A. Description and guidelines

Course description

By looking into the Three Baskets of the Pāli canon, distinguishing the voices of its various medieval commentators, leafing through the gilded pages of illuminated manuscripts and comparing contemporary vernacular fiction the course introduces the historical and contemporary Buddhist literatures of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Nepal.

Requirements

This course will be conducted as a seminar. In order to be graded, students must prepare the reading assignments in due time, attend classes regularly, participate actively in the sessions, give one presentation and submit one essay.

The weekly reading assignments consist of a series of primary sources, articles or book chapters covering a specific topic which must be read ahead of the session in which this topic will be discussed. All readings will be made available in a reader or will be posted on the course website. Please check the Course Calendar below to find out which book or articles should be prepared for each session. Additionally, a minimum of 2 questions or critical remarks relating to the material read should be prepared for each session. Students will be expected to raise these questions or make these remarks and confront other members of the class.

Further, the participants are expected to initiate the discussions in class by presenting a short paper of 15 min. max. on a topic of their choice based on the assigned readings. Please check the Course Calendar below to find out which topic/text you would like to present on. It is possible to share such a presentation with a fellow student. The presenting students will be responsible for the programme and the moderation of the discussion during that particular session. They will have to submit the handout or outline of their paper to the course instructor as well as to the course participants not later than 24 hrs. preceding the time of the presentation.
Those students who will not present during that session are expected to prepare and raise at least 2 points per session, based on the assigned readings. For the final take-home essay (15-20 pages) students should choose one from among various topics which should be proposed, discussed and specified in coordination with the course instructor around mid-term. Students may suggest a theme according to their individual interests. This could be a particular text they have found challenging, a question which has come up in one of the readings, presentations, talks or discussions, or a topic you would like to explore more in detail.

The research essay has to be turned in one week after the final day of class as a printout and deposited in the instructor’s mailbox at the Centre for the Study of Religion, Jackman Humanities Building. Possible extensions to the deadline should be discussed with the course instructor well in advance. It is advisable to have at least one meeting with the course instructor to discuss the bibliography, the outline of your essay, your work in progress or receive feedback on a draft. However, keep in mind the deadline, so that you are able to incorporate advice in time. The course instructor will be glad to offer assistance in deciding on the relevant topic, material or method and discuss your thoughts and writing.

It is crucial for written assignments that everything you produce has been either formulated by yourself or marked and referenced as a quotation if you use materials you have taken from a source. As UofT has adopted a firm stance on the issue of plagiarism, please be aware that, if detected, the course instructor has the duty to report them to university authorities.

There will be no exams, quizzes or tests.

Evaluation
1. regular attendance and the active and informed participation in class: 20%
2. in-class presentation(s): 20%
3. one final research essay of 10-20 pages: 60%

Course grading scheme

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<th>Grade</th>
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Interaction with the course instructor

Address all your requests and queries about the course to the course instructor. Use your UTORonto.ca mail address. The mail header should identify the course so that your mail can be quickly identified. Though incoming mails are viewed on a daily basis and though the course instructor will try to address your issues as swiftly as possible, it may take up to three days for the instructor to reply to your mail, so do wait for that period before reacting and do mail in time if you have any urgent requests. Prearrange meetings by email so that they can be scheduled upon request.

Recommended preparation: RLG 206Y1/RLG 206H5 (2L:M2-4)

Recommended preparatory reading:
B. Schedule and topics


The Pāli canon, the paracanonical and the regional literatures. The languages and their relations: Pāli and Sanskrit, Burmese and Mon, Lao and Thai, Khmer and Vietnamese, Bahasa and Nepali. The places and their history: trade, state and networks between South and Southeast Asia. The people: saints, kings, queens, magicians, businessmen, nuns and monks.


What makes literature “religious”? What makes “the Canon”? What does not make it into the Canon? Who is a “Theravādin”? How “Theravādin” is Theravāda literature actually? How has Theravāda literature been studied and why so?

Required readings:

Recommended readings:

III. Sept. 29, 2009. Organizing: manuscripts and monasteries

Transmission and education, orality and script, inscriptions and manuscripts, art and archives, production and destruction.

Required readings:

Required readings:
- U Kyaw Thamee, “Painful As It Is” [*Pu tha hmya*] and “No Cooling of Anguish” [*Ei khvang ma phan*]. In *Burmese Classical Poems*. Selected and Translated by Friedrich von Lustig. Rangoon: U Khin Pe Gyi, 1966; 34-35.

Recommended reading:


Required primary readings:

Required secondary readings:

Recommended reading:
VI. Oct. 20, 2009. Hagiography 2: living the life and writing it up

Required primary readings:

Recommended readings:

VII. Oct. 27, 2009. Regulations: on how to be a good monk and how to do magic

Required primary readings:

Required secondary readings:

Recommended readings:

VIII. Nov. 3, 2009: Sermons: putting down facts or getting the message across

Required primary readings:

Required secondary readings:
- Walters, Jonathan S. Suttas as History: Four Approaches to the "Sermon on the Noble Quest" (Ariyapariyesanasutta). History of Religions, 38, 3 (Feb., 1999), 247-284.

Recommended readings:

Primary readings:

Secondary readings:

IX. Nov. 17, 2009. Commentaries: in other words and yet the same

Required primary readings:

Required secondary readings:

Recommended readings:

X. Nov. 24, 2009. Scholasticism: from basket to bucket and back again

Required primary readings:
- *Yo-nge-khou yu-pe-pya pathane. (24) passe nung rung-khyak-mya*. Published by Science scholarship Khang-mong-do, Yangon, 2008 [view the 32 illustrations only].

Required secondary readings:

Recommended readings:
XI. Dec. 1, 2009. The Sciences: how to know things the Buddhist way

Required primary readings:

Required secondary reading:

Recommended readings:

XII. Date TBA, 2009. Historiography: fearing the future, predicting the past, dictating the present

Required primary readings:
- The Mahāvaṃsa, or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon, translated by Wilhelm Geiger, assisted by Mabel Haynes Bode. London: Pali Text Society, 1964; Ch. 1 The Visit of the Tathāgata, 1-9; The Victory of Duṭṭhadāmaṇi, 170-178.

Required secondary readings:

Recommended readings:
Primary sources:
Secondary sources: