

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS & RELIGION**

**RELS 319 L01: Esoteric Buddhism**

**Course Outline - Winter 2018**

**TR 2:00-3:15 p.m.**

(University of Calgary Policy about course outlines may be found from page 38 of the  
*University Calendar*)

James Apple, Ph.D.

Office: SS 532

Office hours: T, R 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Or by appointment.

E-mail: [jbapple@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jbapple@ucalgary.ca)

Office phone: 403-220-8267

Dept Office/Phone: 403-220-5886

\*Dept. of Classics & Religion Office:

Social Sciences 558

E-mail: [clare@ucalgary.ca](mailto:clare@ucalgary.ca)

**Course Description:**

This course focuses upon the formation and development of Esoteric Buddhisms in South Asia from c. 500 c.e. to 1200 c.e. Esoteric Buddhist formations, as part of broader pan-Indic cultural movements known as Tantra, are some of the most popular yet most misunderstood forms of Buddhism. In this course, we will examine the social and historical contexts for the formation of Esoteric movements as well as consider some of the many questions concerning the history, literature, and practices of these cultural movements.

**Required Texts**

Davidson, Ronald M. *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003),

English, Elizabeth. *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals, and Forms*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002.

Apple, James B. *Course Pack Reading Assignments: "RELS 319, Vajrayāna Buddhism."* University of Calgary, 2012. Available at the University Bookstore.

**Course Website: Desire2Learn**

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. Registrar scheduled final examination, 40 points (40%)

Schedule of Exams and Essays	Evaluation
1. Midterm in class on <b>Thursday, Feb 15</b> 2. Research paper due on <b>Thursday, April 5</b> 3. Comprehensive Final: <b>To be scheduled by registrar.</b>	Midterm (30%) Research paper (30%) 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 office 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, usually used within the Department of Classics and Religion:

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 important, 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, February 15.**

**3. 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 registrar.**

**4. Research Paper (of approximately 1800 words) worth 30%** of the final course grade, is due on **Thursday, April 5 at the beginning of class.** The requirement is an 1800 word essay reflecting detailed research and critical reflection on a specific topic pertaining to Tantric Buddhism in South Asia. Paper topics are open: you are free to choose any topic within Tantric Buddhist traditions (specific texts, practices, historical figures work best). **PAPER PARAMETERS AND GUIDELINES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS AND POSTED ON OUR D2L 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.

**Recording of the lectures** is not permitted, except by special permission (see Tape Recording of Lectures, *University of Calgary Calendar*, p. 44).

**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.

Scientific evidence demonstrates that use of cellphones lowers student achievement as well as damages the brain (see links below). Use of cellphones are not permitted while

attending class. Cell phones must be turned off and not taken out in class for texting or any other purposes. The in-class wearing of earphones or similar devices is not permitted. Computers should not be used for watching videos or playing computer games.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/mental-wealth/201402/gray-matters-too-much-screen-time-damages-the-brain>

<http://blog.chron.com/sciguy/2013/12/study-students-who-use-cellphones-more-get-lower-grades/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/memory-medic/201303/why-writing-hand-could-make-you-smarter>

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is not tolerated at the University of Calgary and has serious consequences. Your essays/presentations must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. Please see the relevant sections on Academic Misconduct in the current University Calendar (section K, which can be found here:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>). If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor, or librarian staff.

### **Student Accommodations**

The student accommodation policy can be found at: [ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy](http://ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy).

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities [ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy](http://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy).

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

### **Desire 2 Learn (D2L) Help**

Go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students> for Student Help and FAQ's about D2L. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are also available on this website.

### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

- For program planning and advice, students in the Faculty of Arts will contact The Arts Students' Centre (ASC). Drop in at SS102, call at 403-220-3580 or email at [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library.

### **Freedom of Information and Privacy**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP): <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act indicates that assignments given by you to your course instructor will remain confidential unless otherwise stated before submission. The assignment cannot be returned to anyone else without your express permission. Similarly, any information about yourself that you share with your course instructor will not be given to anyone else without your permission. As one consequence, students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number on each subsequent page.

### **Student Ombudsperson and Students' Union Representative**

The Student Ombuds Office provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. See [www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds](http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds) for more information.

The Students' Union Faculty of Arts representative can be reached at [arts1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@ucalgary.ca).

### **Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point**

In case of an emergency evacuation during class, students must gather at the designated assembly point nearest to the classroom. The list of assembly points is found at [www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints). Please check this website and not the nearest assembly point for this course.

### **Safewalk**

The Safewalk program provides volunteers to walk students safely to their destination anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). This service is free and available to students, staff and campus visitors 24 hrs/day, 365 days a year. Call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help phones located throughout campus to request a walk.

