Course Syllabus:

Buddhist Practices and Institutions:
Buddhism and Power (RLG 373H5F)

Course hours: 1-3 pm
Course venue: DV 2080 (Davis Building, former South Building)
Instructor: Christoph Emmrich
Email: christoph.emmrich@utoronto.ca
Office hours: Wednesdays, 3-4 pm and on appointment
Office: 297A NE
Phone: 416-317-2662
1 Course description
The Buddha is said to have been able to stop mad elephants from running him over, have entire armies, out to kill him, be washed away by floods, or teleport himself across rivers and into heavens and hells. Indian Buddhist saints, Nepalese tantric priests and Burmese wizards supposedly had and still have the power to fly through the air, go through walls, or read minds. A mantra recited or written on a scrap of paper, icons and amulets representing the Buddha, or, most of all, the Buddha’s conserved tooth have the power to protect you from danger and vanquish your enemies. Kings, generals, politicians and businessmen in South and Southeast Asia have sought to own these powerful objects and to be endorsed by powerful monks to run countries, wipe out competition or wage devastating wars. In the same way rebels, social reformers and pro-democracy activists have successfully stood up to repression and changed the balance of power by themselves plugging into the power the Buddha, his doctrine and his people have to offer. The ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka is both favored and opposed by monks. And the Thai king, who was once a monk, is the one to decide when the military or the civilians should run the country.

If Buddhism, as it is often believed, is all about peace, meditation, letting go and nirvana, how Buddhist is it to have all these kinds of powers, or how Buddhist is it to have power at all? Or could it be that the path to real power is to refuse to have any? What power can the knowledge about Buddhism confer not only on Buddhist monks and rulers, but on Western scholars and students? This is a course in which you will learn about Buddhism from a different perspective by studying how power makes Buddhism work.

2 Readings, in-class contributions and written assignments

Textbook and materials
There is no textbook. All sources required for reading in this course will be posted on Blackboard.

Requirements
This course will be conducted as a seminar. In order to be graded, students must prepare the reading assignments in due time, attend classes regularly, participate actively in the sessions, participate in one panel and submit one essay.
Readings
The weekly reading assignments consist of a series of sources covering a specific topic, which must be read ahead of the session in which this topic will be discussed. Please check the Course Calendar below to find out which book or articles should be prepared for each session. Your in-class participation (spontaneous questions, answers, comments referring to readings and to in-class remarks by fellow students as well as by the instructor) is part of the grade and the instructor will be taking notes on the frequency and quality of your spoken contributions.

Panel discussion
In addition to general in-class participation oral skills will be tested in individual panels consisting of student groups, which will be formed at the beginning of the course for each session, making sure that every student in class will take part in one panel discussion. The panellists will discuss the readings, point out what they found particularly interesting, strong or weak in a particular author or position and will have the opportunity to formulate questions which may be answered by the other panellists or course participants at large. The panellists will also each serve as main interlocutors for the instructor during in-class discussions. The panellists’ contributions too will be graded on the basis of their frequency and quality.

Essay
The topic of the essay should focus on one of the aspects of power and Buddhism discussed during the individual sessions. Please get in touch with the course instructor, if you have any doubts about how to choose your research essay topic. The course instructor will be glad to offer assistance in deciding on the relevant topic, material or method and discuss your thoughts and writing. Always keep in mind the deadline, so that you are able to react and possibly incorporate advice in time. Guidelines for the writing of the essay will be posted on Blackboard. As a more comprehensive guide for essay writing you are encouraged, but not required, to purchase:


Essay proposal
As a preparation for the final research essay students are expected to write an essay proposal (2-3 pages 1.5-spaced) consisting of (1) an abstract summarizing the topic chosen from among the readings and topics discussed in class or of related interest, the material to be covered, the question asked and the method and/or theory applied and/or discussed and (2) a detailed outline of the structure and contents of your projected essay including title, chapterization, section numbering and section titles, as well as a preliminary bibliography. The deadline for the essay proposal is October 24. It has to be handed in: (1) electronically by sending it to christoph.emmrich@utoronto including the word “buddhapower” and your surname in the subject line (do not use the electronic dropbox on Blackboard) AND (2) as hardcopy to the instructor in class on the day of the deadline. The essay proposal will be graded and students will receive feedback that is intended to help in writing a better essay.
Research essay

The research essay is to be based on the graded essay proposal. In case the topic should be radically changed, a second essay proposal is required in time for the instructor to give a second round of feedback. It must comprise 12-20 pages, excluding cover and contents pages and bibliography with the lines being 1.5-spaced. The deadline for the research essay is November 28. Just as the essay proposal, it has to be handed in: (1) electronically by sending it to christoph.emmrich@utoronto including the word “buddhapower” and your surname in the subject line (do not use the electronic dropbox on Blackboard) AND (2) as hardcopy to the instructor in class on the day of the deadline. The essay too will be graded and students will receive written feedback.

