

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY —FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
Early Mahayana Buddhist Literature

RELS 603.05 L01/703.05 Winter 2009, W 2:00-4:50 p.m., SS 1332

(University of Calgary Policy about course outlines may be found from page 43 of the *University Calendar*)

December 22, 2008

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Required Texts

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

Daniel Boucher. 2008. *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahayana: A Study and Translation of the Rastrapalapariṣṭha-sūtra* (Studies in the Buddhist Traditions)

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

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

Robert Thurman, trans. 2001. *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*

Apple, James B. **Course Pack Reading Assignments:** "RELS 603-703, Early Mahayana Buddhist Literature." University of Calgary, 2009. Available at the University Bookstore.

Course Description:

Self-consciously styled as the "Greater Vehicle" among Buddhist traditions, Mahayana 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 Mahayana 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 be examining 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 2008-2009:

Grade	Grade Point Value	Graduate Description
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	
C	2.0	
C-	1.7	
D+	1.3	
D	1.0	
F	0.0	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.

Course Requirements explained:

1. Attendance and Seminar Discussion Moderator [10%]: All attendees will be required to lead a seminar discussion (or maybe 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: 2/4, 2/25, 3/18 and 4/8. **[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 Wednesday, April 15 at the beginning of class. The requirement is an essay reflecting detailed research and critical reflection on a specific topic pertaining to Mahayana Buddhist literature. Paper topics are open: you are free to choose any topic related to Mahayana Buddhist literature. **PAPER PARAMETERS AND GUIDELINES WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS.**

Research Paper Requirements: Students enrolled in 603 – 3000-3500 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*, 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.

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.*

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.

Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule (Note: CB= Course book)

Jan. 14	Introduction Common or Mainstream Buddhisms	Background reading: [CB] Gombrich, "Gotama Buddha's problem situation" [CB] 'The Noble Search' [CB] <i>Alagaddūpama Sutta</i> [CB] Collins, "The denial of self as 'right view'" [CB] Tambiah, "The Path of Purification"
Jan. 21	CONFERENCE 1: Mahayana: definition, beginnings & formations	Session 1: [CB] Rūpyāvatī Gives Away her breasts [CB] Silk, "What, if anything, is Mahayana Buddhism?" [CB] Schopen, "Mahayana in Indian Inscriptions" Session 2: [CB] Gombrich, "How the Mahayana Began" [CB] Ruegg, "Aspects of the Study of the (Earlier) Indian Mahayana" [CB] Harrison, "Mediums and Messages: Reflections on the Production of Mahayana Sutras"
Jan 28	CONFERENCE 2 The Inquiry of Ugra	Session 1: Nattier, A Few Good Men, pp. 3-102 [CB] Hirakawa, "The Rise of Mahayana Buddhism and Its Relationship to the Worship of Stupas" Session 2: Nattier, A Few Good Men, pp. 103-200 [CB] Harrison, "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle?"
Feb. 4	CONFERENCE 3 The Inquiry of Ugra	[First Short Critical Essay due] Session 1: Nattier, A Few Good Men, pp. 207-279; Session 2: Nattier, A Few Good Men, pp. 280-324; Boucher xi-xxiii
Feb. 11	CONFERENCE 4 Bodhisattvas of the Forest	Session 1: Boucher, pp. 3-110 Session 2: Boucher, pp. 113-170
Feb. 15-22	Reading Week- no class	
Feb. 25	CONFERENCE 5 Vimalakirti	Session 1: Thurman, The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti, pp. 1-10, 11-33 Session 2: Thurman, The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti, pp 34-55 [Second Short Critical Essay due]

March 4	CONFERENCE 6 Vimalakirti	Session 1: <i>Thurman, The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti</i> , pp. 56-72 Session 2: <i>Thurman, The Holy Teaching of Vimalakirti</i> , pp. 73-102
March. 11	CONFERENCE 7 Perfection of Wisdom	Session 1: Conze, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines</i> , Chap 1-5 [CB] Conze, <i>The Development of Prajñāpāramitā Thought</i> Session 2: Conze, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom</i> , Chap 6-10 [CB] Deleanu, "A Preliminary Study on Meditation and the Beginnings of Mahayana Buddhism."
March. 18	CONFERENCE 8 Perfection of Wisdom	Session 1: [Third Short Critical Essay due] Conze, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom</i> , Chap 11-15 Session 2: Conze, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom</i> , Chap 16-20
March. 25	CONFERENCE 9 Perfection of Wisdom	Session 1: Conze, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom</i> , Chap 21-25 Session 2: Conze, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom</i> , Chap 26-32
April 1	CONFERENCE 10 Lotus Sutra	Session 1: Hurvitz, <i>The Lotus Sutra</i> , Preface and Chapters 1 & 2 Session 2: Hurvitz, <i>The Lotus Sutra</i> , Chapters 3-7
April. 8	CONFERENCE 11 Lotus Sutra	Session 1: [Fourth Short Critical Essay due] Hurvitz, <i>The Lotus Sutra</i> , Chapters 8-11 Session 2: Hurvitz, <i>The Lotus Sutra</i> , Chapters. 12-15
April. 15	CONFERENCE 12 Lotus Sutra	Session 1: Hurvitz, <i>The Lotus Sutra</i> , Chapters 16-17 [Final Research Papers are due] Session 2: Hurvitz, <i>The Lotus Sutra</i> , Chapters. 20-28

Course Book Bibliography

Gombrich, Richard. 1988. "Gotama Buddha's problem situation." *Theravada Buddhism : a social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo*. Pp. 32-59, 218-219.

Bodhi, Bhikkhu. 2004. "The Noble Search" in *Buddhist scriptures* (Penguin). Edited by Lopez (ed.). Pp. 104-115.

Bodhi, Bhikkhu. 1995. "Alagaddupama Sutta" *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*:

a New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya. Boston: Wisdom Publications. Pp. 224-236, Notes 1208-1213

Collins, Steven. 1982. "The denial of self as 'right view'." *Selfless Persons : imagery and thought in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 87-115, Notes 276-281.

Tambiah, Stanley. 1984. "The Path of Purification." *The Buddhist saints of the forest and the cult of amulets : a study in charisma, hagiography, sectarianism, and millennial Buddhism*. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 28-52, Notes 351-353.

Ohnuma, Reiko. 2004. "Rūpyāvatī gives away her breasts" in *Buddhist scriptures* (Penguin). Edited by Lopez (ed.). Pp. 159-171.

Silk, Jonathan. 2002. "What, if anything, is Mahayana Buddhism?" *Numen : international review for the history of religions*. Leiden: Brill. Pp. 355-405.

Gombrich, Richard. 1990 "How the Mahayana Began," in *The Buddhist forum*, vol 1. Edited by Tadeusz Skorupski (ed). Pp. 21-30.

Schopen, Gregory. 1979. "Mahayana in Indian Inscriptions." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 21. Pp. 1-19.

Ruegg, David Seyfort. 2004. "Aspects of the Study of (Earlier) Indian Mahayana," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. Volume 27, No. 1, pp. 3-63.

Harrison, Paul. 2003. "Mediums and Messages." *The Eastern Buddhist*. Vol 35 (1&2). Eastern Buddhist Society. Pp. 115-151.

Hirakawa, Akira. 1963. "The Rise of Mahayana Buddhism and Its Relationship to the Worship of Stupas." *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 22, pp. 57-106.

Harrison, Paul. 1987. "Who gets to ride in the Great Vehicle?" *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. International Association of Buddhist Studies. Pp. 67-89.

Conze, Edward. 1968. "The Development of Prajñāpāramitā Thought." *Thirty years of Buddhist studies*. University of South Carolina Press. Pp. 123-147.

Deleanu, Florin. "Preliminary Study on Meditation and the Beginnings of Mahayana" in the *Annual Report of the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Soka University for the Academic Year 1999*, pp. 65-113.