

Restricted to fourth-year Philosophy Majors students (but also open to Philosophy Honours students).

Wed 2-5PM. BUCH-D213.

Professor Evan Thompson. 604-827-2071. evan.thompson@ubc.ca Office hours: Mon, Tues, Wed 1-1:45PM or by appointment. Office: Buchanan E377.

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

This course will focus on the thought of the South Asian Buddhist philosopher, Nāgārjuna (ca 150-250 CE). We will focus on his two principal works, *The Fundamental Stanzas of the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*) and *The Dispeller of Disputes* (*Vigrahavyārtanī*) along with contemporary philosophical analyses of his thought. For an introduction to Nāgārjuna, see the entry devoted to him at the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2019/entries/nagarjuna/>

The format of the course is seminar discussion.

Upon successful completion of the course, you will have a thorough knowledge of Nāgārjuna, one of the most important and influential philosophers of Asia, as well as world philosophy altogether. You will also have learned about many core ideas of Indian Buddhist philosophy and how they are interpreted by contemporary Western philosophers.

Required Texts

The following books are available at the UBC Bookstore:

Jay L. Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*

Mark Siderits and Shoryu Katsura, *Nāgārjuna's Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*

Jan Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*

Jan Westerhoff, *The Dispeller of Disputes. Nāgārjuna's Vigrahavyārtanī*.

All other readings will be made available via Canvas.

Course Requirements

Paper 1: 1500 words. 30%. Due October 7.

Final Paper: 2500 words. 50%. Due December 4.

Participation: 20%.

This is a seminar so class attendance and participation is essential. You are required to do the assigned class readings before each class meets. The reading is demanding, both in amount and difficulty, so make sure you give yourself enough time to do it before class.

I recognize and acknowledge that some of you may feel uncomfortable speaking in class. For those who feel this way, I encourage you to email me with your thoughts and questions. This will let me

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know that you are engaged with the material, and will count toward the participation component of your mark. (See also the email policy below.)

Cell phone and computer policy: Cell phones should be turned off or put in silent mode during class. You should not be sending messages. If you are using a computer, then it should be used only for taking notes.

Statement on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is intellectual theft and occurs when you submit or present the oral or written work of another person as your own. Scholarship rests on examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. When another person's words (i.e., phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, endnotes, or another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (for example, within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments. For further information, please see the following link about academic misconduct:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/Vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,111,959>

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, as well as possible further disciplinary action by the University.

Email Policy

The following guidelines apply to email communication during this course:

- I will make every effort to reply to legitimate email inquiries within 24 hours during weekdays but will likely take longer to respond to email during the weekend.
- Each email message should include in the Subject line the course identifier and a clear statement of purpose (e.g., PHIL 491: Question about Paper); otherwise, it may be deleted along with spam messages.

SCHEDULE

NB: "MMK" refers to *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, which we are reading in two translations simultaneously, one from the Sanskrit (Siderits and Katsura) and one from the Tibetan (Garfield). When you see "MMK" listed below in the assigned readings, you should read BOTH translations. Also, Garfield translates the text by itself (Part One) and the text with his commentary (Part Two). You should make sure you read Part Two, i.e., you should read both his translation of the text and his commentary. In summary, any MMK reading assignment refers to both the Siderits and Katsura translation, and Garfield's translation plus his commentary.

Background and Introduction

Week 1: September 4: Introducing Indian Buddhist Philosophy

Westerhoff, *The Golden Age of Indian Buddhist Philosophy*, Introduction, Chapter 1.

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Week 2: September 11: Background to Madhyamaka

The Kaccāyanagotta Sutta

The Heart Sutra

Westerhoff, *The Golden Age of Indian Buddhist Philosophy*, Chapter 2.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapters 1 and 2.

Week 3: September 18: Negation and the Tetralemma

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapters 3 and 4.

Graham Priest, "Beyond True and False," *Aeon* 05 May 2014. <https://aeon.co/essays/the-logic-of-buddhist-philosophy-goes-beyond-simple-truth>

Fundamental Stanzas of the Middle Way [MMK: *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*]

Week 4: September 25: Causation

MMK: Dedicatory Verse and Chapter 1.

Garfield, pp. 87-99.

Siderits and Katsura, pp. 1-10.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapters 2 and 5.

Week 5: October 2: Motion

MMK: Chapter 2.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapter 6.

Dan Arnold, "The Deceptive Simplicity of Nāgārjuna's Arguments Against Motion: Another Look at *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* Chapter 2"

Week 6: October 9: Essence/Intrinsic Nature

MMK: Chapter 15.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapter 2 (already assigned for Week 2).

Week 7: October 16: The Self

MMK Chapters 4, 8, 9.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapter 7.

Week 8: October 23: The Self

MMK, Chapter 18.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapter 7 (already assigned for Week 7).

Week 9: October 30: The Buddha, The Four Noble Truths, and Nirvāna.

MMK, Chapters 22, 24, 25.

The Dispeller of Disputes [*Vigrahavyārtanī*]

Week 10: November 6: Knowledge and Language

Westerhoff, *The Dispeller of Disputes*, Chapters 1 & 2.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapters 8 & 9.

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Week 11: November 13: Knowledge and Language

Westerhoff, *The Dispeller of Disputes*, Chapter 3.

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapters 8 & 9 (already assigned for Week 10).

Contemporary Interpretations

Week 12: November 20: Interpreting Madhyamaka

Westerhoff, *Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka*, Chapter 10.

Mark Siderits, "Madhyamaka and Anti-Realism"

Jay L. Garfield and Graham Priest, "Nāgārjuna and the Limits of Thought."

Week 13: November 27: Interpreting Madhyamaka

Jay L. Garfield and Graham Priest, "Mountains Are Just Mountains."

Tom J. F. Tillemans, "How Do Madhyāmikas Think? Notes on Jay Garfield, Graham Priest, and Paraconsistency"

Tom J. F. Tillemans, "'How Do Madhyāmikas Think?' Revisited."

Yasuo Deguchi, Jay L. Garfield, and Graham Priest, "How We Madhyāmikas Think: A Response to Tom Tillemans."

Tom J. F. Tillemans, "Philosophical Quietism in Nāgārjuna and Early Madhyamaka."

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