

PHIL/RELIG 438/538: Buddhist Philosophy—India	Fall 2006
Instructor: Dr. Richard P. Hayes	Classroom: Humanities 518
Office hours: Thurs 2:00–4:00PM	Or by appointment
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1 Course description

The most distinctive feature of Buddhist philosophy, especially in India, was the doctrine of non-self. We shall begin by examining pre-Buddhist views of the self. Then we shall examine passages in early Buddhist scriptures in which the doctrine of non-self is first taught and introduced as a topic of meditation. We shall then see how two influential Buddhist scholastics, Vasubandhu (fifth century C.E.) and Candrakīrti, treated the doctrine of non-self.

All required readings for this course will be found on WebCT.

2 Assignments

There will be four assignments in this course.

Historical assignment On the basis of the lectures and readings done through September 14, outline what you see as the key issues that distinguished the teachings of the Buddha from the teachings of other religious philosophers in ancient India. Approximate length of essay: 1000 words. *Due September 14.*

First critical review Write a critical analysis of an argument of your choice from either the *Questions of King Milinda* or Candrakīrti's *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way*. First state the author's argument as you understand it, then state what you see as the principal strengths and weaknesses of the argument. Approximate length: 1250 words. *Due October 24.*

Second critical review State what you see as the principal strengths and weaknesses of the arguments given by Vasubandhu against personalism. Approximate length: 1250 words. *Due November 14.*

Persuasive essay Considering all the writings we have studied in this course, which author that we have studied gives what is in your opinion the most satisfactory exposition of the teachings of the Buddha on the self? State why you find the author you have chosen more satisfactory than others. Approximate length: 1500 words. *December 7.*

Assignment	Date due	Pct
Historical assignment	Sep 14	20%
First critical review	Oct 24	25%
Second critical essay	Nov 14	25%
Persuasive essay	Dec 7	30%
		100%

3 Schedule of lectures and discussions

Dates	Topic	Readings
Aug 22	Discussion of course contents and structure	
24	Background: Pre-Buddhist views of self; Upaniṣads and Jainism	
29	Sāṃkhya and Yoga views of self	
31	Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika views of self	
Sep 5	The Pali canon	Connected Discourses (Ch. 1 ¹)
7	The Pali canon	The Gradual Sayings (Ch. 2)
Sep 12	The Pali canon	Middle-length Sayings (Ch. 3)
14	The Pali canon	Long Discourses (Ch. 4)
19	Milinda's Questions	Horner (1964, pp. 34–54)
21	Milinda's Questions	Horner (1964, pp. 54–88)
26	Thanissaro Bhikkhu	<i>Mind Like Fire Unbound</i> (Part III through Chapter II)
29	Thanissaro Bhikkhu	<i>Fire</i> (Chapters III and IV)
Oct 3, 5	The practical dimension	Thanissaro & Ayyā Khemā (Part II)
10	Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti	“Self-existence” in Sprung (1979, pp. 152–164)
17	Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti	“Self and the way things really are” in Sprung (1979, pp. 165–186)
19	Class cancelled	
24	Reductionist and nonreductionist theories	Duerlinger (1993)
27	Personalism <i>Pudgalavāda</i>	http://www.iep.utm.edu/~p/pudgalav.htm
31	Vasubandhu's critique of personalism	Duerlinger (1997)
Nov 2	Vasubandhu's critique <i>continued</i>	Duerlinger (1998)
7, 9	Vasubandhu's critique <i>continued</i>	Duerlinger (2000)
14	Situating reductionism	Siderits (2003, pp. 15)
16	Refuting the self	Siderits (2003, pp. 17–34)
21	Wholes, Parts and Supervenience	Siderits (2003, pp. 75–98)
28	The ethical consequences of Buddhist Reductionism	Siderits (2003, pp. 99–112)
30	Personal identity, continuity and the I-consciousness	Thupten Jinpa (2002, 107–147)
Dec 5	No-Self, Truth and the Middle Way	Thupten Jinpa (2002, 148–183)
7	Conclusions	

¹All references to chapters are to those in the course pack.

Works Cited

- Duerlinger, James. "Reductionist and Nonreductionist Theories of Persons in Indian Buddhist Philosophy." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 21 (March 1993): 79–101.
- Duerlinger, James. "Vasubandhu's Philosophical Critique of the Vātsīputrīya's Theory of Persons (I)." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 25 (1997): 307–335.
- Duerlinger, James. "Vasubandhu's Philosophical Critique of the Vātsīputrīya's Theory of Persons (II)." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 26 (1998): 573–605.
- Duerlinger, James. "Vasubandhu's Philosophical Critique of the Vātsīputrīya's Theory of Persons (III)." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28 (2000): 125–170.
- Horner, I. B. *Milinda's Questions*. Volume 22 of Sacred Books of the Buddhists. London: Pali Text Society, 1964.
- Siderits, Mark. *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy: Empty Persons*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003.
- Sprung, Mervyn. *Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way: The Essential Chapters from the Prasannapadā of Candrakīrti*. Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1979.
- Thupten Jinpa. *Self, Reality and Reason in Tibetan Philosophy: Tsongkhapa's quest for the Middle Way*. Curzon critical studies in Buddhism. London; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002.