

Seminar in Late Twentieth Century Philosophy – Tibetan Buddhist Thought
Philosophy 395
Professor Carol J. Moeller
Spring 2006

Office: Zinzendorf 202, 610-625-7881, moeller@moravian.edu

Required Texts:

Jean-François Revel and Mattieu Ricard, *The Monk and the Philosopher*

The Dalai Lama, *The Universe in a Single Atom*

Ngakpa Chogyam with Khandro Dechen, *Spectrum of Ecstasy: Embracing the Five Wisdom Energies of Vajrayana Buddhism*

Traleg Rinpoche, *The Essence of Buddhism*

Recommended Texts: Robert Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*, Reginald Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, Reginald Ray, *Secrets of the Vajra World*

Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays 9-10 a.m.; Tuesdays, Thursdays 1-2 p.m.

Class Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:20-3:30

Classroom: Hall of Science 200

Course Description

This course focuses upon Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, worldview and spiritual practices. It examines Tibetan Buddhist answers to questions traditionally asked in Western philosophy, at times looking at contrasts and parallels to Continental and British-American traditions in Western philosophy.

Course Goals

Course Outcomes

Students should demonstrate understanding and

Course Requirements (as percentage of final grade)

Class attendance and discussion participation	10%
Attendance at videos and field trips	10%
Four three to four page essays	10%
2 oral presentations, any quizzes and other in-class work	5%
One 12-14 page essay, or two 5-7 page essays (your choice)	25%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Optional Substitution: Meditation Practice and Journal (10%), to be substituted at your wish for any about 10 percent portion, except for attendance, and for field trip and video portion (though if these – especially the trips, are impossible for some reason that you know in advance, please talk to me about that).

Course Requirements Further Explained

Class attendance and participation (10%): Attendance and discussion participation are required at class and at video showings and field trip. Unexcused absences or failure to participate will detract from your grade, see below for numerical penalty.

Attendance at videos and field trips (10%): Probably at least two trips: one will be about a half a day trip to the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center in Washington, NJ, and one a full day trip to the Rubin Museum of Art of the Himalayas in the Chelsea area of New York City. There might be a cost of about \$10 for the New York trip, especially if arranged through the Art Department.

Four 3-4 page seminar essays, and two oral presentations, (10%):

Four 3-4 page seminar essays, on the readings for the class meeting at which you hand it in. That is, the essay should be about your reaction to the readings, not a review or extension of the class discussion. Of the 24 or so class meetings, you need to hand in 4 seminar essays. I would suggest you try to do a brief essay at least once per week, so that unexpected life issues or other coursework won't interfere with your completing all 4 essays. These essays are for your benefit, to practice engaging critically with the readings; they will be given a rough grade, such as on a scale of 0-5.

Two oral presentations, quizzes and other in-class work, (5%): The two oral presentations are to give an overview and exposition of the readings for that day, giving your questions, criticisms or comments in response. They should be about five minutes minimum. These are occasional quizzes and in-class assignments, individual and group.

Essay (25%): Either two 8-9 page essays (double-spaced) or one 16-17 page essays (double-spaced) on topic(s) selected from those I distribute, or your own proposed topic with my written approval. Please use 10-12 font (no decorative fonts please), use 1 inch margins (top/bottom/sides) and properly document sources. Use a complete bibliography, using footnotes or endnotes or giving parenthetical references (name of author, page of reference), in the body of the paper. Be sure to cite the page in question, so your documentation is complete. Come see me for any help or for feedback on outlines or drafts of your essay.

Midterm Exam (20%) and Final Exam (20%): The midterm and final exams will cover the readings, videos and other materials covered in the class. It will require students have a good understanding of the material, can reflect coherently about it, and can draw connections to other philosophical issues. The final exam will focus on material from the second half of the course; however, it will necessarily draw on some from the first half of the course.

Optional Substitution: Meditation Practice and Journal (10%): Meditation practice and journal to be substituted at your wish for any about 10 percent portion, except for attendance, and for field trip and video portion (though if these – especially the trips, are impossible for some reason that you know in advance, please talk to me about that). This can include some mindful walking and other forms of meditation, but should include some regular time in some form of sitting meditation. For optimal grade, this would be a minimum of 30 brief meditation sessions (can be as short as 5 minutes), and brief experiential journal about at least 15 of these sessions (can be just a couple of sentences each). Journal is to have sections handed in regularly, at appointed times, so do them on loose leaf paper or something else easy to turn in. A log should note the date and time of each session as well.

Academic Integrity:

The rules of academic integrity for Moravian College must be followed. Please take them seriously. Any suspicion of violations will be actively pursued. For more information on these policies, please see the student handbook, the professor, or the academic dean's office.

