

PHIL 3500: Buddhist Philosophy

Meeting Location: TBD

Meeting Time: TBD

Instructor: Colin J. Lewis (clewis5@uccs.edu)

Office: COH 4055

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:

Students will study several forms of Buddhism, learning their origins, differences, how they fit together, and how this ancient tradition can apply to contemporary issues. In particular, students will engage with questions concerning such topics as the nature of existence, causality, knowledge and knowing, theism, and ethics. Additionally, we will discuss overlaps between Asian Buddhism and so-called “western” philosophy. Ultimately, students will be asked to synthesize all of the knowledge acquired over the course of the semester and present a mature, defensible argument supporting a thesis addressing an issue pertinent to a topic in Buddhist Philosophy or the application thereof.

Course Objectives:

In this course, we aim to (1) broaden one’s knowledge of the history of philosophy in the Buddhist tradition broadly construed; (2) derive and critically evaluate the metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical effects of the variety of philosophical positions originating in Buddhism; (3) write arguments either challenging or supporting the claims we consider in the course; (4) broaden a general knowledge base of contemporary applications of Buddhist Philosophies.

By the end of the course, students will ...

- improve their ability to think clearly and logically.
- improve their ability to write clearly and persuasively.
- improve their ability to recognize and evaluate arguments.
- understand a wide range of basic philosophical concepts.
- be exposed to a wide range of philosophical writings on the course topics.

Compass Curriculum: This course is part of the Compass Curriculum. The Compass Curriculum is the signature undergraduate education program at UCCS for all majors and all colleges. This program endeavors to provide you with the tools for professional and personal success that you will need when you graduate. The program includes skills that employers say that they want students to have from their education (critical thinking, oral and written communication, ethics, innovation, problem-solving, understanding inclusiveness, and sustainability).

***Writing Intensive**

Writing Intensive courses help you learn how to:

- Approach writing as a process.
- Revise your written work based on feedback.
- Provide useful feedback to your classmates about their written work.
- Refine your critical and analytical writing skills.

Essential Learning Outcomes:

- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate quantitative and qualitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Apply and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, including interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary research.
- Communicate information effectively through writing
- Demonstrate the core ethical principles and responsible methods of your discipline.

***Inclusiveness**

Inclusiveness courses help you learn about:

- The dynamics and systemic and historical aspects of inclusion and exclusion (e.g., meritocratic hierarchy in Confucianism, universal caring in Mohism, and the caste systems of the Indian tradition)
- Ways that inclusivity (and exclusivity) are generated at local, national, and global levels (e.g., conception of unity or "oneness" in Vedanta, existential dependence in Buddhism)

Essential Learning Outcomes:

- Articulate origins, influences, and impacts of inclusion and exclusion within societies.
- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate quantitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Gather, critically analyze and evaluate qualitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts.
- Apply and integrate knowledge from a range of disciplines, including interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary research.
- Demonstrate the core ethical principles and responsible methods of your discipline.

Required Texts

[-What the Buddha Taught, Rahula](#)

Course Requirements / Grade Breakdown

Attendance (20%), In-Class Contributions (20%), Weekly Journal (20%), Term Papers (20%), Final Paper (20%)

The structure of this course is arranged around several topics (see the Course Schedule for details). For each topic, students are expected to make substantive contributions both in-class and via assignments submitted online.

Attendance – 20%

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. Absences are excused only in cases of emergency, illness (with medical documentation), or in circumstances deemed reasonable by the instructor.

Participation – 20%

Philosophy is traditionally a practice that involves a great deal of discourse. Our class should be no different: students are expected to complete homework assignments and participate in discussion and be capable of answering questions when asked. Toward this end, portions of some classes will be set aside specifically for small- and large-group discussion periods. During these times, students will be expected to collaborate and contribute in conversations regarding core arguments and concepts presented in readings and lectures. All discussion and class interactions must be respectful in nature.

Weekly Journal – 20%

Good philosophy often requires reflection, exploration, and creativity. Accordingly, in addition to more formal writing assignments, participation in this course also requires the completion of weekly (one-page-ish) journals. You might think of this as the more "laid back" form of writing that we will do in this course, as it allows you to get your ideas out into the open in an informal setting. While in short and long papers you are expected to perform critical analysis, the journals are more akin to a play space or drawing board, where you engage freely with the weekly material and express ideas about what you find interesting, why, and what kinds of questions you might want to engage with on the discussion board or in the formal papers.

