



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Renison University College
Affiliated with the University of Waterloo
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Renison University College Land Acknowledgement

With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

Winter 2021

Course Code: RS 301/GSJ 301

Course Title: Engaged Buddhism

Class Times/Location: Online

Instructor: Jeff Wilson

Office: Closed due to the pandemic

Office Phone: 519-884-4404 x28625

Office Hours: By arrangement (send me an email if you would like to arrange to talk)

Email: jeff.wilson@uwaterloo.ca

Course Description

This course examines Buddhist - including mindfulness - engagement with contemporary social issues, such as peacemaking, environmentalism, political reform, race and gender concerns, and LGBTTTQQIPA+ rights.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Grasp the fundamentals of contemporary Buddhist thought and worldview
 - Comprehend central Buddhist ideas and concepts, such as interdependence, karma, and nirvana

- Understand the relationships between Buddhist beliefs and movements for social transformation
- B. Understand how Buddhist principles and practices are applied to a wide range of social issues
- Describe various Buddhist liberation movements in Asia and beyond
 - Engage productively with primary and secondary sources on socially engaged Buddhism
- C. Apply Buddhist hermeneutics to issues of social justice
- Apply ideas of interdependence, no-self, karuna, upaya, and karma to environmental, gender, violent conflict, and ethnic majoritarian/white supremacy issues
 - Apply ideas of ahimsa, bodhicitta, metta, avidya, tanha, and moha to the roots and possible mitigation of conflicts

A Note About Content

Religion engages with, and reflects, the full range of human experience, behaviour, and attitude, including the ugliest parts of human life. Films, books, and other media that we will view or read for this course contain a wide range of content, including things that may make individual students uncomfortable or upset. This may include physical or sexual violence, discrimination and prejudice, sexuality or nudity, frightening images and events, self-harm, religious, political, or cultural views at variance with your own, and other potentially disturbing content. Please speak with the instructor if you wish to receive more information about particular types of content.

Required Texts

- *Green Buddhism: Practice and Compassionate Action in Uncertain Times*, by Stephanie Kaza
- *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life*, by Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Radical Dharma: Talking Race, Love, and Liberation*, by angel Kyodo williams, Lama Rod Owens, and Jasmine Syedullah

We will read three books this term. They have been selected because they are all available easily and cheaply online, including Kindle and/or audio

versions, and reflect a range of Buddhist experiences.

Readings Available on LEARN

- Weekly readings (a mix of shorter primary and secondary sources).
- Some materials will also be accessed via other websites.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Our course will be delivered asynchronously, and primarily through the Learn platform. There are NO exams. This course outline lays out the expected process of the course. However, due to the unpredictable nature of life under the pandemic, the course outline and our course requirements are subject to possible change during the term. Students will be fully informed about any changes that become necessary.

| <u>Assessment</u> | <u>Date of Evaluation</u> | <u>Weighting</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Self introduction | Monday Jan 11 or sooner | 1% |
| Discussions | Sunday nights or sooner, ongoing | 18% |
| Exercise responses | Sunday nights or sooner, ongoing | 21% |
| Book responses | Jan 29, Feb 26, Mar 26 | 30% |
| Research project | April 12 | 30% |
| Total | | 100% |

Introduction

Introduce yourself to the class in the Learn discussion forums. Further instructions are provided in the Forum.

Discussions

Participation in asynchronous discussions about course materials in the Learn discussion forums. Further instructions are provided in the folder Assignments, under Content, in Learn.

Exercise Responses

Reflective explorations of Buddhist/mindfulness exercises. Upload to Learn. Further instructions are provided in the folder Assignments, under Content, in Learn.

Book Responses

Papers responding to the three assigned books. Upload to Learn. Further instructions are provided in the folder Assignments, under Content, in Learn.

Research Projects

An in-depth research project on a topic of the student’s choice. Further instructions are provided in the folder Assignments, under Content, in Learn.

