

DRAFT¹ Syllabus
HR 1615: Readings in Early Buddhist Texts:
The Long Discourses of the Buddha

This course consists of in depth readings (in translation) of selected suttas (discourses) from the *Long Discourses of the Buddha* (the *Dīgha Nikāya*), one of the most significant collections of early Buddhist scriptures. In reading these suttas and relevant scholarly articles we will learn about a range of important teachings, spiritual practices, ethical values, cosmologies, political theories, and myths from early Buddhism and ancient India. The course is intended for M.A., M.Div. and M.B.S. students. Auditors with faculty permission.

Instructor: Gil Fronsdal (Fronsdal.Sati@gmail.com)
Assistant Instructor: Diana Clark (dianaclark2020@gmail.com)
Office Hour: by arrangement

Text:

- Walshe, Maurice. *Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, 1995 (ISBN 0-86171-103-3) and/or
- Study guides and translations by Piya Tan found at: dharmafarer.org/wordpress/sutta-titles-2/digha-nikaya

Other course reading material will be provided by the instructors

Course evaluation:

- Three 750-1,000-word “spiritual exploration” papers (due weeks 4, 7, 12) = 15%
- One 2,500-3,000-word analytical paper (due week 9) = 25%
- One 4,500-6,000-word analytical paper (due week 14) = 45%
- Class participation = 15%

Format for papers:

- “Spiritual exploration” papers are an in-depth examination of a sutta, or a portion of a sutta, and its relevance to your spiritual practice or ministry.
- Analytical papers are different in tone and content from a “spiritual exploration” paper. Analytical papers are scholarly, research papers with a minimum of three peer-reviewed articles or books for the mid-term and five for the final paper.
- All papers should be submitted electronically to the instructors.
- Please, no late papers.

¹ It is likely that this syllabus will be modified slightly prior to the beginning of the semester

HR 1615 Syllabus
Fall 2013

Week 1 – Introduction to the course and opening of the Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)

Week 2 – Doctrines and the alternative

- Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)
- “Introduction” from *The All Embracing Net of Views* by Bhikkhu Bodhi (pp 1-50) www.dhammatalks.net/Books11/Bhikkhu_Bodhi-Discourse-All-Embracing_Net_of_Views.pdf
- Ling, Trevor. “Introduction.” *The Buddha’s Philosophy of Man* 1993 vii-xxiv
- Additional, optional reading
 - Evans, Stephen A., “Epistemology of the Brahmajāla Sutta,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 2009 67-84
 - Syrkin, Alexander. “On the first work in the Sutta-Pitaka: the Brahmajāla-Sutta.” In *Buddhist studies*, 153-166. London, England: Curzon Pr, 1983.

Week 3 – Praxis I

- Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)
- “Introduction” from *The Discourse on the Fruits of Reclueship* by Bhikkhu Bodhi (pp 1-15)
- Gethin, Rupert. “On the Practice of Buddhist Meditation According to the Pali Nikāyas and Exegetical Sources: Part 1.” *Buddhismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Hamburg) 10 (2004), pp. 17–37
- Additional, optional reading:
 - Attwood, Jayarava Michael. “Did King Ajātasattu Confess to the Buddha, and did the Buddha Forgive Him?” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 15 (2008)

Week 4 – Praxis II

- Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta –(DN 22)
- Excerpts from *Satipatthana* by Analayo Bhikkhu (Windhorse Publications: 2003)
- Bodhi, B. “What Does Mindfulness Really Mean? A Canonical Perspective.” *Contemporary Buddhism* 12 (2011) 19-39

Due: 750-1,000-word “spiritual exploration” paper on either the Brahmajāla or Sāmaññaphala Sutta

Week 5 – Ethics, Karma, and Society

- Aggañña Sutta (DN 26)
- Cakkavatti Sutta (DN 27)
- Kūṭadanta Sutta (DN 5)
- Collins, Steven. Excerpts from *Aggañña Sutta: An Annotated Translation*. 2001
- Fenn, Mavis. "The Kūṭadanta sutta: tradition in tension." In *Buddhist studies from India to America*, 89-100. London: Routledge, 2006
- Ling, Trevor. "The Wrong Sacrifice and the Right." *The Buddha's Philosophy of Man* (1993) 87-9
- Additional, optional reading
 - Hiltebeitel, Alf. "Recontextualizing satire of Brahmanical dharmasāstra in the Aggañña." *Religions of South Asia*, 3 no 1 Je 2009, p 77-92.
 - Gombrich, Richard. "The Buddha's Book of Genesis?" *Indo-Iranian Journal* 35: 159 – 178, 1992
 - Collins, Steven. "The Lion's Roar on the Wheel-Turning King: A Response to Andrew Huxley's 'The Buddha and the Social Contract.'" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 24 (1996): 421–446.
 - Mahony, William K. "Chakravartin" in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* 2004