When you write in your journal, try to start yourself off by asking a deep question about the material, or perhaps by bringing up an issue that you do not quite understand. After you do this, keep pushing the matter: Why is this thing interesting or confusing to you? What do you think could be done to engage or resolve the question more thoroughly? (continued on next page)

Again, the journals need not be formal scholarship, but they should be taken seriously as another avenue for working with the material. Accordingly, journals will be scored roughly 50% on completion, and 50% on level of engagement demonstrated.

Term papers (20%) and Final Paper (20%)

One way in which students will be held accountable for the readings, and also contribute to the development of class discussions, will be by a series of writing assignments. There will be three term papers (6-8 pages) due over the course of the semester, the best two of which will count toward the final grade. The length requirements listed are guidelines about the minimum and maximum length of the paper, but you should aim for this ballpark range. The papers must be turned in via Canvas according to the submission guidelines in this document. These assignments are designed to require you to engage closely with a single issue, carefully elaborated through your analysis. They should utilize an essay structure described in the course's writing guide: introduction, exposition, and analysis. Remember to use assigned readings and to list the relevant page numbers with your engagements so that I may follow your topic and argument (and, of course, to avoid plagiarism). Feel free to compare different positions you have engaged with over the semester. Following the deadline for submission, each paper will be evaluated by the instructor and feedback will be provided for the purpose of revision.

For a **final paper** (8-10 pages), students will resubmit a revised version of the paper of their choosing. It is also recommended to send a draft of your paper (or at least an abstract or outline) no less than a week before the deadline so the instructor can provide comments for improvement.

Submission Guidelines / Warnings for ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

- (1) Anything that you submit must be in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. I do not accept .wps or other file formats. If for any reason file attachments do not work, you may copy/paste the text of your assignment into the empty text box on the submission page for each assignment.
- (2) I do not accept e-mailed assignments unless otherwise specified. Please submit through the relevant assignment listed on the Canvas page.
- (3) Save your files as, "LastName_FirstName_AssignmentName/#" so that I can identify your assignments if I need to download them from Canvas.
- (4) 12-point font, standard typeface, double-spaced, and 1-inch margins.
- (5) Uploaded to the 'Files' tab is a document entitled 'Writing Manual.' Please read this document, as it provides detailed guidelines for how to write an effective paper in this course.
- (6) All submitted written work will be scrutinized for plagiarism by the Turnitin software, as well as by the instructor. Any work found to have been plagiarized will be subject to penalization. See the section entitled "Plagiarism" for more details.

Grading Scale

A 100-93 / A- 92-90 / B+ 89-87 / B 86-83 / B- 82-80 / C+ 79-77 / C 76-73 / C- 72-70 / D+ 69-67 / D 66-63 / D- 62-60 / Fail <60

Philosophy and Personal Beliefs

This is a philosophy course, which means (in part) that we will examine various arguments concerning moral education in particular and morality in general. Some of these arguments may directly contradict your personal beliefs about these issues. In fact, I expect this to happen. Nevertheless, I expect you to think about and assess claims from various perspectives that may be different from your own.

One method you may find helpful to adopt is to “try on” arguments that directly contradict your first intuitions. By this method, you will find the most compelling arguments in support of the claims with which you disagree – when you dismantle them, you will have a strong argument to support your own view.

One of my fundamental goals in this class is for you to enhance your understanding of different perspectives and your ability to critically analyze those viewpoints. Your grade will be based on your understanding of the readings, the philosophical concepts and tools they employ, and your analysis. It will not be based on personal conclusions.