Course Outline

Readings will be posted ahead of the weeks on which they are due, in an ongoing fashion.

| Week | Date | Topic | Readings Due |
|------|--------------|--|------------------|
| 1 | Jan 5-9 | Course introduction; Buddhist background | Week 1 readings |
| 2 | Jan 11-15 | The Asian historical roots of Buddhist social engagement | Week 2 readings |
| 3 | Jan 18-23 | Buddhism and Race | Week 3 readings |
| 4 | Jan 25-29 | The Quest for Gender Equality in the Monastery | Week 4 readings |
| 5 | Feb 1-5 | Movements for Gender Liberation in Wider Society | Week 5 readings |
| 6 | Feb 8-13 | Queering Dharma | Week 6 readings |
| | Feb 15-19 | Reading Week | |
| 7 | Feb 22-26 | Buddhist Environmentalism | Week 7 readings |
| 8 | Mar 1-5 | Prison Ministry and Reform | Week 8 readings |
| 9 | Mar 8-13 | Mindfulness Interventions to Decrease Activist Burn- out | Week 9 readings |
| 10 | Mar 15-19 | Buddhist Politics and Economics | Week 10 readings |
| 11 | Mar 22-26 | Buddhist Interfaith Coalition-Building for Justice | Week 11 readings |
| 12 | Mar 29-Apr 2 | Case Study: Buddhist peacework in the Vietnam War | Week 12 readings |
| 13 | Apr 5-6 | Final Thoughts | Week 13 readings |

Late Work

We are mostly using guidelines, rather than deadlines, this term. It is particularly important to try and get your discussion responses posted in a

timely fashion. This is because if you don't, other students can't read and reply to you, and thus their learning is affected. If a student is consistently late, the instructor will reach out to determine the cause. It is possible that late penalties may be enacted in certain cases.

Academic Integrity:

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage \(https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) and the [Arts Academic Integrity webpage \(https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/current-undergraduates/student-support/ethical-behaviour) for more information.

Discipline: Every student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their own actions. [Check the [Office of Academic Integrity \(https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration, should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or Academic Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties are imposed under the University of Waterloo Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties \(https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties\)](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties).

Students should also be aware that copyright laws in Canada prohibit reproducing more than 10% of any work without permission from its author, publisher, or other copyright holder. Waterloo's policy on Fair Dealing is available here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/copyright-guidelines/fair-dealing-advisory> Violation of Canada's Copyright Act is a punishable academic offence under Policy 71 – Student Discipline.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and](#)

[Grievances](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70), Section 4 (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant, who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there are grounds. Students who believe they have grounds for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72) (<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72>).

Academic Integrity Office (uWaterloo):
<http://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Note for Students with Disabilities: The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AAS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Intellectual Property. Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of the instructor, which can include:

- lecture handouts and presentations (e.g., PowerPoint slides)
- lecture content, both spoken and written (and any audio or video recording thereof)
- questions from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams)
- work protected by copyright (i.e., any work authored by the instructor)

Making available the intellectual property of instructors without their express written consent (e.g., uploading lecture notes or assignments to an online repository) is considered theft of intellectual property and subject to disciplinary sanctions as described in Policy 71 – Student Discipline. Students who become aware of the availability of what may be their instructor's intellectual property in online repositories are encouraged to alert the instructor.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health supports if they are needed.

On Campus

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 xt 32655
- **MATES**: one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- **Good2Talk**: Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7**: Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME**: set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online at the Faculty of ARTS [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information.

A respectful living and learning environment for all

Everyone living, learning, and working at Renison University College is expected to contribute to creating a respectful environment free from harassment and discrimination.

If you experience or witness harassment or discrimination, seek help. You may contact Credence & Co., Renison's external anti-harassment and anti-discrimination officers, by email (info@credenceandco.com) or by phone (519-883-8906). Credence & Co. is an independent K-W based firm which works with organizations toward thriving workplace cultures, including professional coaching, consulting, facilitation, policy development, conflict mediation and ombudsperson functions.

Harassment is unwanted attention in the form of disrespectful comments, unwanted text messages or images, degrading jokes, rude gestures, unwanted touching, or other behaviours meant to intimidate.

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, discrimination means unequal or different treatment causing harm, whether intentional or not, because of race, disability, citizenship, ethnic origin, colour, age, creed, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, or other personal characteristic.