

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY —FACULTY OF ARTS

Tibetan Religious Traditions

Religious Studies 327 L01 Course Outline - Fall 2010, TR 2:00-3:15 p.m., SS 012

(University of Calgary Policy about course outlines may be found on page 39 of the
University Calendar.)

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Course Description:

Religious Studies 327 is a selective survey of the philosophical, cultural, and historical aspects of Buddhist and related formations in Tibet. We initially consider the Indian Buddhist doctrines and practices that are often essentialized as "Buddhism," which nevertheless are necessary for understanding "Buddhism" as it developed in Tibet. The course then surveys the history of Buddhism in Tibet, from Buddhism's introduction into this country up to the predominance of Tibet's four principal Buddhist traditions. We then focus upon selected thematic topics such as the gradual stages to awakening (*lam rim*) literature, mind training (*blo sbyong*), buddha-nature, tantra, women in Tibetan Buddhism, life and institution of the Dalai Lama, along with the issues of orientalism and the modern interpretation of Tibetan Buddhist formations.

Required Texts:

Pommaret, Francoise. (2003) *Tibet: An Enduring Civilization*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams.

Powers, John. (2007) *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. Revised Edition. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.

Course Website: **Blackboard**

Our course web site will list important announcements, electronic readings, and downloadable documents.

Course Requirements and Weighting:

1. Regular attendance, preparation of reading assignments, and regular, wakeful participation in discussion.

2. Midterm examination, 30 points (30%).

3. Research paper, 30 points (30%).

4. Final examination, 40 points (40%).

* **There will be a Registrar scheduled final examination in this course.**

Schedule of Exams and Essays	Evaluation
1. Midterm in class on Thursday, October 28	Midterm (30%)
2. Research paper due on Thursday, December 2	Research paper (30%)
3. Comprehensive Final: To be scheduled by registrar.	Final (40%)

Missed Exams: If you cannot write a test on the scheduled date due to a sudden illness or emergency, you must contact me or the Department front desk as soon as possible. To be allowed a rewrite of a test, you must provide proof of illness/emergency. Transfer of weight from a missed test or unwritten essay to another course requirement will not be allowed in this course. Without acceptable documentation (i.e. medical certificate, police report, bereavement notice, confirmation of religious observance, or court order) or without **PRIOR** arrangement with the instructor, missed assessments will receive an ‘F’. This policy is intended to encourage diligence and integrity among students as well as to uphold principles of fairness and equality with respect to other students in the class. Excuses other than those listed above will receive little attention.

To ensure academic honesty. No student is allowed to leave the examination room until they have handed in their exam. No additional materials or technical aids are permitted at your desk during an exam.

Grading

A numerical mark will be given for each course requirement. A letter grade will be assigned on the following number and letter grade scheme (standardized within the Department of Religious Studies):

A+	100-96	A	95-90	A-	89-85
B+	84-80	B	79-75	B-	74-70
C+	69-65	C	64-60	C-	59-55
D+	54-53	D	52-50	F	Under 50

Course Requirements explained:

1. Attendance and participation: Regular attendance, preparation of reading assignments, and class participation are expected in a university-level class. These are not graded requirements, but obviously they will impact your performance in the course. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and to ask a fellow student to lend you their notes.

Classroom sessions will consist of lectures on the scheduled subject matter related to the overall theoretical objective of the course. Students must prepare the material before each meeting and be ready to comprehend the topics to be covered. As much as possible the lectures attempt to complement the required readings or address related issues not treated extensively in the assigned books. During such sessions, students must have knowledge of the required readings. Participation in class thus plays a significant role in conducting lectures.

Given the nature of the lectures, and the fact that the examination will test knowledge of material discussed in lectures as well as the readings, it cannot be overemphasized that attendance is necessary and to your advantage. Your attendance in class allows you to participate in and contribute to the class by raising questions and offering insights. More importantly, your attendance allows you to hear what specific points are being emphasized. Students are reminded that presence at lectures, participation in classroom discussion and projects, and the completion of assignments are important components of most courses. Students will serve their interests best by regular attendance. Those who choose not to attend must assume whatever risks are involved.

2. Midterm examination (30 points = 30%): This will chiefly consist of short identification and essay questions, with the possibility of some objective questions, as well. Some time in the preceding class will be devoted to review. **THE DATE OF THE MIDTERM IS Thursday, October 28.**

3. Research Paper (of approximately 1800 words) worth 30% of the final course grade, is due on *Thursday, December 2 at the beginning of class*. The requirement is an 1800 word essay reflecting detailed research and critical reflection on a specific topic pertaining to Tibetan Buddhism. Paper topics are open: you are free to choose any topic within Tibetan Buddhist traditions (specific texts, practices, historical figures work best). **PAPER PARAMETERS AND GUIDELINES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS AND POSTED ON OUR BLACKBOARD COURSE SITE.** Late papers will be **penalized 10% of the value of the assignment for each day the paper is late.** If you have any questions please contact me immediately.

4. Final examination (40 points = 40%): The format will be the same as for the midterm exam. The date of the final exam is **to be scheduled by the registrar.**

Recording of lectures is not permitted, except by special permission (see Tape Recording of Lectures, *University of Calgary Calendar*, p. 40).

E-mail policy: E-mails will be responded to within 24 hours during weekdays. I do not reply to email messages that are poorly written, unclear or disrespectful.

