

Tibetan Buddhist Thought
Philosophy 223
Professor Carol J. Moeller
Spring 2016

Office: Comenius 110, 610-625-7881, moellerc@moravian.edu

Required Texts: Matthieu Ricard, *The Monk and the Philosopher*, Traleg Kyabgon, *The Essence of Buddhism*

Recommended Text: Robert Thurman, *Why the Dalai Lama Matters*, Robert Thurman, *Essential Tibetan Buddhism*

Class Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35-3:45, Comenius 114

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:45-10:15 a.m., 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., and by appointment.

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 Requirements (as percentage of final grade)

Class engagement and discussion participation, attendance at videos	5%
Field trip (date to be determined)	5%
Five 1-2 page response essays, 2 oral presentations, quizzes and other in-class work	5%
Mindfulness Practice and log (at least 30 minutes per week) or Alternative	5%
5-6 page essay	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students should achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To understand and appreciate Tibetan Buddhist thought;
- 2) To understand Tibetan Buddhist thought in contrast and in connection with Western philosophical views;
- 3) To develop greater reading, writing, reasoning and speaking ability in the context of Tibetan Buddhist thought;
- 4) To appreciate Tibetan Buddhist worldviews and gain more perspective on Western ones.

Course Requirements Further Explained

Engagement and participation (5%): Attendance and discussion participation are required at class and at field trip. Unexcused absences or failure to participate will detract from your grade. (Participation need not be overtly verbal; however, students ought to be present and attentive, engaging in the material somehow even if silently.)

Note: in addition to the engagement grade here, unexcused absences beyond two will count against your final grade for the course at a rate of 0.5% each. Please inform me before the date of an excused absence, giving relevant documentation.

Field Trip (5%): Field trip is to the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center in Washington, NJ. It is one of the first sites of Tibetan Buddhism coming to North America. I will work with the class to find a good time. The location is about one hour away.

Five 1-2 page response essays and two oral presentations (5%):

Five 1-2 page response essays: reflective papers 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 five response essays. I would suggest you try to do a brief essay at least once every week or every other week, so that unexpected life issues or other coursework won't interfere with your completing all five essays. These essays are for your benefit, to practice engaging critically with the readings; they will not be graded except for Pass/Fail, simply marked for credit toward your assigned total of five.

Two oral presentations, 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.

Quizzes and other in-class work These are occasional quizzes and in-class assignments, individual and group.

Mindfulness Practice and Log, at least 30 minutes per week (5%):

Outside of class, students will do and log at least 30 minutes per week of mindfulness practice, a variety of which will be introduced in class, in videos, and in the readings. These must be done each week as we go along; submit simple logs each Tuesday during class (noting time, place, type of meditation/mindfulness practice, and any comments). Alternatives may be arranged, if the student is not comfortable with undertaking this kind of practice, whether for religious, philosophical, or other reasons.

Essay (20% each): 5-6 double-spaced pages on topic 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. Also, please be careful about Internet use and proper references with it. With the use of any Internet source, you must submit a hard copy of the article as well as the web address. Come see me for any help or for feedback on outlines or drafts of your essay.

Exams (20% each): The exams will cover the readings, videos and other materials covered in the class. Each will require students have a good understanding of the material, can reflect coherently about it, and can draw connections to other philosophical issues.

Academic Support Services: If you know or suspect you might be in need of particular learning assistance, in anything from study skills or time management to possible disability issues, please contact the Academic Support Center as soon as possible, lower level of Monocacy Hall, 610-861-1401.

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Pages</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
T	1/19	First Day of Class		
TH	1/21	<i>Essence of Buddhism</i>	ix-x, 1-9	_____
T	1/26	<i>Essence of Buddhism</i>	10-22	_____
TH	1/28	<i>Essence of Buddhism</i>	23-29	_____
T	2/2	“ “	30-35	_____
TH	2/4	“ “	Review	_____
T	2/9	No Class, Tibetan New Year (Professor will be away)		
TH	2/11	Exam 1		
T	2/16	“ “	36-41	_____
TH	2/18	“ “	42-49	_____
T	2/23	“ “	50-57	_____
TH	2/25	“ “	58-68	_____
T	3/1	“ “	69-78	_____
TH	3/3	“ “	79-95	_____
T	3/8	Spring Recess: No Class		
TH	3/10	Spring Recess: No Class		
T	3/15	“ “	96-118	_____
TH	3/17	“ “	119-143	_____
T	3/22	“ “	144-157	_____
TH	3/24	“ “	158-178	_____
T	3/29	Review		_____
TH	3/31	Exam 2		_____
T	4/5	Monk and the Philosopher	vii-23	_____
TH	4/7		24-117	_____
T	4/12		118-170	_____
TH	4/14		171-213	_____
T	4/19		214-262	_____
TH	4/21		263-305	_____
T	4/26		306-351	_____
TH	4/28	Review		

MON May 2 3:00 p.m. Final Exam

