Buddhism in the Nepal Himalayas: Seminar

Draft as of 2/11/2019

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:30-6:30
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Course Description
This advanced seminar will explore the Buddhist traditions found in the Himalayas, covering the elite philosophical, artistic, and soteriological traditions as well as popular literatures and devotional practices. Course materials will include philosophical and ritual texts, story narratives, historical textbooks, films, and experiential practice. The central focus will be on the Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist traditions found there, and examine these in relation to both Hinduism and shamanism. The seminar will utilize case studies to sample religion in the southern Himalayan region, focusing on the Kathmandu Valley, Dolpo, the Langtang Valley and Marsyandi Valleys of central Nepal. Presentations by guest scholars who are leading figures in Nepal studies, and Himalayan art will be part of this course. Extracurricular class activities will be held in conjunction with the “Dharma and Punya: Buddhist Ritual Art from Nepal” at the Cantor Gallery and include a weekend day trip to New York.

Requirements:
Attendance at Cantor Gallery Events.
Field trip to the Rubin Museum and Karmapa monastery in Woodstock, NY.
Extracurricular lectures.

Required Textbooks:
Readings on Electronic Reserves [MCR]

Grading:
Participation ................................................................. 15
Art Case Study Paper/presentation................................. 15
Religious Practice Paper/presentation.............................. 15
Final term Paper ............................................................. 35
Oral Final........................................................................ 20
100 pts

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Schedule of Seminar Sessions

8/28. Class 1: Geology, Geography, Orientalism
Required Reading:
Peter Molnar, “The Collision between India and Eurasia,” [MCR]
Martin Brauen, excerpt from Dreamworld Tibet [MCR]
Donald Lopez, Prisoners of Shangri-La. [MCR]
Peter Bishop, The Myth of Shangri-La [MCR]

9/4. Class 2: Indic Mahayana Buddhism: Philosophy
FILM “Cycles of Interdependence”
Required Reading:
Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism. 31-80; 101-134
Gregory Schopen, “Mahayana” [MCR]

4 PM: Exhibition Opening at the Cantor Gallery

Required Reading:
Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism. 31-80; 101-134
Gregory Schopen, “Mahayana” [MCR]

9/18. Class 4: Tantric Belief and Practice
The Cakrasamvara Tantra
Required Reading:
Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism. 81-99; 249-323
Lama Yeshe, Introduction to Tantra. Revised ed.
David Gray, Cakrasamvara Tantra: First Four Chapters [MCR]
9/25. Class 5: Newar Buddhist History (Licchavi, Malla, Shah Eras)

Required Reading:
Theodore Riccardi, Jr. "Buddhism in Ancient and Medieval Nepal" [MCR]
B. Bledsoe, *Written in Stone: Inscriptions of the Kathmandu Valley’s Three Kingdoms*. [MCR]
Todd T. Lewis, *Popular Mahayana Texts from Nepal*, 1-20


Required Reading:
Todd T. Lewis, *Popular Mahayana Texts from Nepal*, 21-118
*Svayambhu Purana* [MCR]

--- Fall Break ---

10/23. Class 7: Newar Buddhism: Basic Rituals

The *Guru Mandala Puja; Pancopachara Puja*

Guest Scholar: Prof. Naresh Bajracarya

Required Reading:
Naresh Bajracharya, “The *Guru-maṇḍala-Arcana*” [MCR]

10/30. Class 8: Newar Buddhism: *Vratas* and Life-Cycle Rites

Required Reading:
John Locke, “The *Uposatha Vrata* of Amoghapasa in Nepal,” [MCR]
*Popular Mahayana Texts from Nepal*, 119-164
11/2. Special Community Program: 
Stūpa Making (Dyah Tayegu)
Cantor Art Gallery 5-9 PM; Ritual with Naresh Man Bajracarya

11/6. Class 9: Samyak, Ratha Jatra-s
Films: “Samyak 1993” and “On the road with the Red God”
Required Reading:
Todd T. Lewis, Popular Mahayana Texts from Nepal, 119-164

11/13. Class 10: Introduction to Highland Himalayan Traditions: 
Case Study, Dolpo
Required Reading:
Geoff Childs, Tibetan Diary: From Birth to Death and Beyond in a 
Himalayan Valley of Nepal

11/20. Class 11: Himalayan Traditions: 
Case Study, Helambu
FILM “Himalayan Herders”
Required Reading:
Naomi Bishop, excerpt from Himalayan Herders [MCR]
12/3. Class 12: Highland Himalayan Traditions
Case Study, Marsyandi Valley

Required Reading:
Stan Mumford, *Himalayan Dialogue*

12/10. LAST CLASS: Term Papers Presented

Exam Period: Oral Final