Plagiarism

It is crucial for written assignments that everything you produce has been either formulated by yourself or marked and referenced as a quotation if you use materials you have taken from a source (printed or electronic, textual or visual). The main objective hereby is to develop an understanding of the line, which runs between you and others, your own authorship and that of others and the respect for other people's work and intellectual property. It is important that you stand for what you yourself can produce and do not pretend to be someone else by appropriating his or her work. At the same time it is important to learn to intensely engage with, use and, to differing degrees, distance yourself other peoples work. This is only possible if you clearly separate your own contributions from those of others from which you draw and which you respect and which makes others respect your own work. Put other's words in quotation marks and note where you found them and others can find them too. And try to find a balance in your work of what you have formulated and of what you decide to quote. No assignment should be without a quote, but not more than 10% of your assignment should consist of quotes. Never leave a quote unconnected to your own work. Use quotes effectively: to prove, to stress, to condense your own statements. Finally, texts and bits of text (paragraphs, sentences, verses etc.) taken from sources, inserted in your work and not marked as quotes are called "plagiarisms" and have to be reported to university authorities by course instructors at UTM.

3 Dates, deadlines and evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment type</th>
<th>Deadline:</th>
<th>Weight for Final Grade:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in-class participation</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>panel participation</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essay proposal</td>
<td>Oct. 17</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research essay</td>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course grading scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>57-59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>53-56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>50-52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Deadlines**

All UTM students are required to declare their absence on ROSI in order to request academic consideration for any missed course work. Students who wish to receive consideration due to illness must email the instructor within a week of the deadline, and provide a UofT medical certificate: [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/sites/files/registrar/public/shared/pdfs/forms/medcert_web.pdf](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/sites/files/registrar/public/shared/pdfs/forms/medcert_web.pdf)

Essay-related assignments are subject to a late penalty of 10% per day late. This penalty may be waived in the event of unforeseen emergencies such as illness or crisis. If your assignment is late and you believe that you should not be penalized, within a week of submitting the essay please send a written explanation to the instructor, along with appropriate supporting documentation. (Such documentation may include a UofT medical certificate, and/or a letter from a counsellor, police officer, religious leader, etc.) Based on your explanation and documentation we will overlook the late penalty, in whole or in part, as seems justified. Please note that this policy regarding late penalties means that no extensions for essays will be given in advance.

**4 Interaction with the course instructor**

Address all your requests and queries about the course to the course instructor. The mail header should start with “buddhapower” so that it can be quickly identified and to avoid dismissal due to an unclear header. Though incoming mails are viewed on a daily basis and though the course instructor will try to address your issues as swiftly as possible, it may take up to three days for him or her to reply to your mail, so do wait for that period before reacting and do mail in time if you have any urgent requests. Prearrange meetings by email so that they can be scheduled either during official office hours (Wednesday 3-4pm) or upon request.

**5. Support and accommodation**

The new UTM Service Directory ([http://www1.utm.utoronto.ca/~servicesdirectory/](http://www1.utm.utoronto.ca/~servicesdirectory/)) is a convenient gateway to a variety of campus services, such as the library, UTM Bookstore, Blackboard Help, AccessAbility, etc.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please contact the instructor and/or the AccessAbility Resource Centre as soon as possible (access@utm.utoronto.ca or [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/access/](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/access/)).

UTM students are also invited to use the resources of the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre. For information regarding, e.g., individual appointments, writing workshops, and peer facilitated study groups, see [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/).

For information on other forms of available support, please see the following sites or speak with a UTM instructor or staff member:

- Campus Police: [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/campus-police/](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/campus-police/)
- Computing Services: [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/computing-services/](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/computing-services/)
- Registrar & Registration Services (including course information, tuition and scholarship information, and academic advising): [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/)
- Student Affairs & Services (including first year programs, health & counselling, housing, international student resources, multi-faith programs, study abroad, etc.): [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/sas/](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/sas/)
6 Course Calendar
(may be subject to change)

I Introduction

Session 1: Sept. 12, General Introduction 1: Buddhist Institutions and Power as Practice

II Power Theory

Session 2, Sep. 19, The Subject of Power
Required readings:

Further readings:

Session 3, Sep. 26, Theories of Power and Buddhism
Required readings:
- Bell, Catherine. The Power of Ritualization. In Catherine Bell, Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice. 197-204.

Further readings:
III Buddhist Forms of Power

Session 4, Oct. 3, The Powers of the Buddha

Required readings:

Further readings, secondary sources:

Session 5, Oct. 10, Ritual Power

Required readings:

Further reading, primary sources:

Further reading, secondary sources:
Session 6, Oct. 17, Power and Knowledge

Required readings:

Further reading:

Session 7, Oct. 24, Gender Power

Required readings:

Further reading:

Session 8, Oct. 31, Power and Economies

Required readings:

Further reading:

**Session 9, Nov. 7, Royal Power**

Required readings:

Further readings, primary sources:

Further readings, secondary sources:
Session 11, Nov. 14, Military Power and Dictatorship

Required readings:

Further reading, primary sources:

Further reading, secondary sources:

Session 11, Nov. 21, Powers of Subversion

Required readings:

Further reading, secondary sources:

IV Conclusions

Session 12, Nov. 28, Power and Study of Buddhism

Required reading:

Further reading: