposal must include the following:

1. An outline of the argument you plan to make. Include your thesis statement and a description of your argument. What do you plan to say in each of your paragraphs? How will each paragraph contribute to your argument? What do you think you will conclude? Are there any counter-arguments that you can anticipate?

2. A bibliography of relevant sources. Each of the sources listed in your bibliography should be annotated. That is, each bibliographic entry should be followed by a brief outline of the content and/or argument of the source, and a description of the relevance of each source to your paper.

The paper proposal is intended to help you start your paper early. It is also intended to help you understand that researching and writing a paper is a process. Thus, you should not feel limited as to how much you may submit. If you are able to submit more (e.g., a first paragraph, a full draft), please feel free to do so.
Paper

2000 words (+/- 200 words), 30% of final grade
Due: Wednesday, March 30 at 23:59 in the appropriate dropbox on A2L as a PDF file

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, Turabian style bibliography at end of document.

The purposes of the paper are to have students carry out research on a particular topic related to the course content and to have students articulate this research in a coherent, well-structured argument.

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** - Please consider the following readings:


“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: What role does apocrypha have in the adaptation of a religious tradition to a new setting? Does apocrypha occupy a secondary status relative to non-apocryphal texts? Or, is apocrypha be regarded on equal footing with non-apocryphal texts? In what ways is the status of apocrypha typical or problematic for the study of religion?

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. Your argument should take into consideration the suggested readings plus additional sources you find in the course of your research.
**Suggested Topic 2** - 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 im-mediate, 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 im-mediacy? 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 the questions asked. In other words, your paper should be argumentative, not descriptive. Your argument should take into consideration the suggested readings plus additional sources you find in the course of your research.

**Suggested Topic 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? Or, are there other factors to consider when we define a tradition? 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 the questions asked. In other words, your paper should be argumentative, not descriptive. Your argument should take into consideration the suggested readings plus additional sources you find in the course of your research.

**Suggested Topic 4** - Please consider the following readings:

Lotus Sutra, especially pp. 179–185.


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

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. Your argument should take into consideration the suggested readings plus additional sources you find in the course of your research.
Books on Reserve at Mills Memorial Library


