

**Emory University-Institute of Buddhist Dialectics
Tibetan Studies Program in Dharamsala**

Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy

MESAS 370 / REL 365 / PHIL 390

3 credits

Instructor: Ani Kelsang Wangmo

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Course Description

This class exposes students to central concepts, arguments, and practices from Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions, as found in ancient texts, medieval commentaries, and writings by contemporary Buddhist teachers. In addition to lectures given by Institute of Buddhist Dialectics' professors, the course will also include talks by local Buddhist scholars and meditation masters, as well as fieldtrips to important religious sites. Another important component will comprise attending two-weeks' of public teachings given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama (this year on the *Dhammapada* and the *Jatakas*), which will be accompanied by regular discussion sections on these texts. His Holiness the Dalai Lama will also give a special class on some aspect of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy to our group. Throughout the course, students will be asked to analyze, debate, and become proficient in key Buddhist philosophical concepts -- in class, in written essays, and in creative assignments. Finally, students will be encouraged to explore and articulate the relevance of these concepts and practices in light of contemporary (ethical, philosophical, scientific, environmental, social, etc) issues and concerns.

Course Schedule & Structure: M/W/F for 1 ½ hours (exact time TBA). Class will consist primarily of lectures, with time for discussion. It will also include several guest lecturers and fieldtrips.

Course Activity: There will be three short response papers, two creative assignments, and a final paper due during the course. Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, and must come to class -- on time -- having completed the readings assigned. We would like you to put effort into retaining and understanding the material covered in class, as well as provide your own analysis of the material. Throughout the course, we will be using a number of terms that are specific to Tibetan Buddhist philosophical discourse. Students should be able to understand and use this terminology accurately, both in discussion and in written and creative assignments.

Grading breakdown:

- 10% Participation & attendance (in classes, discussions, and fieldtrips)
- 45% Three 3-page written response papers
- 20% Two creative assignments (details to be given in class)
- 25% Final research paper

Course Schedule & Readings

Please Note: Schedule, Topics, and Readings might change!

****Readings will be provided to you on the Philosophy Course CD****

WEEK 1

Mon. Jan. 21 Life of the Buddha

Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, 23-53 (Chapter1)

Wed. Jan. 23 Four Noble Truths

Discourses of the Buddha [Vol. II], 1843-1847 & 1523-1525

H.H. the Dalai Lama, *The Heart of the Buddha's Path*, 152-209

Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 288-291

Fr. Jan. 25 The Four Seals: Impermanence, Suffering, No-self, & Nirvana

Discourses of the Buddha [Vol. I] 961-962, 569-570, 251-253, 1163-1164

H.H the Dalai Lama, *Many Ways to Nirvana*, 3-39

Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 336-337

Written response due in class – 3 pages

WEEK 2

Mon. Jan. 28 Introduction to Buddhist Psychology

Discourses of the Buddha [Vol. II], 1738-1739, 1781-1782

H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, 18-21

Lati Rinpoche, *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*, 11-39

Ani Tenzin Palmo, *Reflections on a Mountain Lake*, 185-194

Wed. Jan. 30 Three Higher Trainings: Ethics, Mental Absorption, & Wisdom

H.H. the Dalai Lama, *World of Tibetan Buddhism*, 18-20

Ani Tenzin Palmo, *Reflections on a Mountain Lake*, 41-60

Fr. Feb. 1 Wheel of Life: Ignorance, Karma, and Realms of Existence

Discourses of the Buddha [Vol. I], 537-53, [Vol. II], 1211-1212

H.H. the Dalai Lama, *The Meaning of Life*, 3-41

H.H the Dalai Lama, *Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, 26-28

WEEK 3

Mon Feb 4 The Three Types of Persons and the Three Vehicles

H.H. the Dalai Lama, *World of Tibetan Buddhism*, 9-13

HH the Dalai Lama, *Opening the Mind and Generating the Heart*, 41-47.