Doing Well:

As a seminar, this course absolutely depends upon consistent student involvement. It is imperative that students keep up with their work in this course and get help any time they have trouble. Each chunk of material builds upon the previous chunk, and so holes in understanding will continue to cause problems. Similarly, missing even a single class or skipping some readings can disrupt the learning process and leave a student feeling hopelessly lost very quickly. Please be on top of your work, come to class, ask questions, and achieve an excellent level of understanding and ability to do problems.

Learning Disabilities:

Students with learning disabilities should contact the Learning Services Office as soon as possible to arrange for any necessary accommodations.

Disabilities:

Students with any disabilities who may be interested in reasonable accommodations should contact the Learning Services Office.

Potential Syllabus Changes:

This syllabus is subject to change at the professor's notice.

Further Note on Grading:

As in other courses, grading is at the discretion of the professor. For example, there may be an element of subjectivity in how much partial credit is given to a response. You may appeal grades to the Dean's Office.

Reading schedule is in flux at the moment because it depends to some degree upon the arrival of the Dalai Lama's book. It will require about 50 pages of reading prior to each class meeting.

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Pages</i>
T	8/29	Introduction to the Course	
TH	8/31	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	vii -- 52
T	9/5	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	53-148
TH	9/7	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	148-213
T	9/12	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	214-262
TH	9/14	<i>The Spirit of Tibet: Video & Assignment</i>	
T	9/19	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	263-305
TH	9/21	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	306-351
T	9/26	<i>The Essence of Buddhism</i>	Beginning through end of Chapter 4
TH	9/28	<i>The Essence of Buddhism</i>	Chapter 6-10
			Essay topics (1 st Set of Options) Distributed
T	10/3	<i>The Essence of Buddhism</i>	Chapter 15-17
			Exam 1 (Take-Home) Handed Out
TH	10/5	<i>The Yogis of Tibet: Video</i>	
T	10/10	No Class	Fall Break
TH	10/12	<i>Kundun: Video & Assignment</i>	
T	10/17	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i>	Beginning to 40
			Exam 1 (Take-Home) Due
TH	10/19	<i>Windhorse: Video and Assignment</i>	
T	10/24	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i>	41-70
			Essay 1 Option Due

Essay topics (2nd Set of Options) Distributed

TH	10/26	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i>	71-93
T	10/31	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i>	93-136
TH	11/2	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i>	136-163
T	11/7	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i>	163-209
TH	11/9	<i>Kundun</i> : Video & Assignment	
T	11/14	<i>The Universe in a Single Atom</i> Discussion of <i>Kundun</i>	Essay Due
TH	11/16	<i>Spectrum of Ecstasy</i>	Beginning to 72
T	11/21	<i>Spectrum of Ecstasy</i>	73-121
TH	11/23	No Class	Thanksgiving
T	11/28	<i>Spectrum of Ecstasy</i>	122-180
TH	11/30	<i>Spectrum of Ecstasy</i>	180-233
T	12/5	<i>Spectrum of Ecstasy</i>	233-276
TH	12/7	Review, Discussion	

12/13-12/16; 12/18-12/19 Final Exam (as scheduled during finals) Final Exam

Note: It is College policy that final examinations may not be rescheduled except by approval from the dean's office. If you anticipate needing to leave town before the last day of final exams, seek that approval. The professor is not permitted to allow other re-schedulings or make-ups of finals, beyond those permitted by official policy (as detailed in the College Catalog). There will be no exceptions.

3	Tues.	9/5		
4	Thurs.	9/7		
5	Tues.	9/12		
6	Thurs.	9/14		
7	Tues.	9/19		
8	Thurs.	9/21		
9	Tues.	9/26		
10	Thurs.	9/28		
11	Tues.	10/1		
12	Thurs.	10/3		
13	Tues.	10/8	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	24-117
14	Thurs.	10/10	No Class: Fall Break	
15	Tues.	10/15	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	118-170
	Thurs.	10/17	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	171-213
8	Tues.	10/22	<i>The Monk and the Philosopher</i>	214-262
	Thurs.	10/24		
10	Tues.	10/29		
	Thurs.	10/31		
11	Tues.	11/5		
	Thurs.	11/7		

12 Tues. 11/12

 Thurs. 11/14

13 Tues. 11/19

 Thurs. 11/21

14 Tues. 11/26

 Thurs. 11/28

15 Tues. 12/4

 Thurs. 12/6 Review

12/13-12/16; 12/18-12/19 **Final Exam**

, **Video: Medicine Buddha Mandala**

Video: Kundun

Class begins at noon, Video: The Yogis of Tibet

[Recommended: *Essential Tibetan Buddhism* Intro., 1-45]