

**Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature**  
**SASIAN R5A 005**  
**Fall 2019**

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11:00–12:00 in 39 Evans Hall

**Course Syllabus (Complete)**

Instructor: Paul Thomas  
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Office: 363 Dwinelle  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 12–2 pm and by appt.

**Course Description:**

This course will be focused on Indian Buddhist tantric literature in translation, with additional material related to background knowledge on Buddhism in general, non-Buddhist tantric literature, and Indian religion in general. After covering the background knowledge needed to understand Buddhist tantric literature and practice, we will trace the development of this phenomenon from its “pre-history” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, through its golden age, up until the demise of Buddhism in India in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A secondary theme will be the relation between tantric Buddhism and a closely related religious system, that of tantric Śaivism (focused on the god Śiva).

Successful completion of this course satisfies the first half of the University’s Reading and Composition (R&C) requirement. As such we will train in critically reading both primary and secondary sources, thinking about them, and expressing our thoughts in writing. In order to develop these skills, we will hold focused class discussions and weekly writing workshops, and there will be a number of writing assignments of varied lengths and genres.

**Required Materials:**

Course reader: “Intro to Indian Tantric Buddhist Literature”; course code: SASIAN R5A. Available at Krishna Copy, 2001 University Ave. (at Milvia St., just a few blocks west of campus). \$32

There will be a supplementary reader with the materials for the last two weeks of class at Krishna Copy by Wednesday, November 6.

Harvey, Michael. *Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003. ISBN-13: 978-1603848985 Available on Amazon for \$15

## **Grading**

### **Attendance and Participation (20%):**

As usual, you are expected to attend all course meetings, to show up on time, and to actively participate in class discussions.

Please do all the reading assigned, in order to get the most out of the class and to enjoy the discussions. I will provide some themes and questions for you to think about before you start the reading, which we will use to guide the discussion in class.

Laptops and phones are not allowed to be used in class. I want you to get the most out of the class, and to be present to share this experience with me and your classmates. Thanks for your cooperation on this.

### **Writing Assignments and Peer Review (70%):**

These brief writing assignments will be based on the material related to tantric Buddhism in the reader, and in each one we will try to highlight an aspect of writing for you to work on. The real purpose of these assignments is to hone your writing skills; as an added benefit you will deepen your knowledge of Tantric Buddhism.

The first assignment will be a “pilot essay” that will allow me to become familiar with your writing so that I can how to most effectively advise you. You won’t be graded on the quality of the essay, but as part of this assignment you will come to see me in office hours within a week of submitting it, and your sincere engagement in this will count towards 5% of your grade.

For two of the assignments you will review another of your classmates’ work, and re-write your own essay based on your colleague’s comments. The peer-review portion of the grade will be based on your review comments of your colleague’s paper.

Assignment #1: Preliminary 2–3 pg. essay + Office hours visit	due Wed. Sep 4	5%
Assignment #2: 2–3 pg. essay	due Wed. Sep 18	5%
Assignment #3 (draft): 3–4 pg. essay	due Wed. Oct. 2	10%
Peer review comments on assignment 3	due Fri. Oct. 4	5%
Assignment #3 (final)	due Wed. Oct 16	5%
Assignment #4: 3–4 pg. essay	due Wed. Oct 30	10%
Assignment #5 Topic Proposal + Office hours visit	due Wed. Nov. 6	2.5%
	(OH visit by Fri. Nov. 15)	
Assignment #5 (draft): 4–5 pg. essay	due Wed. Nov. 20	10%
Peer review comments on assignment 5	due Fri. Nov. 22	5%
Assignment #5 Office Hours Visit	by Wed. Dec. 4	2.5%
Assignment #5 (final)	due Fri. Dec. 6	10%

### **bCourses Forum Discussion (10%)**

There will be a student-guided *bCourses* forum related to the reading for each week, where you can post comments, notes, and questions about the reading. This forum provides a space to clarify questions that you have about the reading and to share your insights. Each week we will have one volunteer to begin the discussion. You may use/contribute to the online forum as often as you'd like. But contribute to the forum at least once a week.

## **Course Schedule**

There may be some flexibility in this schedule; I will announce any changes in class and on bCourses.