**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 (Note D2L= Desire to Learn Link)**

Week 1 Jan 9, 11	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>  <b>What is “Tantra?”</b>	La Vallée Poussin, “Tantrism (Buddhist) [D2L]  Davidson and Orzech, “Tantra” [D2L]  Urban, “The Extreme Orient” [D2L]
Week 2 Jan 16, 18	<b>The History and Historiography of Tantric Buddhisms</b>  <b>What are Vajrayāna Buddhist formations?”</b>	Wedemeyer, “Tropes, Typologies, and Turnarounds” [D2L]  Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, pp. 1-24, 113-123
Week 3 Jan 23, 25	<b>What are Vajrayāna Buddhist formations?”</b>  <b>Consecration and Maṇḍalas</b>	Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, pp.113-123  Snellgrove, Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, pp. 117-141[D2L]
Week 4 Jan 30, Feb 1	<b>Consecration and Maṇḍalas</b>  <b>Vajrapāṇi, Monks, and Siddhas</b>	Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, pp. 124-144  Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, pp.144-168
Week 5 Feb 6, 8	<b>Monks and Siddhas</b>	Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, pp. 169-187

		Kapstein, “Scholastic Buddhism and the Mantrayāna” [D2L]  Davidson, <i>Indian Esoteric Buddhism</i> , pp. 187-235
Week 6 Feb 13, 15  <b>Feb 15 Midterm</b>	<b>Syncretism and Varieties in/of Tantric Buddhisms</b>  <b>Mid-term Exam, Thurs, Feb 15</b>	Wallis, <i>Mediating the Power of Buddhas</i> , pp. 1–54[D2L]  Giebel, <i>Two Esoteric Sutras</i> , pp. 125–141, 145–154, 199–220[D2L]
<b>Feb 19-25</b>	<b>Reading week No Classes</b>	
Week 7 Feb 27, March 1,	<b>Hermeneutics or “How to Read a Buddhist Tantra”</b>	Mitra, “Tathāgata-guhyaka alias Guhyasamāgha” [D2L] Snellgrove, <i>Indo-Tibetan Buddhism</i> , pp. 160–176[D2L]  Davidson, <i>Indian Esoteric Buddhism</i> , pp. 236-292
Week 8 March 6, 8	<b>Hermeneutics or “How to Read a Buddhist Tantra”</b>	Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies” [D2L]
Week 9 March 13, 15	<b>Readings &amp; Rituals: the <i>Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa</i> and <i>Susiddhikara</i>,</b>	Wallis, <i>Mediating the Power of Buddhas</i> , pp. 1–54[D2L] Giebel, <i>Two Esoteric Sutras</i> , pp. 125–141, 145–154, 199–220[D2L]
Week 10 March 20, 22	<b>Vajrayoginī, her ritual and forms</b>	English, <i>Vajrayoginī</i> , pp. 1-109.
Week 11 March 27, 29	<b>Vajrayoginī, her ritual and forms</b>	English, <i>Vajrayoginī</i> , pp. 109-223.
Week 12 April 3, 5	<b>Vajrayoginī, her ritual and forms Papers due Thursday, April 5</b>	English, <i>Vajrayoginī</i> , pp. 109-223.  English, <i>Vajrayoginī</i> , pp. 227–313
Week 13 April 10, 12	<b>Vajrayoginī, her ritual and forms</b>	English, <i>Vajrayoginī</i> , pp. 227–313
<b>TBA</b>	<b>Registrar Scheduled Final Exam</b>	

### Course Book Bibliography

- La Vallée Poussin, “Tantrism (Buddhist)” in James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908-1926), , pp. 193-197.
- Davidson, Ronald, and C. Orzech, “Tantra” in R. Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (NY: Macmillan, 2003), pp. 820-826.
- Urban, Hugh. “The Extreme Orient: The Construction of ‘Tantrism’ as a Category in the Orientalist Imagination,” *Religion* 29 (1999), pp. 123-146.
- Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. one (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987), pp. 117-141.
- Davidson, Ronald M. *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 1-24, 113-168, 169-235, and 236-292
- Wedemeyer, Christian K. “Tropes, Typologies, and Turnarounds: A Brief Genealogy of the Historiography of Tantric Buddhism,” *History of Religions* 40:3 (Feb 2001), pp. 223–259.
- Kapstein, Matthew. “Scholastic Buddhism and the Mantrayāna,” in M. Kapstein, *Reason’s Traces* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), pp. 233-255.
- Mitra, Rajendralal. “Tathāgata-guhyaka alias Guhya-samāgha” in *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1882), pp. 257-260.
- Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. one (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987), pp. 160–176.
- Wedemeyer, Christian K. “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahāyoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75: 2 (June 2007), pp. 383-417.
- Wallis, Glenn. *Mediating the Power of Buddhas* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 1-54.
- Giebel, Rolf, trans. *Two Esoteric Sutras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra [and] The Susiddhikara Sutra*. Berkeley: Numata Center, 2001), pp. 125–141, 145–154, 199–220.
- English, Elizabeth. *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals, and Forms*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002.
- Wallace, Vesna A. 2001. *The Inner Kālacakratantra: a Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Newman, John. “Eschatology in the Wheel of Time Tantra” in D. Lopez, ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 284-289.

*Updated November 14, 2017*

Jackson, Roger R., trans. *Tantric Treasures: Three Collections of Mystical Verse from Buddhist India*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.