Fall 9-1-2000

RELS 232.01: Introduction to Buddhism

Alan Sponberg
University of Montana - Missoula

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/5176

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
**INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM**

**Instructor:** Alan Sponberg <sponberg@selway.umt.edu>  
Office: Rm. 150, Liberal Arts Bldg.  
Hours: MF 10:10-11:00am  
Tue 11-12, or by apt. (ph: 243-2803)

**Teaching Assistant:** Bodhipaksa  
Office: 724 Eddie, Basement Rm. 5  
Hours: TTR. 2:00-3:00  
Or by apt. (ph. 243-2074)  
<bodhipaksa@msn.com>

Course Requirements: Attendance, reading, 2 mid-term essay-question exams (Oct. 6 and Nov. 8), and a comprehensive essay-question final exam. Note also that the nature of this course makes it very important that you attend class regularly and that you keep up with the assigned reading (60-75 pg/week), a number of which may need to be read more than once due to the unfamiliar nature the subject. Please do not take the course if you will not be able to do this.

The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 19th (8:00-10:00am) as indicated in the Course Schedule. You cannot pass this course if you miss the final exam, which means you must take special care to make your holiday travel plans accordingly. If you neglect to make your reservations early enough to get a flight that allows you to take the final exam, it will not be possible to schedule a make-up exam.

Policy on Make-up Exams: Make-up exams will be given only for unavoidable and excusable absence (illness, etc. — not over-sleeping, late return from week-end trip, alien abduction, etc.), and only if you contact me prior to the scheduled time of the exam. My voice mail is available 24-hours/day at 406-243-2803. With prior approval, the usual make-up assignment for a missed exam is to write a 10-page paper.

Books to purchase at the Bookstore (Library copies are on reserve at Mansfield Library)
- Michael Carrithers: *The Buddha*
- Sangharakshita: *Guide to the Buddhist Path*
- Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas* (We will be reading approximately one-half of this book)
- Thich Nhat Hanh: *The Heart of Understanding*
- Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*

Faculty Pack: available from UC Bookstore (ask if none are on the shelf)

Optional Course on Buddhist Meditation: Students who wish to may enroll concurrently in RS 233 (2 cr. hr.); note that RELS 233 is not a requirement for taking this course, RS 232, though it will definitely add to your experience and understanding of Buddhism. Note the room changes and also the beginning dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Begins</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RS 233.01</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>3:10-5:00</td>
<td>GBB L13</td>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS 233.02</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>3:40-5:30</td>
<td>GBB L13</td>
<td>Sept. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS 233.03</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>3:40-5:30</td>
<td>GBB L13</td>
<td>Sept. 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RS 233 is open only to students currently or previously enrolled in RS 232.

* * * * *
Schedule of Readings

Readings should be completed by the date indicated.
* Asterisk indicates item is in the FacPac

I. THE BUDDHA

Sept. 6 Introduction

Sept. 8 *Sangharakshita: The Three Jewels, ”Approaches to Buddhism” & ”Essence of the Dharma”
Carrithers: The Buddha: 1-28

Sept. 11 *Nanamoli: Life of the Buddha, ”Birth and Early Years” & ”Struggle for Enlightenment” 33pp

Sept. 13 Carrithers: The Buddha: 29-52

Sept. 15 Carrithers: The Buddha: 53-78 ”The Awakening”

Sept. 18 *Nanamoli: Life of the Buddha, ”The Kalama Sutta”
"Carrithers: The Buddha: 79-98

Sept. 20 Video Documentary: “Footprint of the Buddha”
*Subhuti: ”Everyone Has a View”
Sangharakshita: Guide to the Buddhist Path, ”Word of the Buddha” & ”Wrong View, Right View, an Perfect View”

Sept. 22 Vessantara: Meeting the Buddhas, 1-23 Note Glossary of Terms at end of volume

Sept. 25 Sangharakshita: Guide to the Buddhist Path, ”Archetypal Symbolism in the Biography of the Buddha”

Optional Practice Exam: Tues., Sept. 26, 5:30pm—place to be announced

II. THREE HISTORICAL PHASES OF BUDDHISM

A. PHASE ONE: EARLY CONSERVATIVE BUDDHISM—Focusing on the Developmental Dimension

Sept. 27 Sangharakshita: Guide, ”Wheel of Life and Spiral Path,” & ”Six Realms”—bring to class
**”The Vicious Circle of Samsara & the Path to Enlightenment (Diagram)”—bring to class

Sept. 29 Sangharakshita: Guide, ”Twelve Links” & ”Stopping the Wheel”—bring FacPac to class
Oct. 2 Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Spiral Path"—bring PacPac to class

Oct. 4 *Selected Texts: "Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dharma" & "Parable of the Piece of Cloth"
**"Where Buddhism Begins & Why it Begins There," "The Problem of Desire" & "Desire for the Eternal"
Review: *The Buddha*, pp. 66-78
Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The 'Goal' of Nirvana" & "Enlightenment"

Optional Review Session: Wednesday, Oct. 4th, 4pm, place to be announced

First Exam: Oct. 6


Oct. 13 *Goldstein & Kornfield: "Why Meditate"
Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Four Brahma-viharas" & "The Dhyanas"

Review *Guide*, pp. 88b-89a (2nd ed: 82b-83a) on "Who or what is reborn?"
*Epstein: "Freud and Dr. Buddha"
*Joanna Macy: "The Greening of the Self"* {10pp, Prajna: self

B. Phase Two: MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM—Focusing on the Relational Dimension of Buddhahood

Oct. 18 **"Beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India"
Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 129-158

Oct. 20 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 159-182; 195-202


Oct. 25 Thich Nhat Hanh: *Heart of Understanding*, vii-29

Oct. 27 Thich Nhat Hanh: *Heart of Understanding*, 31-54

Oct. 30 **"Heart Sutra & Commentary"

Nov. 1 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 25-54

Nov. 3 **"Mandala of the Five Buddhas" (diagram)
Sangharakshita: *Guide*, "The Symbolism of the Five Buddhas" & "Five Wisdoms"
Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 52-53, 57-67

Nov. 6 Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, pp. 69-126

Optional Review Session Nov. 7th, 5:30, place to be announced

Second Exam: Nov. 8
Nov. 10  Veteran's Day Holiday—no class

C. Phase Three: Zen, Pure Land & Vajrayana Buddhism—Focusing on the Technical Dimension of Buddhahood

Nov. 13  *Sthiramati: "The Tantra and Vajrayana Buddhism" & "The End of Buddhism in India"

Nov. 15  Vessantara: *Meeting the Buddhas*, 205-218 & 229-240

Nov. 17  *"Death and Dying in Tibetan Buddhism" by John Powers

Nov. 20  *"Faces of the Dalai Lama" by Glenn Mullin

Nov. 22-24  ****Thanksgiving Holiday****


Nov. 29  Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp. 52-105

Dec. 1  Dalai Lama: *Healing Anger*, pp 106-144

III. Buddhism in the Modern World—A Fourth Phase???

Dec. 4  *Fields: "East and West: The Central Region"

Dec. 6  *Fields: "The Restless Pioneers"

Dec. 8  *Batchelor: "Sangharakshita: Adaptation"*

*"The Great Conversion: Dr. Ambedkar and the Buddhist Revival" by Christopher Queen

Dec. 11  *Batchelor: "Satipatthana: Mindful Awareness"

*Gary Snyder: "Buddhism & Planetary Culture"

Review: *Johanna Macy: "The Greening of the Self"

Dec. 13  *Batchelor: "Nhat Hanh: Engagement"

Dec. 15  Conclusion and Review for Final

Optional Review for Final Exam: Dec 15th — 4:10pm, place to be announced

Final Comprehensive Exam: Tues., Dec. 19th, 8:00am-10am (meet in our usual classroom)