### **Part 1: Background Knowledge**

#### **Week 1: Introduction and the Old Vedic Religion**

Wed. August 28

Introduction to the Course

Fri. August 30

Discussion: Flood, Gavin. "Veda." in *Introduction to Hinduism*, pp. 35–50. (Reader p. 1)  
*Rig Veda*. Trans. Wendy Doniger, pp. 25–31, 43–45, 120–121, 148–151, 221–223. (Reader p. 11)

## **Week 2: The Śramaṇa Movement and Early Buddhism**

Mon. Sep. 2

Labor Day holiday

Wed. Sep. 4

Discussion: Bronkhorst, Johannes. *Buddhist Teaching in India*, pp. 9–60 (Reader p. 23)  
Assignment #1 due in class

Fri. Sep. 6

Writing workshop: Introduction to *Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* (pp. ix–xiv)

## **Week 3: Mahāyāna and Dhāraṇī Buddhism**

Mon. Sep. 9

Discussion: Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas*, pp. 126–144. (Reader p. 55)

Wed. Sep. 11

Discussion: *Amoghapāśahṛdayadhāraṇī*, trans. Meisezahl. (Reader p. 67)

Fri. Sep. 13

Writing Workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, Ch. 1 “Concision”

## **Part 2: “Tantric” Buddhism Proper**

### **Week 4: Overview and Methodological Issues**

Mon. Sep. 16

Discussion: Williams, Paul. “Mantranaya/Vajrayāna: Tantric Buddhism in India.” (Reader p. 77)

Wed. Sep. 18

Discussion: Williams, Paul. “Mantranaya/Vajrayāna: Tantric Buddhism in India.” (Reader p. 77)

Assignment #2 due in class

Fri. Sep. 20

Writing workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, Ch. 2: “Clarity.”

## **Week 5: Kriyātantra and Mantra**

Mon. Sep. 23

Discussion: Wheelock, Wade. “The Mantra in Vedic and Tantric Ritual.” (Reader p. 107)

Wed. Sep. 25

Discussion: Excerpt from Ch. 2 of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*: ¶ 1–106. Trans. Wiesiek Mical. (Reader p. 123)

Fri. Sep. 27

Writing workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, Ch. 3: “Flow”

## **Week 6: Yogatantra and the Maṇḍala**

Mon. Sep. 30

Discussion: Bühnemann, Gudrun. “Maṇḍalas and Yantras.” (Reader p. 143)

Wed. Oct. 2

Discussion: Excerpt from the *Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra (Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha)*. Trans. Rolf Giebel. (Reader p. 165)

Assignment #3 draft due in class

Fri. Oct. 4

Writing workshop: Peer review session on Assignment #3

Peer review comments due in class

## **Week 7: Sādhana and the View**

Mon. Oct. 7

Discussion: Padmasambhava. *Garland of Views: An Instruction*. Trans. Geshe Thupten Jinpa. (Reader p. 197)

Wed. Oct. 9

Discussion: *Hevajrasāadhanopāyika*, trans. Torsten Gerloff. (Reader p. 205)

Fri. Oct. 11

Writing Workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, Ch. 4: “Punctuation”

## **Week 8: Mahāyoga and Sexuality**

Mon. Oct. 14

Discussion: Jackson, Roger. “Ambiguous Sexuality.” (Reader p. 227)

Wed. Oct. 16

Discussion: *Guhyasamājatantra*, Chs. 7–8. Trans. Francesca Fremantle. (Reader p. 237)  
Assignment #3 final due in class

Fri. Oct. 18

Writing workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, Ch. 5: “Gracefulness”

### **Week 9: Yoginītantra and Non-Dualism**

Mon. Oct. 21

Discussion: Wedemeyer, Christian. “The Practice of Indian Tantric Buddhism.” (Reader p. 247)

Wed. Oct. 23

Discussion: *Hevajatantra* chs. 1–9, trans D.L. Snellgrove. (Reader p. 265)

Fri. Oct. 25

Writing workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, Ch. 6: “Using Sources”

### **Part 3: Śaivism and Tantric Buddhism**

#### **Week 10: General Background on Śaivism**

Mon. Oct. 28

Discussion: Flood, Gavin. “Śaiva and Tantric Religion.” (Reader p. 285)

Wed. Oct. 30

Discussion: *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā*, chs. 1–4. (Reader p. 299)  
Assignment #4 due in class

Fri. Nov. 1

Writing workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, ch. 7: “Paragraphs”

#### **Week 11: Interaction in the Early Period (c. 6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> cent.)**

Mon. Nov. 4

Discussion: Goodall, Dominic, and Isaacson, Harunaga. “On the Shared ‘Ritual Syntax’ of the Early Tantric Traditions.” (Reader p. 329)

Wed. Nov. 6

Discussion: Goodall, Dominic, and Isaacson, Harunaga. “On the Shared ‘Ritual Syntax’ of the Early Tantric Traditions.” (Reader p. 329)  
Assignment #5 Topic Proposal due in class

