Philosophy 336/AAAS 336/Philosophy 510H:
Buddhist Metaphysics
Spring 2010

Prof. Charles Goodman
cgoodman@binghamton.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM, in LT 1214 on the twelfth floor of the Library Tower

Course Description:
We will study philosophical theories about reality, and about our knowledge of reality, developed by Buddhists in India and Tibet. First, we will examine the ontology and metaphysics of early Buddhism and of Abhidharma texts, and compare their ideas with those of contemporary analytic philosophers. We will then use both primary and secondary sources to investigate Nāgārjuna’s radical critique of all philosophical views. In particular, we will give detailed examination to the interpretations of Nāgārjuna offered by the Indian philosopher Candrakīrti and the Tibetan philosopher Tsong kha pa. During class discussions, we will critically investigate Buddhist arguments and analyze their strengths and weaknesses. Among the issues we will discuss are time and change, causation, personal identity, and the nature of knowledge.

Prerequisites: One course in philosophy.

Course Requirements:
Attendance in class is expected, and since this is a seminar, active participation in class is essential. Students will be evaluated on the quantity and quality of class participation. There will be two papers, 6-8 pages in length. Each of these two papers must be revised and handed back in. There will also be a final seminar paper, 8-12 pages long. Late papers will lose one-third of a grade per day. At each class, a question about the reading for the next session will be provided. Five times during the semester, there will be an unannounced, one-page in-class writing assignment on the reading question.

Grading Policy:
Grades in Philosophy/AAAS 336 will be based on the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Writing Assignments</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Paper Revision</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Paper Revision</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Seminar Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Plagiarism:**
As it is a type of academic dishonesty, plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated in this course. You may, however, discuss issues about Buddhist philosophy with your fellow students, as long as the papers you turn in are substantially your own work. If you do commit plagiarism on any assignment, you will receive a grade of F for that assignment, and additional measures may be taken at the discretion of the instructor.

**Learning Objectives:**
- To become familiar with the major forms of Buddhist philosophy and the differences between them.
- To learn the principal arguments for the doctrine of no self.
- To develop some skill in comparing Asian and Western philosophical ideas.
- To develop greater proficiency in analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical arguments.
- To improve writing skills and critical thinking abilities.

**Required Readings:**


Coursepack (henceforth CP), available from the Binghamton University bookstore

**List of Readings and Discussion Topics:**

1/26: **Organizational Meeting**

1/28: **Introduction to Buddhism**
Goodman, “Fundamental Buddhist Teachings,” available on the Blackboard website

2/2: **The Worldview of the Abhidharma**
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 1, 23

2/4: **Why There Is No Soul (I)**
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 26
2/9: **Why There Is No Soul (II)**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 28

2/11: **An Argument Against Composition**  
Unger, “The Problem of the Many,” CP

2/16: **A Question about Composition**  
van Inwagen, ch. 1-3 and 6, pp. 1-37 and 56-60

2/18: **Some Radical Answers**  
van Inwagen, ch. 8-11, pp. 72-114

2/23: **Identity and Modality**  
van Inwagen ch. 12-14, pp. 115-168

2/25: **Subjects of Experience**  
van Inwagen ch. 15-16, pp. 169-212  
First Paper topics handed out

3/2: **No-Self, Metaphor and Approximation**  
Goodman, “Vaibhāṣīka Metaphoricalism,” available on the Blackboard website

3/4: **The Great Way and the Philosophy of Idealism**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 3

3/9: **The Middle Way School and its History**  
Huntington pp. 25-67  
First Paper due

3/11: **The Bodhisattva Stages**  
Huntington pp. 149-156 and pp. 185-196

3/16: **The Diamond Slivers**  
Huntington pp. 157-84

3/18: **Discussion of Paper for SPEL Colloquium**  
Essay by Jonathan Gold will be made available

3/23: **The Madhyamaka View**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 2, 4  
First Paper Revision due

3/25: **Conventional and Ultimate**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 10
4/6: **Buddhist Epistemology**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 9, 16, 17  
Second Paper topics handed out

4/8: **The Regress of Justification and the Status of Epistemology**  
Siderits, “The Madhyamaka Critique of Epistemology (I),” CP

4/13: **Zen Buddhism**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 7, 13, 22

4/15: **Buddhism in Tibet**  
Tsong kha pa ch. 1, 6  
Second Paper due

4/20: **The Middle Way in Tibet: An Introduction**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 5, 11, 20

4/22: **Identifying the Object of Negation**  
Tsong kha pa ch. 9-11

4/27: **The Status of the Conventional**  
Tsong kha pa ch. 12-14  
Second Paper Revision due

4/29: **Emptiness and Causation**  
Tsong kha pa ch. 15-16  
Final Paper Topic Suggestions handed out

5/4: **What to Negate**  
Tsong kha pa ch. 17-19

5/6: **How to Live the View**  
Edelglass and Garfield ch. 36-38

Final Paper due during exam period