

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Course Outline**

**Phil 2966F  
“Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy”**

<b>Summer Day 2020</b>	<b>Instructor:</b> Robert J. Stainton
<b>Class Days and Hours:</b> M, W, F 12:30-2:30 p.m.	<b>Office:</b> StH 3126 <b>Office Hours:</b> F 11:00-12:00
<b>Classroom:</b> Online via Zoom	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:rstainto@uwo.ca">rstainto@uwo.ca</a>
<b>Web Site:</b> <a href="http://publish.uwo.ca/~rstainto/">http://publish.uwo.ca/~rstainto/</a>	

**DESCRIPTION**

A very first introduction to Buddhist philosophy. The course will overview the connections among Buddhist epistemology, metaphysics and ethics, comparing them where helpful to doctrines familiar from Western philosophy (e.g., in the pre-Socratics and Early Modern Empiricists). Discussion will range across the sutras (tracing to the Buddha’s own teachings), the middle period Abhidharma schools, and the later Mahayana teachings. We will discuss how each of epistemology, metaphysics and ethics, across the three periods, connect to Buddhist soteriology (salvation from suffering), but the course will address Buddhism as philosophy, rather than as a religious practice. As such, the doctrines will be explained sympathetically, but also assessed critically.

**TEXTS**

TBA

**OBJECTIVES**

The twin objectives are honing of philosophical skills and enriching students’ familiarity with some “touchstone” ideas in Buddhist philosophy. In terms of skills, the emphasis will be on: introduction to philosophical writing; methodological reflection; and respectful but incisive philosophical dialogue.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Three brief essays (~1000 words each): 45%  
Glossary of philosophical terms: 15%  
Participation in online classes: 15%  
Take-home exam: 25%

**AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

### **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>. It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM**

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances: [http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_322](http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322)

### **EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENT**

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

### **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **PLAGIARISM CHECKING**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning (519) 661-3030 (during class hours) or (519) 433-2023 after class hours and on weekends.