Academic Honesty: *Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contributions of others be acknowledged. As a result, cheating or plagiarisms on any assignments or examinations are regarded as extremely serious academic offenses. Students are advised to consult pp 49-52 of the University Calendar which provides a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with plagiarism, cheating, and other academic misconduct. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.*

Academic Accommodation: If you are a student with a disability who requires academic accommodation and you have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at (403) 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Once registered, please

discuss any upcoming tests/examinations with the instructor **two weeks** before the scheduled date. (DRC web address is: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/Others/DRC/>).

Gnosis: Gnosis is the Religious Studies Student Club. For membership or more information please email: gnosis@ucalgary.ca or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~gnosis>.

Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule:

This outline is subject to change. It may be modified if it appears to the instructor that the material is not being adequately covered in the allotted time. The amount of time devoted to particular topics is contingent on the instructor’s sense of what deserves greater emphasis as the course progresses. **Remember, to be aware of changes occurring in the schedule and to receive any crucial information regarding the course, regular attendance in class is necessary.** The instructor is not responsible for accommodating those with inexcusable absences. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and to ask a fellow student to lend you their notes. In addition, important materials are regularly handed out during class. The instructor is not responsible for providing handouts at a later date for those with an inexcusable absence from class. Keep in mind that all lectures in class constitute material that may appear on the final examination. Remember, too, that it is not possible for the instructor to explain all the material contained in the readings—it is up to students to be familiar with the readings regardless of the extent to which the assigned texts are discussed in class.

Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule

Sept. 14-23	Introduction, Buddhist History and its Practices; Life of the Buddha; Indian Buddhist Background	Powers (2007):21-28; Pettit (1999): 41-45 [Blackboard] Buddhism in India: Powers, 31-59. Important Buddhist Doctrines: Powers, 63-80.
Sept. 28-30	Indian Background: Buddhist thought and practice in “India”	Meditation: Powers, 81-99. Two Truths and Four Schools: <i>Abhidharmakosa</i> 6:4. (Readings on Course web page) [Blackboard] Mahayana Buddhism in India: Williams: Chapter 3 [Blackboard]
Oct. 5-Oct. 7	Indian Background: Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism in “India”	Mahayana: Powers, 101-134 Madhyamaka: Williams (1989 excerpts, Madhyamaka) [Blackboard] Nagarjuna, <i>Wisdom</i> : selections. [Blackboard] Yogacara: Williams (1989 excerpts, Cittamatra) [Blackboard] <i>Madhyantavibhaga (Discriminating the Middle and the Extremes)</i> : Chapter 1.vv1-5 with commentary. <i>Vimsatika (Twenty Verses)</i> . [Blackboard] Tantra in “India”

Oct. 12-Oct.14	Tibetan History and Culture History of Buddhism in Tibet (I)	“Land and Identity,” Pommaret: 13-25. “Tibetan Religious History,” Powers, Chapter 5: 137-179. Samuel [Blackboard]: Chapters 23-24. “Kings and Lamas,” Pommaret: 51-75.
Oct.19-Oct.21	History of Buddhism in Tibet (II) A Survey of Traditions	“Religions and Beliefs,” Pommaret: 27-50. Samuel [Blackboard]: Chs. 26-27. “The Four Schools: Nyingma and Kagyu,” Powers: 355-397.
Oct.26-Oct. 28	A Survey of Traditions Mid-term Exam	“The Four Schools:” Powers: 399-431. “The Four Schools: Sakya and Geluk,” Powers: 433-496. Mid-term Exam Thursday, Oct. 28
Nov. 2-Nov.4	Exemplums of Tibetan Buddhist thought and practice: <i>The Step-by-Step Stages of the Path to Buddhahood (I)</i>	Dalai Lama: Chapters 1-7; Lam Rim Outlines [Blackboard] Dalai Lama: Chapters 8-9; Lam Rim Outlines [Blackboard]
Nov. 9-Nov.11	Exemplums of Tibetan Buddhist thought and practice: <i>The Step-by-Step Stages of the Path to Buddhahood (II)</i>	Dalai Lama: Chapters 1-7; Lam Rim Outlines [Blackboard] Dalai Lama: Chapters 8-9; Lam Rim Outlines [Blackboard]
Nov. 16-Nov.18	<i>The Step-by-Step Stages of the Path to Buddhahood (III)</i> Understanding Tibetan Tantra	Dalai Lama: Chapter 10; Lam Rim Outlines: 53-81. Powers: 249-323; Mills (2003: chapter 4) [Blackboard]
Nov.23-25	Death and Dying in Tibetan Buddhism Tibetan Festivals	Powers: 325-352 Rigzin: 1-14 [Blackboard]; Yuthok: 48-72 [Blackboard]; Powers: 219-231.
Nov.30-Dec.2	Festivals and Feminism Papers due Thursday, December 2	Women in Tibetan Buddhism: Klein (1995): 5-57. [Recommended: 61-88] [Blackboard] Papers due Thursday, December 2
Dec. 7-9	The Twentieth Century and the Dalai Lama Interpreting Tibetan Buddhism & Contemporary Tibetan Buddhism	Powers: 181-218 Pommaret: Chapters 4 & 5 Dalai Lama readings to be posted [Blackboard] Contemporary Tibetan Buddhism: Germano (1998). [Blackboard]
TBA	Registrar Scheduled Final Exam	