

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

**Advanced Studies in Buddhism
RELS 603.05 / 703.05 L01: Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature
Winter 2016, T 2:00-4:45 p.m.**

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

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Required Texts

Jan Nattier. 2005. *A Few Good Men. The Bodhisattva Path according to The Inquiry of Ugra.*

Étienne Lamotte (Translator), Sara Boin-Webb (Translator). 2008. *Śūramgamasamādhisūtra: The Concentration of Heroic Progress*

Edward Conze, trans. 2001. *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lands & Its Verse Summary*

Leon Hurvitz, trans. 1976. *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sūtra)*

Course Description:

Self-consciously styled as the “Greater Vehicle” among Buddhist traditions, Mahāyāna streams of Buddhism have had a profound impact on the shape of Buddhist formations in India, throughout Asia, and beyond. This seminar will examine, in a selected survey format, the classification and development of early Mahāyāna literature utilizing a range of interdisciplinary methods and approaches. The course focuses on the problems of classification and definition; social formation and mythmaking; controversies in the conception of Buddhahood; gender and identity; visualization and other meditation techniques; the role of faith and the practices of lay people; and the development of the bodhisattva ideal.

Course Ethos

This course requires a high degree of self-motivation. Not only is the study of

Buddhist formations a truly demanding intellectual task, for which a robust reading requirement is a necessary component, but we will examine a number of primary and secondary sources that will not be familiar to all. Furthermore, this is a seminar course. Rather than following the lecture format, we will have discussions, and for discussions to be substantive, disciplined, and thought-creating, it means that seminar members must do the readings and attend the seminar with the intention to contribute to the course Conferences.

Grading

A letter grade will be assigned to each component of the course according to the University's Graduate Studies Calendar 2015-2016:

A+	4.0	Outstanding
A	4.0	Excellent – superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of the subject matter
A-	3.7	Very good performance
B+	3.3	Good performance
B	3.0	Satisfactory performance Note: The grade point value (3.0) associated with this grade is the minimum acceptable average that a graduate student must maintain throughout the program as computed at the end of each registration anniversary year of the program.
B-	2.7	Minimum pass for students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Note: A student who receives a B- or lower in two or more courses will be required to withdraw regardless of their grade point average unless the program recommends otherwise. Individual programs may require a higher minimum passing grade.
C+	2.3	All grades below B- are indicative of failure at the graduate level and cannot be counted toward Faculty of Graduate Studies course requirements. A student who receives a grade of F will normally be required to withdraw unless the program recommends otherwise.
C	2.0	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	
F	0.0	

N.B. All written assignments will be graded with regard to both form and content.

Course Requirements explained:

1. Attendance and Seminar Discussion Moderator [10%]: All attendees will be required to lead a seminar discussion (more than one, depending on our numbers). This entails a short presentation in which the discussion leader identifies the central themes brought out by the course readings and then proposes a series of questions for the class to consider. A schedule for presentations and conference session talking points will be determined in the first two weeks of the term.

2. Four Short critical response essays due on the following dates: 2/2, 2/23, 3/8 and 3/29. [60% total; 15% each]. These reports will serve as documentation of your presence and as evidence of your engagement with the reading material. The short essay guidelines and topics will be distributed in class.

3. Research Paper worth 30% of the final course grade, is due on Tuesday, April 12 at the beginning of class. The requirement is an essay reflecting detailed research and critical reflection on a specific topic pertaining to Mahāyāna Buddhist literature. Paper topics are open: you are free to choose any topic related to Mahāyāna Buddhist literature. **PAPER PARAMETERS AND GUIDELINES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS.**

Research Paper Requirements: Students enrolled in 603 – 3500-4000 words
Students enrolled in 703 – 4000-4500 words

There will be NO registrar scheduled final exam in this course.

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

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 54-56 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.*

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf

Desire2Learn Help

Go to <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/category/d2l> for Student Help and FAQ's about Desire2Learn. Troubleshooting tips and a tutorial are also available on this website.

Electronic Device Policy: Please review the university policy regarding specific

permission and forms required for recording of lectures:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>

Scientific evidence demonstrates that use of cellphones lowers student achievement as well as damage 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>

Graduate Student Association Ombudsperson

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 for more information.

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. 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.