

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
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Séminaire II : Metaphysics: East Meets West (2PH2128)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal M A - philosophie	Séminaire: 2 ph	oral: 30 min	5
Pilier secondaire M A - philosophie	Séminaire: 2 ph	oral: 30 min	5

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Automne

Equipe enseignante:

Alexander SKILES

Objectifs:

The aim of this course is twofold. One aim is to provide a very general conceptual introduction to Buddhist philosophy, with a particular emphasis on the interpretation of its core metaphysical doctrines, and how the philosophical insights that emerge might contribute to active debates in contemporary Western analytic metaphysics. The second aim is to focus in particular on the metaphysical contributions of Nagarjuna (c. 150-250 CE) and the 'middle way' school he pioneered, which have been highly influential both to the development of Buddhist thought (he is often referred to as "the second Buddha") and to the building discussion of Buddhism in contemporary Western analytic metaphysics.

Contenu:

The course will be topically organized around the following five issues:

Part I. What is "Buddhist philosophy", and why should contemporary Western analytic metaphysicians study it?

Part II. What is it for all phenomena to be 'impermanent' (anitya), 'interdependent' (pratitya-samutpada), and 'lack an intrinsic nature' (sunyata)?

Part III. What would reality have to be like in order for there to be 'four corners of truth' (catuskoti)?

Part IV. Nagarjuna on causation and motion

Part V. Nagarjuna on the emptiness of the self

Forme de l'évaluation:

The overall mark of the course will be weighted as follows:

Participation (including attendance and regular, substantive contribution to seminar discussions): 10%

One in-class presentation: 10%

End of term oral examination: 30%

One end of the term research essay: 50%

La non-remise du travail écrit dans les délais impartis, sans motif valable, entraînera automatiquement un échec à ce travail.

Documentation:

You will not be required to purchase class texts, as these will be distributed to you in PDF format by email. The readings will either consist in (i) recent journal articles by contemporary Western analytic metaphysicians or (ii) chapters from the following two textbooks:

Garfield, J. (2015), *Engaging Buddhism: Why It Matters to Philosophy*, Oxford University Press;

Westerhoff, J. (2009), *Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction*, Oxford University Press.

Pré-requis:

Although there are no formal prerequisites for the course, I will assume some basic familiarity with the issues and methods of contemporary Western analytic metaphysics at a level appropriate for those who have finished the B.A. in philosophy. I will not assume any familiarity

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whatsoever with Eastern philosophy (indeed, the main point of the course is to help you build this background). The language of instruction and evaluation in this course is English.

Forme de l'enseignement:

The course will be conducted as a research seminar at a level appropriate for those at the M.A.-level in philosophy. Students will be expected to carefully read the assigned texts beforehand, and discuss comments and questions they come up with together and with the instructor in a respectful, collaborative fashion.