



dharmo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ
“The dhamma protects the one who lives by the dhamma”
—*Mahādhammapāla Jātaka*

Buddhism, Society, and Politics in Southeast Asia

Fall 2016

Wednesdays, 12:35–3:35, Loree 131

Professor D.C. Lammerts

Office: Loree 130

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:35-4:35PM

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Description

This seminar explores the histories of Buddhist social and political culture in Southeast Asia from premodernity to the present. We read primary literary and historical texts, inscriptions, and art historical and archaeological evidence, as well as current interdisciplinary scholarship in Buddhist and Southeast Asian Studies, to consider how Buddhism has played, and continues to play, a vital role in the construction of norms and habits of the sociopolitical domain. Examples of particular thematic foci include diverse regional Buddhist practices and understandings of law, gender, class, political authority, cosmology, the family, monastic institutions, colonialism, modernity, and economic life.

Core Learning Goals (Relevant to Undergraduates)

This course seeks to foster critical analysis and understanding of the constitutive relationship of Buddhism and social and political life in premodern, modern, and contemporary Southeast Asia. It explores Buddhist theories and practices concerning society and politics in historical and cultural context. Additionally, the course seeks to strengthen skills in social and historical analysis, academic writing, and engagement with primary documents, through written response assignments and a substantial final paper.

The course satisfies the core curriculum requirements for social and historical analysis (h, k, and i). After taking this seminar, students will:

- 1) be able to identify and assess some of the diverse ways in which Buddhism has informed or given rise to particular social and political theories and practices (h);
- 2) have gained a considerable understanding of, and a capacity to explain via historical reasoning, the development of Buddhist social and political histories in (parts of) Southeast Asia, and their continuing relevance for the present day (k, i).

The course also meets core curriculum goals regarding cognitive skills and processes (WCr, WCd, and u) by

- 1) fostering communication and writing skills appropriate to the academic study of religion and the humanities and social sciences more broadly (WCd/t);
- 2) requiring students to engage in and respond to ongoing peer and instructor review (WCr/s2);
- 3) asking students to develop independent readings of primary historical and literary documents and write about them using correct citation and bibliographic methods (u).

Assignments

1) Participation, Reading, and Attendance (20%)

As a general guideline, each student should expect to devote approximately four hours each week to focused reading and reflection thereon. It is crucial that seminar participants complete all assigned readings before coming to class. Failure to do so will result in a 5-point deduction from your final grade. All participants are expected to contribute energetically to seminar discussion.

Each student is permitted one unexcused absence during the semester. Additional unexcused absences will result in a 5-point deduction from your final grade. Excused absences require official documentation (e.g. a signed note from a physician or the Office of the Dean of Students).

2) Forum Posts

Thrice during the semester, each student will be responsible for posting on Sakai a concise (400–500 word) response to the week's assigned readings by midnight the day before class. You may access the forum and submit your post via Sakai>Forums>BUDDHISM,SOC&POLITC 01 F16 Forum>the due date of your submission>"start a new conversation."

These posts will not be graded, but failure to post by the deadline will result in a deduction from your final grade. Posts should not involve a summary of readings. Rather, they should identify and elaborate upon major critical themes raised by the week's reading(s) and pose at least two questions for in-class discussion. All students are required to read forum posts prior to class meetings. Online responses to and discussions of posts are welcome.

Students may also use the Sakai forum to discuss any other aspects of the course via Sakai>Forums>BUDDHISM,SOC&POLITC 01 F16 Forum>"Other Discussion">"start a new conversation." Kindly note that all forum activity will be closely monitored by Dr. Lammerts.

3) Response Papers (20%)

Students will write two, three-page response papers (worth 10% each) that engage with and critique major questions or themes raised by our assigned readings. These papers should include a clear thesis statement, and argue in its support on the basis of evidence drawn from the readings. These papers are due on Oct 5 and Oct 26. Please bring **two copies** of your paper with you to class on the day it is due, as one copy will be given to another student for peer review.

4) Peer Review (10%)

Each student will be responsible for critiquing a response paper written by another student in a short, one- to two-page, peer review essay. Peer reviews are due on Oct 12 and Nov 2. Please bring **two copies** of your peer review with you to class on these days. Your peer review will be shared with the author of the paper it critiques.

Peer reviews should evaluate the successfulness of the response paper in terms of the following three areas:

—Thesis. Is the claim the author is trying to make useful, insightful, or relevant? Can we learn from it? Does it teach us something we don't already know?

—Argument. Are you convinced by the author's argument? Does the author satisfactorily support her/his thesis with evidence? Is their interpretation of that evidence correct?

—Style/Presentation. Is the paper clearly written? Are there ways to improve its structure or format?

5) Précis/Presentation (10%) and Final Essay (40%). Students will prepare a final essay (12–15 pages) that examines in detail a critical theme or question concerning the relationship between Buddhism, society, and/or politics in Southeast Asia in light of a close reading and analysis of three or more texts read for the class. The final paper may be a further development and revised expansion of a response paper. More guidance concerning this project will be given in class. Students will submit a 2–3 page précis of their final paper on Nov 30, and will present their projects before the class on Nov 30 and Dec 7.

It is advised that students meet with Dr. Lammerts during office hours to discuss paper projects prior to Nov 23.

All written assignments should be prepared in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Electronic submissions are not permitted.

Core Assessment (Relevant to Undergraduates)

Assignments 2–5 will be evaluated in light of Core Curriculum Assessment Rubrics and assigned a score of Outstanding, Good, Satisfactory, or Unsatisfactory based on the degree to which they meet the Core learning goals outlined above. Final Core assessment will be based on an evaluation of each student's complete portfolio of Core-related work at the end of the semester.

Grading System:

A=100-90, B+=89-87, B=86-80, C+=79-77, C=76-70, D=69-65, F=64 and below.

Course Policies

i) Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with Rutgers policies and materials concerning academic integrity and plagiarism at the following sites:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources>

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses. Any student found to have committed or aided the offence of plagiarism will be subject to penalties in accordance with the policies of the University.

ii) Use of electronic equipment

Please turn off all mobile phones, computers, and other electronic devices before class. If you must use a computer, tablet, or e-reader, for reading electronic readings please sit in the first two rows of the classroom. Recording devices are not permitted

iii) Your participation grade is based upon your daily preparedness (i.e., having completed all readings and assignments) and contribution to classroom discussion. Again, please ensure that you come to class having carefully read the readings assigned for the day. All students should bring electronic or paper copies of readings to class. (Phones are not acceptable reading devices).

iv) Dr. Lammerts will not ordinarily discuss course-related matters (grades, readings, attendance, assignments, etc.) via email. If you have a question about any aspect of our seminar, please see Dr. Lammerts during office hours or contact him to schedule a meeting at an alternate time.

v) Sharing and/or digital transmission of course-related content and work

You may not share, reproduce, or transmit lecture notes, readings, audio, video, assignments, student work, or any course-related content via the internet or otherwise, except via approved

channels as defined above. Discussion of this class online (e.g., on Facebook) outside of the designated Sakai course forum requires the prior approval of Prof. Lammerts. Failure to obtain prior approval may constitute a violation of academic integrity as well as copyright policies.

Final Note

This course fulfills the requirements of a senior seminar in Religion, required for all departmental majors prior to graduation. If you are a Religion major and require senior seminar credit, please ensure that you are registered in the graduate section of the course (i.e. 840:570, not 840:370).

WEEKLY READINGS

Note that additional materials (e.g. video) and/or readings (particularly primary sources) not listed below may be presented in class for analysis and discussion. The syllabus is subject to change based on the trajectory of the seminar as it develops during the semester.

September 7. Overview of the Seminar

September 14.

Kate Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity, and Identity*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014: 15–42; 69–137.

September 21.

Donald K. Swearer & Sommai Premchit, *The Legend of Queen Cāma: Bodhiraṃsi's Cāmadevīvaṃsa, a Translation and Commentary*. Albany: State University of New York, 1998, pp. 3–77.

Forum: Group A (posted no later than midnight Sept 20)

September 28.

No Class. Please continue (preferably, finish) reading *The Legend of Queen Cāma* and begin work on your response papers.

October 5.

Donald K. Swearer & Sommai Premchit, *The Legend of Queen Cāma: Bodhiraṃsi's Cāmadevīvaṃsa, a Translation and Commentary*. Albany: State University of New York, 1998, pp. 79–133.

Response paper #1 (on Cāmadevī, pp. 3–133) due in two copies

October 12.

Patrick Jory, *Thailand's Theory of Monarchy: The Vessantara Jātaka and the Idea of the Perfect Man*. Albany: State University of New York, 2016, pp. 1–43.

Peer review #1 due in two copies.

Forum: Group B (posted no later than midnight Oct 11)

October 19.

Patrick Jory, *Thailand's Theory of Monarchy: The Vessantara Jātaka and the Idea of the Perfect Man*. Albany: State University of New York, 2016, pp. 45–126.

Forum: Group A (posted no later than midnight Oct 18)

October 26.

Patrick Jory, *Thailand's Theory of Monarchy: The Vessantara Jātaka and the Idea of the Perfect Man*. Albany: State University of New York, 2016, pp. 127–188.

Response paper #2 (on Jory, pp. 1–188) due in two copies.

November 2.

Susan Fulop Kepner, *The Lioness in Bloom: Modern Thai Fiction About Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. “Matsii,” pp. 95-103.

Charles Keyes, “Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk: Buddhist Notions of Female Gender in Rural Thailand.” *American Ethnologist* 11.2 (1984): 223-241.

Forum: Group B (posted no later than midnight Nov 1)

November 9.

Alicia Turner, *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014, pp. 1–74.

Peer review #2 due in two copies.

Forum: Group A (posted no later than midnight Nov 8)

November 16.

Alicia Turner, *Saving Buddhism: The Impermanence of Religion in Colonial Burma*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014, pp. 75–156.

Forum: Group B (posted no later than midnight Nov 15)

November 23.

No Class. Please use this week to further develop your final paper projects and write your précis.

November 30.

Presentation and Discussion of Final Papers I

Two- to three-page précis of final paper due.

December 7.

Presentation and Discussion of Final Papers II

December 15.

Final Paper due to Religion Department by 5PM.