

PHIL/RELG 438/538: Buddhist Philosophy—India		Fall 2008
Instructor: Richard P. Hayes	Classroom: SARAR 107	
Office hours: Tues 11:00–12:00	Or by appointment	
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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Buddha is reported to have said that whoever knows the Buddha’s teachings knows the Buddha, and whoever knows the doctrine of dependent origination knows the Buddha’s teachings. Buddhists ever since have struggled to come up with a satisfactory theory of cause and effect. Our task will be to examine several approaches to causality in the Indian Buddhist scholastic tradition and to compare them with causal theories in Western philosophy. Beginning with discussions of dependent origination in the Pali canon, we’ll move on to two abhidharma traditions and to the critique of causality by the Mādhyamikas.

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

2. ASSIGNMENTS

Evaluation in this course will be based on four pieces of work. More details on each of these items will be given in class and on WebCT.

Quizzes There will be two in-class quizzes during the term, which will cover the readings, lectures and discussions. The first quiz will cover the Pali canon, and the second will cover Vasubandhu’s system of abhidharma.

Review of *Mind Like Fire Unbound* Write a critical review of what you take to be the principal points made in Thanissaro Bhikkhu’s essay *Mind Like Fire Unbound*. This review should be approximately 1000 words (about four pages) in length.

Essay on Mādhyamika Write a critical essay of Nāgārjuna’s critique of causes and conditions. This essay should be approximately 1500 words (about six pages) in length.

Reflections on in-class discussions During the last two weeks of class, we will have small-group discussions of writings by Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa and David Loy. After attending these discussions, write up your reflections on what your group discussed about these writings.

The distribution of marks for these four assignments are as follows:

Assignment	Date due	Pct
In-class quiz on Pali canon	Sep 23	15%
Review of modern expositors	Oct 14	25%
In-class quiz on abhidharma	Nov 11	15%
Essay on Mādhyamika	Nov 25	30%
Reflections on in-class discussions	Dec 11	15%
		100%

3. SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS

Date	Topic and reading	
Aug 26	Discussion of course contents and structure	
28	Causal theories in Indian philosophy	Potter , 93–116
Sep 2	The Pali Canon	Connected Discourses (Course Pack Ch. 1.1–1.6)
4	The Pali Canon	Connected Discourses (Course Pack Ch. 1.7–1.12)
Sep 9	The Pali canon	The Gradual Sayings (Course Pack Ch. 2)
16	The Pali canon	Middle-length Sayings (Course Pack Ch. 3.1–2)
Sep 18	The Pali Canon	Middle-length Sayings (Course Pack Ch. 3.3–4)
23	The Pali canon In-class quiz on Pali canon	Long Discourses (Course Pack Ch. 4)
30	Piyadassi Thera	Piyadassi Thera
21	Thanissaro Bhikkhu	<i>Mind Like Fire Unbound</i> (Course Pack Part II through Chapter II, pp. 63–94)
Oct 7	Thanissaro Bhikkhu	<i>Fire</i> (Course Pack Part II Chapters III and IV)
9	The practical dimension	Bhikkhu Thanissaro & Bhikkhu Bodhi (Course Pack Part III)
Oct 14	Abhidharma Review of <i>Mind Like Fire Unbound</i> due	(Course Pack Part IV)
21	The causal principle and its validity	Kalupahana, 1975 , 89–109
23	The causal explanation of existence	Kalupahana, 1975 , 110–146
28	Vasubandhu's <i>Abhidharmakośa</i>	Consult Chaudhuri
30	Types of cause in Vasubandhu	Stcherbatsky , 93–107
Nov 4	Vasubandhu's theory of karma	Stcherbatsky , 28–43
6	Vasubandhu's theory of karma	Hayes
11	The Mādhyamika school: an overview In-class quiz on abhidharma	
13	Nāgārjuna's <i>Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i>	Garfield , 100–102 Kalupahana, 1986 , 101–103
18	Critique of causality	Kalupahana, 1986 , 105–109 Garfield , 103–115
20	Critique of causality	Kalupahana, 1986 , 109–117 Garfield , 115–123
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Date	Topic and reading
25	Candrakīrti's commentary Sprung , 65–75
Dec 2 4	Buddhadāsa: "The value of morality" Swearer , 158–166 Buddhadāsa: "Democratic socialism"
Dec 9 11	David Loy: "Pave the planet or wear shoes?" Loy , 73–89 Conclusions Reflections on in-class discussions due

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