

RELIGION 323: Buddhism

Summer 2012
Instructor: Dr. Tao Jiang

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Description:

The focus of this class will be on key traditional Buddhist teachings, with a focus on the teaching of the historical Buddha, the two major schools of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism (Madhyamaka and Yogācāra), and the Buddhist encounter with the West. We hope to achieve two main objectives: to acquire basic knowledge of core Buddhist doctrines, such as the Four Noble Truths, dependent origination, not-self/no-self, emptiness, and the storehouse consciousness within their historical contexts, and to have some exposure to the engagement between Buddhism and Western modernity. The primary orientation of this class is philosophical and historical.

Course Requirements:

Two Exams	60%
& Five one-paragraph report	20%
# One Book Report	20%

& You need to write a one-paragraph report for the reading assigned for the following five online sessions, indicated in the schedule below. The purpose is to make sure that you keep up with the reading. It can be three to five sentences long (not longer than a page), discussing any point in the reading that interests you. You can also use the report to gather your thoughts on the reading. The report is due by 6pm on the day of the online session. Late submission will be accepted with a 2-point reduction per day.

You are required to write a 7-page (double-spaced, size 12 font, Times New Roman font) book report on either one of the two last textbooks by the end of the semester. Basically, you should follow this structure: identify the central thesis and summarize how the author presents it through several sub-theses. It should be treated as a summary and analysis of the book, NOT an opinion piece. You must use Microsoft Word, or if you use some other software you need to convert it to either word or pdf format before submitting it. You must submit it online at sakai.rutgers.edu by midnight on August 14, 2011. Given the tight grading schedule, late submission will not be accepted.

Course Policies:

* **NO** make-up for missed exams will be given, unless a letter verifying an emergency is provided.

* The class strictly follows the university policy on academic integrity. It is available at <http://TeachX.rutgers.edu/integrity/index.html>

Required Texts:

(A) *Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction*, by Mark Siderits. Hackett.

- (B) *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, translated by Jay Garfield. Oxford.
- (C) *Contexts and Dialogue: Yogācāra Buddhism and Modern Psychology on the Subliminal Mind*, by Tao Jiang. Hawaii.
- (D) *The Making of Buddhist Modernism*, by David McMahan. Oxford

Important Dates:

1st exam: July 19

2nd exam: August 2

Book Report Due: August 14

Schedule:

The format of this hybrid course will be a combination of in-person class meetings and online chat sessions. I will be available online at sakai.rutgers.edu in the chat room from 8:00pm to 9:30pm in the online period to answer any questions. Any question about the reading is welcome. If nobody asks any question during the chat session, I will pose some questions in order to focus the attention of the discussion. You do not have to be available online during the chat session, but you do have to turn in the short report by 6pm. When you have time please make sure to check the chat room and see what questions are discussed.

July 10	A 1-2 (in person)
July 12	A 3-4 (online, <u>1st short report due</u>)
July 17	A 6-8 (in person)
July 19	1 st Exam; Introduction to Madhyamaka (B pp.87-102) (in person)
July 24	B pp.103-123 (online, <u>2nd short report due</u>)
July 26	B pp.293-321 (in person)
July 31	B pp.322-334 (online, <u>3rd short report due</u>)
Aug. 2	2 nd Exam; C Intro – Chapter 1 (in person)
Aug. 7	C 2-5 (online, <u>4th short report due</u>)
Aug. 9	D 1-4 (online, <u>5th short report due</u>)
Aug. 14	D 5-9 (online); final book report due today by midnight on sakai.rutgers.edu