

PHIL 470 (2025-26: Term 2). Comparative Conceptions of the Self. Credits: 3

Tues & Thurs. 9:30-11:00AM.

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Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:45-1:45 PM

TA:

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This course will examine various conceptions of the self in Asian philosophical traditions. Although the class format is lecture, emphasis will be given to classroom discussion of readings.

Required Books: available at the UBC bookstore, or from your preferred book seller. If you have trouble acquiring any of these books, contact me.

Jay L. Garfield, Maria Heim, and Robert H. Sharf, *How to Lose Yourself*

John Holder, *Early Buddhist Discourses*.

Thomas Kasulis, *Zen Action, Zen Person*.

Patrick Olivelle, *Upaniṣads*

Requirements

- **3 in-class 30 minute quizzes, each worth 25%.** The quizzes will ask you to explain basic ideas, concepts, and arguments for the readings and lectures. You should have no trouble with them if you do the readings and attend the lectures. **NO MAKE UP QUIZZES WILL BE GIVEN, SO IF YOU MISS A QUIZ YOUR MARK WILL BE REWEIGHTED. YOU CANNOT MISS MORE THAN ONE QUIZ AND HAVE YOUR MARKS REWEIGHTED (i.e., two missed quizzes means you get a 0 in each one).** Quiz Dates: January 22, February 12, March 26
- **Final paper: 25%.** Instructions for writing the paper will be posted separately at Canvas. Due Friday April 10 no later than midnight 12am.

Statement on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is intellectual theft and occurs when an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as their 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, in endnotes, or in 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. **Using ChatGPT or other AI content generators to generate any portion of your written work counts as plagiarism in this course.** 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 review the UBC Calendar Academic regulations for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty (See the UBC Calendar, under "Academic Regulations," and "Student Conduct and Discipline": <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,54,0,0>.)

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 470: Question about Paper).

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Jan. 6 & 8. *Upaniṣads*

Upaniṣads, 28-30, 34-52, 58-71, 171-175.

Week 2: Jan. 13 & 15. *Upaniṣads*

Upaniṣads, 227-228, 232-247, 268-277, 289-290.

Week 3: Jan. 20 & 22. The Buddha. QUIZ 1 on *Upaniṣads* on January 22.

How to Lose Yourself, vii-25.

Early Buddhist Discourses, "Discourse on the Noble Quest," "Discourse to the Kālāmas," "The Greater Discourse on Cause"

Week 4: Jan 27 & 29. The Buddha.

How to Lose Yourself, vii-25.

Early Buddhist Discourses, "The Greater Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness," "The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving," "Discourse of the Honeyball,"

Week 5. Feb. 3 & 5. The Buddha.

Early Buddhist Discourses, "Short Discourses from the *Samyutta Nikāya*," "The Shorter Discourse to Mālunkya-putta," "Discourse to Vacchagotta on Fire," "Discourse to Poṭṭhapāda".

Week 6. Feb 10 & 12. Buddhist Philosophical Analyses of the Self. QUIZ 2 on the Buddha's teaching of no-self on February 12.

How to Lose Yourself, 26-121.

Week 7: Feb 17 & 19. MIDTERM BREAK.

Week 8: Feb 24 & 26. Nyāya versus Buddhism on the Self.

The Nyāya-sūtra, Chapter 4: Self (at Canvas)

Matthew Kapstein, "Vasubandhu and the Nyāya Philosophers on Personal Identity" (at Canvas)

Mark Siderits, *Buddhism as Philosophy*, selections (at Canvas)

Week 9: March 3 & 5. Advaita Vedānta

Śaṅkara, *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, selections (at Canvas)

Eliot Deutsch, *Advaita Vedānta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*, Chapter 4: The Self (at Canvas)

Week 10. March 10 & 12. Madhyamaka

Zen Action, Zen Person, Chapter 2

Week 11. March 17 & 19. Chan.

How to Lose Yourself, 123-195.

Week 12. March 24 & 25. Zen. QUIZ 3 on Chan on March 26.

Zen Action, Zen Person, Chapters 5, 6, 7

Week 13. April 1 & 3. Zen.

Zen Action, Zen Person, Chapters 5, 6, 7

Week 14. April 8. Conclusion.