

BUDDHIST THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

Professor Joy Brennan, she/her/hers
 O'Connor House 204
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 Office hours: T 2-4; W 2-3; F 1-3

RLST 260
 W/F 8:40-10:00
 Google Meet/Tent north of first-year quad



COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This semester we will travel through emotions, cosmologies, systems of psychological causation, alternate world-systems, and forms of meditative practice so that we may spend time inside of Buddhist ideas, studying our worlds and ourselves from within. We will also travel through three-dimensional space, from the beginnings of Buddhism in South Asia, to Buddhist thought and practice in East Asia and Tibet, to the Western world's growing engagement with Buddhist ideas and practices. You will leave this course with knowledge of the historical development of Buddhist ideas, texts, institutions and practice in different regions of the world, and also with an understanding of how to see the world through Buddhist eyes.

REQUIRED TEXTS

[AVAILABLE IN THE BOOKSTORE]

Foundations of Buddhism,
 by Rupert Gethin

The Vimalakirti Sutra, by Burton Watson

Dreaming Me, by Janice Dean Willis

*Gethin's book can also be found online through the library's website.

*All other required readings are posted on Moodle.



HOW ARE WE DOING THIS HYBRID THING?

Because this is a hybrid course, it will take place both in person and online. Here's what we will do:

- Remote students will meet with me on Wednesday from 8:40-10 on Google Meet.
- Students on campus will meet with me on Friday from 8:40-10 in person.
- All students will have less synchronous in class time with me than in a normal semester. We will do three asynchronous things to make our time together richer.
 - 1) Each week, I will post 2-3 videos of not more than 20 minutes long on my YouTube channel. Part of the assignment for each week is to watch these videos.
 - 2) You will have a rotating study partner with whom you will meet once per week to work with on the study guides. On campus students will meet with study partners during assigned class time on Wednesday for at least 40 minutes. Off campus students will set up a forty minute meeting with their study partners.
 - 3) All students will meet with me once every other week for a 10-20 minute check-in.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING SCALE (TOTAL CLASS POINTS = 100)

- 5 page paper on assigned topics (20 points)
- Dependent arising narrative (10 points)
- Midterm exam (20 points)
- Final 6-8 page paper or creative project (25 points)
- Final exam (25 points)

IMPORTANT DATES

10/9: 5 page paper due

10/19-10/23: Midterm exams (dependent arising narrative due before your exam)

11/6: Proposals for final paper/project due

12/4: Final paper/project due

12/14-12/18: Final exams

WHAT YOU'LL FIND ON MOODLE

- All readings that are not in the three required texts will be on Moodle
- All weekly study guides will be on Moodle
- All assignment guides will be on Moodle
- Links to all of my YouTube videos will be on Moodle
- A permanent link to our Google Meet (for remote students) is on Moodle

TURNING IN WRITTEN WORK

All written work should be turned in to me as a .doc file attached to an email. Please do not share a Google Doc with me. If you write your paper on Google Docs, simply save it in .doc format and send to me as an attachment. Please do not send me a PDF file. The deadline for all written work is 5:00 pm on the due date specified on this syllabus.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Subject to change based on our pace)

- 9/9 & 9/11 Read: Gethin chapters 1 & 3; *Life of Buddha* chapters 1-5
The Discourse on Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma; Discourse to Assalayana
 To do: Week 2 study guide; Watch video talks
- 9/16 & 9/18: Read: Review *Life of Buddha* chapters 1-5 & read 13-15; The story of Kisa Gotami; *From One who is Dear*
 To do: Week 3 study guide; Watch video talks
- 9/23 & 9/25: Read: Gethin chapters 5 & 6; *Chandogya Upaniṣad* (sections 7-12);
The Discourse on the No-self Characteristic
 To do: Week 4 study guide; Watch video talks
- 9/30 & 10/2 Read: *The Shape of Suffering* pages 3-33; *The Great Causes Discourse*
 To do: Week 5 study guide; Watch video talks; Study the image of the Wheel
- 10/7 & 10/9 Read: *The Noble Eightfold Path; Faith in Awakening; The Shorter Instructions to Malunkya; Half (of the Holy Life)*
 To do: Week 6 study guide; Watch video talks; Submit paper on 10/9
- 10/15 & 10/16 Read: Gethin chapter 7; *The Foundations of Mindfulness and Mindfulness Defined*
 To do: Week 7 study guide; Watch video talks
- 10/21 & 10/23 Read: Gethin chapter 9; *The Heart Sutra*
 To do: Week 8 study guide; Watch video talks; Midterm oral exams
- 10/28 & 10/30 Read: Collection of readings on Buddhist approaches to anger: excerpt from Śāntideva's *Bodhicāryāvātara*; excerpt from Asanga's *Bodhisāttvabhūmi*; Emily McRae's "Anger and Oppression: A Tantric Buddhist Perspective"; and excerpt from Lama Rod Owens', *Love and Rage: The Path of Liberation through Anger*.
 To do: Week 9 study guide; Watch video talks
- 11/4 & 11/6 Read: *The Vimalakirti Sutra*
 To do: Week 10 study guide; Watch video talks; Final proposal due on 11/6
- 11/11 & 11/13 Read: *The Vimalakirti Sutra*
 To do: Week 11 study guide; Watch video talks
- 11/18 & 11/20 Read: Poceski "Spread and Flourishing of Buddhism in China"; Mulien; "The Practice of Huayan" (everyone should read pages 263-266; those who are interested may read the whole article)
 To do: Week 12 study guide; Watch video talks

12/2 through 12/11 Read: *Dreaming Me*

To do: *Dreaming Me* study guide; Watch video talks

COURSE POLICIES

ACADEMIC HONESTY & INTEGRITY [PLAGIARISM POLICY]

It is your responsibility to learn how to document and acknowledge those whose words and ideas you have drawn upon or used in your work. Please study the section on Honesty in Academic Work and Violations of Academic Integrity in the Course Catalog. If you have any questions about the policy, please come talk with me about it. A basic rule for using sources: when in doubt, quote and cite.

ACCESSIBILITY

If you have any accessibility requirements, please contact Erin Salva, the Director of Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS), as soon as possible to verify your eligibility for accommodations and confirm the nature of the accommodations you need. [salvae@kenyon.edu; 740-427-5453] Please also speak with me as soon as possible about what SASS approved accommodations need to be made.

ASSIGNMENTS

If an emergency or illness has delayed your work on an assignment, please email me or come visit me to request an extension no later than 24 hours before the assignment is due. Otherwise, late assignments will suffer a grade reduction commensurate with their lateness.

COMMUNICATING WITH ME

I am available during the office hours listed at the top of this syllabus, as well as over email. You can expect to receive a response to any email you send me within 24 hours, except over weekends and holidays when the response clock is on pause.

LIBRARY

The Religious Studies library liaison is Karen Greever, whose office is room A-15 in Library A. You can ask her for help with any questions about using the library for our course. For references, you might start by looking at our Department's library resource guide at <http://kenyon.libguides.com/rlst> and our course's guide at <http://kenyon.libguides.com/rlst260>.

TITLE IX

I'm a mandatory Title IX reporter. If you tell me of an incident of sexual misconduct or harassment, involving you or any other student or Kenyon employee, I am legally obligated to report it to Kenyon's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to discuss an incident of sexual misconduct or harassment with someone who is not obligated to report it, you may talk with the staff of the Cox Counseling Center or with either of our two campus chaplains, Marc Bragin and Rachel Kessler.