Fri. Nov. 8

Writing Workshop: *Nuts and Bolts*, ch. 8: “Beginnings and Endings”

## **Week 12: Interactions with Kashmiri Śaivism in the 9<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Mon. Nov. 11

Veteran’s Day Holiday

Wed. Nov. 13

Discussion: Thomas, Paul. “Parallels in Ritual Practice.” (Reader p. 371); The *Vijñānabhairava*, vv. 28–40. Trans. Jayadev Singh. (Reader p. 401)

Fri. Nov. 15

Writing Workshop: *Writing Analytically*, Chapter 1

## **Part 4: Conclusion**

## **Week 13: The Yoga of the Kālacakratāntra**

Mon. Nov. 18

Discussion: Hatchell, Christopher. *Naked Seeing*, Chapter 1

Wed. Nov. 20

Writing Workshop: *Writing Analytically*, Chapter 2  
Assignment #5 rough draft due in class

Fri. Nov. 22

Writing Workshop: Peer-review session on Assignment #5  
Peer-review comments on Assignment #5 due in class

## **Week 14: Film Screening and Thanksgiving Holiday**

Mon. Nov. 25

Film: *Yogis of Tibet*

Wed. Nov. 27

Thanksgiving holiday

Fri. Nov. 29

Thanksgiving holiday

## **Week 15: The Yoga of the Kālacakrat Tantra**

Mon. Dec. 2

Discussion: *Vajrapāṇi's Śaḍāṅgayoga* (trans. Wallace)

Wed. Dec. 4

Writing workshop: *Writing Analytically*, Chapter 3

Fri. Dec. 6

Writing workshop: *Writing Analytically*, Chapter 4

Assignment #5 final draft due in class

There is no final exam for this class; the course ends on the last day of class, Fri. Dec. 6.



## **Course Policies and Guidelines**

### **Class culture**

To create a class environment that encourages open dialogue, collaboration, and active learning, I and your classmates expect that you will adhere to the following honor code adopted by the student community at UC Berkeley: “As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others.” I welcome scholarly disagreement but will not tolerate disrespectful and/or disruptive classroom behavior.

### **Electronics policy**

To make the most of our discussion time, turn off and stow all electronics during class. This includes laptops and, most certainly, cell phones.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance and timeliness will factor into your participation grade. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting class notes, announcements, and any assignments or scheduling changes from a classmate. After two unexcused absences, 2% of your total class grade will be subtracted for each absence from class.

Class begins promptly at 11:10 a.m. Arriving over five minutes late for three classes equals one absence. If you need to leave class early, please let me know ahead of time by email. Otherwise you will not receive a full participation grade for the day.

### **Due dates**

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on their due date. Any written work handed in late will be marked down by 20% of its total points per day.

### **Academic integrity**

Plagiarism will result in a failed grade for the plagiarized work and possibly for the entire course. Further disciplinary action might also follow. For the University’s official policy on academic integrity, refer to <http://campuslife.berkeley.edu/conduct>. We will discuss academic integrity and cover proper citation practices in class.

### **Office hours**

Apart from our one required office-hour meeting, you are welcome to see me during my regular office hours or by appointment. So that we can make the most of our time, come with specific questions, comments, or concerns.

## **Course correspondence**

When sending me a course-related email, please put “SAR5A” in the subject line. I will answer questions requiring brief responses via email but ask that you see me in person for questions requiring longer answers. I will respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them Monday through Friday. Since email is another opportunity to articulate your thoughts in writing, compose your email correspondences as you would any other writing for the class (ungraded of course).

## **Student Learning Center (SLC)**

I encourage you to take advantage of the SLC for individual tutoring in writing. For more information or to schedule an appointment, refer to <http://slc.berkeley.edu> or call (510) 642–7332.

## **Accommodations for students with disabilities**

If you have a letter from the Disabled Students Program (DSP) for academically related accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible to make any needed arrangements. For DSP information, refer to <http://dsp.berkeley.edu> or call (510) 642–0518.

## **Re-grading requests**

To make a re-grading request, send me a written request no sooner than seven days after you receive your graded assignment. In the written request, specify which element(s) of the graded assignment you think should be re-examined. Also state why your paper merits a second evaluation. Re-grading a paper does not necessarily guarantee a higher grade; in fact, it may actually result in a grade lower than the one originally assigned.

## **Grading Scale**

A+	98–100
A	93–97
A–	90–93
B+	87–89
B	83–86
B–	80–82
C+	77–79
C	73–76
C–	70–72
D+	67–69
D	63–66
D–	60–62
F	59 and below