Wed. Feb. 6 “Wheel of Life” in-class presentations due

Fieldtrip to Namgyal Monastery (Philosophy & Culture class)

Feb. 7- 9 Losar (Tibetan New Year) Note: sometime during this time we will likely visit Dema Locho Rinpoche

WEEK 4

- Mon Feb 11** **The Two ‘Individual Vehicle’ Tenets**
Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 337-351
- Wed. Feb. 13** **Mind-Only Tenets**
Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, 365-374
Jeffrey Hopkins, *Cutting Through Appearances*, 260-267
- Fri .Feb. 15** **NO CLASS (fieldtrip to Sherabling, Tashi Jong, etc)**
Ani Tenzin Palmo, Introduction to *Reflections on a Mountain Lake*
Note: sometime during this fieldtrip we will meet Ani Tenzin Palmo and/or another Buddhist teacher

WEEK 5

- Mon. Feb. 18** **Madhyamika Tenets**
Jeffrey Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness* 398-421
- Wed. Feb. 20** **First day of Public Teachings by His Holiness the Dalai Lama**
Note: Throughout the teachings you should be reading from the *Dhammapada* (and possibly the *Jataka Tales*)
- Fri, Feb 22** **His Holiness’ teachings**

WEEK 6

- Mon. Feb. 25** **Evening discussion on H.H. the Dalai Lama’s Teachings**
- Wed. Feb 27** **H.H. the Dalai Lama’s teachings**
- Fr. Feb. 29** **Evening discussion on H.H. the Dalai Lama’s Teachings**
- Sun. Mar. 2** **H.H. The Dalai Lama’s Teachings end**

WEEK 7

- Mon. Mar. 3** **Dependent Arising**
Lobsang Gyatso, *Harmony of Emptiness & Dependent Arising*, 43-123
Written Response on the Teachings due in class – 3 pages
- Wed Mar 5th** **Ethical Issues: Sex & Gender**
Readings TBA
- Fri Mar 7th** **Ethical Issues: What comprises violence, and is it ever acceptable?**
Readings TBA
Fieldtrip: Meet Tenzin Tsondue (Philosophy & Culture class)

WEEK 8

- Mon Mar 10th** **NO CLASS (attend March 10th Activities)**

SPRING BREAK (March 11-22)

WEEK 9

- Mon. Mar. 24** **Heart Sutra**
H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*, 59-97
- Wed. Mar. 26** **Heart Sutra – Talk by Geshe Dorji Damdul**
H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Essence of the Heart Sutra*, 99-135
- Fr. Mar. 28** **Debate in the Buddhist Tradition**
Discourses of the Buddha [Vol. II], 1736-1740
Daniel E. Perdue, *Debate in Tibetan Buddhism*, (Chapt.1)
Written Response due in class – 3 pages

WEEK 10

- Mon. Mar. 31** **Method of Exchanging Self for Others**
Shantideva, *Engaging in the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, Chapter 8
Lobsang Gyatso, *Bodhicitta*, 57-99
- Wed. Apr 2** **The Seven-Fold Cause and Effect Method**
Pabongka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, 565-587
Lobsang Gyatso, *Bodhicitta*, 15-55
- Fri Apr. 4** **Lama Langri Thangpa's 'The Eight Verses for Mind Training'**
H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Transforming the Mind*, 109-132
H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, 100-115

WEEK 11

NOTE: Sometime during this week we are scheduled to meet HH the Dalai Lama!

- Mon Apr 7** **The First Four of the Six Perfections: Generosity, etc.**
H.H. the Dalai Lama, *Kindness, Clarity, and Insight*, 32-44
Pabonka Rinpoche, *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, 626-646
- Wed Apr 9** **Creative assignment due in class**
- Fri Apr 11** **The Last Two Perfections: Calm-Abiding & Special Insight**
Dalai Lama, *Kindness, Clarity and Insight*, 65-77
Ani Tenzin Palmo, *Reflections on a Mountain Lake*, 87-103 (Chapter 6)

WEEK 12

- Mon Apr 14** **Introduction to Tantra**
H.H. the Dalai Lama, *The World of Tibetan Buddhism*, 91-156
- Wed. Apr. 16** **Iconography and Buddhist Symbolism**
Readings TBA
- Fr. Apr. 18** **Deity Yoga Practice – Geshe Kalsang Damdul**
Readings TBA

WEEK 13

Mon. Apr. 21	Tantra (continued) Readings TBA
Wed. Apr. 23	Tantra (continued) Readings TBA
Fri Apr. 25th	Last day of class <u>Final paper due -- 10-12 pages</u>