Schedule (Sample dates for Fall 2019)

Week 1 (AUG 29) – Introduction

Readings

-*Milinda Panha* Ch. 1-6

-Writing Manual

Agenda

-Lecture: Origins of Early Buddhism

-Practice: Discussion of readings

-Homework: Bring in three questions for next week's discussion

Week 2 (SEP 5) – Buddhism's Diversification

Readings

-BBC 'Religions' Series on Buddhism: '[Buddhism at a Glance](#),' '[Theravada Buddhism](#),' '[Mahayana Buddhism](#),' '[Pure Land Buddhism](#),' '[Zen Buddhism](#),' '[Vajrayana/Tibetan Buddhism](#),' and '[Nichiren Buddhism](#)'

Recommended viewing

-Theravada: [Vipassana, Happiness, and the Art of Living](#)

-Chan/Zen: [In zazen, I become nothing and everything becomes nothing](#)

-Vajrayana: [What is Phowa?](#)

-Nichiren: [How to chant: Nam-myoho-renge-kyo](#)

Agenda

-Lecture: Versions of Buddhism (A Brief Overview)

-Practice: Discussion

-Homework: [Zen koan](#) reflections (choose 3-4; bring with for next week)

Week 3 (SEP 12) – Buddhism's Foundations, Pt. 1

Readings

-Rahula (16 – 50, 97, 99 – 105)

Agenda

-Practice: Discussion of koan reflections

-Lecture: The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path

-Homework: Reflection paper on applicability of the FNT and NEP

Week 4 (SEP 19) – Buddhism’s Foundations, Pt. 2

Readings

- Rahula (51 – 66, 125 – 138)
- Nagarjuna’s *Mulamadhyamakakarika* (excerpts)
- Recommended: Graham Priest's "[Beyond True and False](#)"

Agenda

- Lecture: Sunyata and the Two Truths
- Practice: Analyzing *Mulamadhyamakakarika*
- Homework: N/A

Week 5 (SEP 26) – Buddhism’s Foundations, Pt. 3

Readings

- Rahula (35 – 44, 67 – 75)
- Sopa’s ‘The Special Theory of *Pratityasamutpada*’

Agenda

- Lecture: *Pratityasamutpada* and *Nirvana*
- Practice: Understanding the 12 Links
- Homework: Prepare abstract/outline/draft for first term paper

Week 6 (OCT 3) – Paper Workshop Day

Agenda

- Workshop for Term Paper 1 (come prepared)

Week 7 (OCT 10) – Buddhism and ‘Western’ Ethics

Readings

- Barnhart’s ‘Theory and Comparison in the Discussion of Buddhist Ethics’
- Recommended: ‘The Good Will and the Categorical Imperative’
- Recommended: [‘The History of Utilitarianism – The Classical Approach’](#)
- Recommended: [‘Moral Particularism’](#) (esp. sec. 1-3)

Agenda

- Lecture: Is Buddhism Novel? Is Buddhism ‘Ethical’?
- Practice: Discussion – your takeaway from the reading(s)
- Homework: Summary paper of your stance before and after discussion

Week 8 (OCT 17) – Buddhism and ‘Other’ Ethics

Readings

- Cokelet’s ‘Confucianism, Buddhism, and Virtue Ethics’
- Recommended: [‘Chinese Ethics – Confucian Ethics’](#) (sec. 2 up to 2.7)
- Recommended: [‘Virtue Ethics’](#)

Agenda

- Lecture: A Confucian, a Kantian, and a Buddhist Walk into a Bar...
- Practice: Comparative analysis of ethical approaches
- Homework: N/A

Week 9 (OCT 24) – Buddhism and Bioethics

Readings

- Keown's 'Buddhism and Medical Ethics'
- Hughes's 'Buddhist Bioethics'

Agenda

- Practice: Developing test cases for Buddhist biomedical ethics
- Practice: Exchanging ideas on test cases
- Homework: Prepare abstract/outline/draft for second term paper

Week 10 (OCT 31) – Guest lecture: Death, Dying, Buddhism

Readings

- Tibetan Book of the Dead* ([excerpts of your choosing](#))
- Recommended: Rinpoche's [The Four Points of Letting Go in the Bardo](#)

Agenda

- Guest lecture by Dr. Mary Anne Cutter (Professor, UCCS Dept. of Philosophy)
- Workshop for Term Paper 2 (come prepared)

Week 11 (NOV 7) – Buddhism and Political Theory

Readings

- Myint's 'Buddhist Political Thought'
- Moore's 'Political Theory in Canonical Buddhism'
- Recommended: Hobbes's *Leviathan* (Ch. 13-14)
- Recommended: '[Jean Jacques Rousseau – Political Philosophy](#)'

Agenda

- Lecture: Understanding the Political Landscape (Buddhist and Otherwise)
- Practice: Discussion – Is Buddhism compatible with our culture?
- Homework: Discussion prep – applications for Buddhism in political theory?

Week 12 (NOV 14) – Buddhism and Anger

Readings

- Vernezzese's 'Moderation or Middle Way'
- McWeeny's 'Liberating Anger'
- Recommended: Hakuin's 'Orategama Zokushu'

Agenda

- Lecture: The Belligerent Bodhisattva?
- Practice: Close reading of the 'Orategama' and discussion of applications of anger
- Homework: Prepare abstract/outline/draft for third term paper

Week 13 (NOV 21) – Special Topic: Genocide in Myanmar

Readings

- Aung San Suu Kyi's "Freedom from Fear"
- Recommended: [NPR series on the Plight of the Rohingya People in Myanmar](#)

Agenda

- Guest lecture by Dr. Jennifer Kling (Asst. Professor, UCCS Dept. of Philosophy)
- Workshop for Term Paper 3 (come prepared)

Week 14 (DEC 5) – Final Workshop

Readings

-N/A

Agenda

-Rework term paper (of your choice) for the final

Late Policy

No late work will be accepted. This is course policy. If you have a crisis, (e.g., you, your spouse, or your child is hospitalized or imprisoned), provide documentation and we will work around it.

Note:

Though it is not expected that the course will change after this syllabus is posted, extenuating circumstances do occur. Changes made to the course will occur at the instructor's discretion. As much advance notice will be provided as possible.

Resources for Students

Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact and register with the Disability Services Office, and provide them with documentation of your disability, so they can determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that disability accommodations cannot be provided until an accommodation letter has been given to me. Please contact Disability Services for more information about receiving accommodations at Main Hall room 105, 719-255-3354 or dservice@uccs.edu. Ida Dilwood, Director.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be grounds for failing a student from the course, as well as additional academic sanctions as defined in the Academic Honor Code. Plagiarism, the “use of distinctive ideas or words belonging to another person, without adequately acknowledging that person’s contribution” ranges from the improper use of such sources as internet materials to improper use of classmates’ notes. It is the students’ responsibility to become familiar with the various definitions and penalties for plagiarism. The webpage of the Department of History at UCCS includes detailed information on what constitutes and how to avoid plagiarism: <http://web.uccs.edu/history/toolbox/plagiarism.htm>

The Administrative Policy Statement for the University of Colorado System can be accessed online at <http://www.cusys.edu/~policies/Academic/misconduct.html>

Writing Center

UCCS offers free writing support at **The Writing Center** at Columbine Hall, room 316. Students of all skill levels can benefit from working with peer writing consultants at any stage of the writing process be it brainstorming, drafting, or final editing. The Writing Center is open for 50 minute face-to-face or online appointments from 9am to 8pm Monday through Thursday and 9am to 2pm on Friday and Saturday. Appointments can be made by visiting <http://www.uccs.edu/writingcenter/>. Call 719-255-4336 with questions about our programming and policies.

Military Deployment and Military Service:

In order to assist students who are called to active duty the Campus has compiled a set of guidelines that include information on withdrawing from courses. General information can be accessed at: <http://www.uccs.edu/~deploy>

In part, that information states that “in order to withdraw from the course, students called to active military duty will need to obtain the proper withdrawal form from the Admissions and Records office, their academic dean’s office or the Student Success Help Center. Information about withdrawing and refund deadlines can be found in the schedule of courses. Completed forms need to be returned to the Admissions and Records office. If students are receiving veterans’ benefits or financial aid, each of those offices will need to approve the form. In addition, the form needs to be approved by the Bursar’s Office located in Main Hall on the second floor. Students will be provided a copy of the drop form to retain for their records. The date the form is receipted by Admissions and Records will determine the amount of any refund.”

Disruptive Students

For information on the Student Code of Conduct or the Disruptive Behavior Policy go to the Office of Judicial Affairs Website: <http://www.uccs.edu/~oja/>

Campus Emergency Response Team

UCCS Chief of Police: Jim Spice, phone: 255-3111, e-mail: jspice@uccs.edu

Director of University Counseling Center: Benek Altayli, phone: 255-3265, e-mail: zaltayli@uccs.edu (regarding harm to self or others)

Director of Judicial Affairs: Steve Linhart, phone: 255-4443, e-mail: slinhart@uccs.edu