Week 6 - Ethics, Karma, and Rebirth

- Sakkapañha Sutta (DN 21)
- Pāyāsi Sutta (DN 23) [??]
- Sigālaka Sutta (DN 31)
- *Introduction* to the DN by Walsche (pp 1-53)
- Summary map of the Sigalovada sutta
- Ghose, Lynken. "Karma and the Possibility of Purification: An Ethical and Psychological Analysis of the Doctrine of Karma in Buddhism." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 35.2 (2007) 259-289
- Additional, optional reading:
 - Gethin, Rupert. "Cosmology and Meditation: from the Aggañña-sutta to the Mahāyāna." *History of Religions* 36, (February 1997): 183-217.
 - Analayo. "Debate with a Sceptic – The Dīrgha – agama Parallel to the Pāyāsi Sutta (1)." *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 13 (2012) 1-26
 - Gunasekara, Victor *An Analysis of the Pāyāsi Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya XXIII) with a Critical Examination of the Arguments Advanced Therein on Rebirth, Kamma and Sasra* <http://www.vgweb.org/bsq/payasi.htm#n1>
 - Werner, Karel. "The Place of Rationality in Early Buddhism." *Buddhist Studies Review* 7 (1990) 39-48

Week 7 –Conditionality

- Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)
- “Introduction” to *The Great Discourse on Causation* by B. Bodhi (pp 1 – 55)
- Graphic depiction of dependent origination from Jayarava
- Additional, optional reading
 - A. K. Warder. “Causation” in *Indian Buddhism*, (Motilal Banarsidass: Delhi), 2004
 - Shulman, Eviatar. “Early Meanings of Dependent Origination.” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 36 (2008) 297-317

Due: 750 - 1,000-word “spiritual exploration” paper from any sutta studied so far in class

Week 8 – Reading Week

Week 9 – Brahmins and Ascetics

- Ambaṭṭha Sutta (DN 3)
- Sonadanda Sutta (DN 4)
- Mahāsīhanāda Sutta (DN 8)
- Black, Brian. “Rivals and Benefactors: Encounters Between Buddhists and Brahmins in the Nikāyas”. *Religions of South Asia* 3.1 (2009) 25-43
- Kloppenborg, Ria. “The Buddha’s Redefinition of Ascetic Practices.” *Buddhist Studies Review* 7 (1990) 26-38
- Additional, optional reading
 - Black, Brian. “Ambaṭṭha and Śvetaketu: Literary Connections Between the Upaniṣads and Early Buddhist Narratives.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79, no. 1 (March 2011): 136-161.
 - Chakravarti, Uma. “Of Binaries and Beyond: The Dialectics of Buddhist-Brahmanical Relations in India” *Religions of South Asia* 3.1 (2009) 7-23

Week 10 – Teaching the Dharma

- Kevaddha Sutta (DN 11)
- Lohicca Sutta (DN 12)
- Tevijja Sutta (DN 13)
- Syrkin, A. “Notes on the Buddha’s Threats in the Dīgha Nikaya.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol 7, no. 1, 1984; 147-158
- Wallis, Glenn. “The Buddha counsels a theist: A reading of the Tevijjasutta (Dīghanikāya 13).” *Religion* 38, no. 1 (March 2008): 54-67.

- Additional, optional reading:
 - Fiordalis, David V. "Miracles in Indian Buddhist Narratives and Doctrine." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 33 (2011) 381-408
 - Krüger, J S. "Buddhist hermeneutics : the case of the Tevijja Sutta." *Journal for the Study of Religion* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 1988): 55-62.
 - Shults, Brett. "Brahmanical Terminology and The Straight Way in the Tevijja Sutta." *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 4. [haven't seen this]

Due: 2,500-3,000-word scholarly paper on ethics in the DN

Week 11 – Debates and Teaching

- Udumbarika-Sīhanāda Sutta (DN 25)
- Pāsādika Sutta (DN 29)
- Manne, Joy, *The Digha Nikaya Debates*, Buddhist Studies Review, 1992, vol 9, no. 2, 117-136

Week 12 - The Buddha's Death I

- Mahāparinibbāna Sutta part 1 (DN 16.1 to 16.3.51)
- Ling, Trevor. "Towards parinibbana" in *The Buddha's Philosophy of Man* 1993 (pp 139-143)
- Additional, optional reading:
 - Pandita. "The Buddha and the Māgadha-Vajjī War." *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 18 (2011) 125-144
 - P. Gnanarama, *The Mission Accomplished: A Historical Analysis of the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya of the Pāli Canon*, Singapore 1997.
 - Williams, Raymond. "Historical Criticism of a Buddhist Scripture: The Mahāparinibbana Sutta." *J Am Acad Relig* (1970) 38 (2): 156-167
 - Gordon Wasson, R; & Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. "The last meal of the Buddha". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102,4 (1982): 591-603. Repr in R Gordon Wasson et al (eds) 1986:95-116. ***I haven't seen this
 - Mettanando Bhikkhu. "How the Buddha died." Bangkok Post, 15th May 2000. <http://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebdha192.htm>.

Due: 750-1,000-word "spiritual exploration" paper on any sutta studied in class

Week 13 – The Buddha's Death II

- Mahāparinibbāna Sutta part 2 (DN 16.4.1 to 16.6.28)

Week 14 –The Buddha’s lineage

- Mahāsudassana Sutta (DN 17)
- Mahāgovinda Sutta (DN 19)
- Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)
- Gethin, Rupert. “Mythology as Meditation: From the Mahāsudassana Sutta to the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra”. *Journal of the Pali Text Society* Vol 28, 2006 63-112
- Bareau, Andre. “The Empire of King Renu and the Date of the Mahāgovinda Sutta” *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Hammalava Saddhātissa* 1984

Due: 4,500-6,000-word scholarly paper on the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta