



RLG371S Interdependence: Socially Engaged Buddhist Ethics and Practice (winter 2024)

Time & Location: Mondays 11am-1pm, TBA
Instructor: Dr. Eleanor Pontoriero (Upāsikā Mittā)
[Academia.edu profile](#)

Office Hours: By Appointment
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This year, we will explore socially engaged Buddhist ethics within Theravada and Mahayana contexts.

Our theme is interdependence – how this ethic informs and manifests in socially engaged Buddhist approaches to human rights, peacebuilding, racial, gender, social and environmental justice, inter- and intra- faith dialogue. Our focus will be contemporary, intersectional, and diverse.

Readings will include excerpts from English translations of Theravada and Mahayana scriptures, as well as contemporary readings by male and female monastic and lay teachers in Asian and North American contexts.

In addition to weekly group meetings and discussions, there will also be an opportunity to integrate individual interests in student research papers as well as individual and group presentations and projects. We will draw on academic and non-academic resources, as well as local, grassroots, and global initiatives.

Weekly meetings will begin with the traditional land acknowledgment honoring our ongoing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We will then have a group presentation and discussion on the weekly topic and required readings, followed by a short break. In the second hour, we will focus on Buddhist mindfulness, compassion, and contemplative practices as a support for socially engaged Buddhism.

Readings:

Sallie B. King, [Being Benevolence: The Social Ethics of Engaged Buddhism](#) (required reading, direct link to online resource)

Sallie B. King, [Socially Engaged Buddhism](#) (required reading, direct link to online resource)

[Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist liberation movements in Asia / edited by Christopher S. Queen and Sallie B. King.](#) (supplementary reading, direct link to online resource)

[Engaged Buddhism in the West / Christopher S. Queen, editor.](#) (supplementary reading, direct link to online resource)

Compassion and Social Justice (Sakyadhita conference 2015, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo)

Khuankaew, Ouyporn, [Tackling gender and sexual discrimination in Buddhism](#), and [Listening to the World: Engagement with Those Who Suffer](#), "Coming Back Home: The Awakening of a Feminist, Buddhist Anti Oppression Peacebuilder" from *Voices of Harmony and Dissent: How Peacebuilders are Transforming Their Worlds*, ed. Valerie Smith et. al. (Winnipeg, Manitoba: CMU Press, 2015), pp. 151-176. (posted on Quercus)

[Buddhist Nuns Changes and Challenges](#) (see chapters 17 on female monastics by Karma Lekshe Tsomo and chapter 20 by Judith Simmer Brown)

Chand R. Sirimanne [Buddhism and women--the Dhamma has no gender](#)
Alexandra Kent, [Sheltered by dhamma: Reflecting on gender, security and religion in Cambodia](#)
[Innovative Buddhist women: swimming against the stream / edited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo.](#)
ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo

[Karma, Monastic Law, and Gender Justice](#), Karma Lekshe Tsomo

Vesely-Flad, Rima, [Black Buddhists and the body: New approaches to socially engaged Buddhism](#)

[Buddhism and Whiteness: critical reflections / edited by George Yancy and Emily McRae](#) (Chapter 13 Racial Justice Work by Rhonda Magee)

Judith Simmer Brown, ["The Four Noble Truths: A Buddhist Theology for Undoing Racism"](#)

Additional and supplementary readings (posted on Quercus or links to online resources provided on syllabus)

Background Reference:

In The Words of the Buddha: An Anthology of the Buddha's Discourses, ed. Bhikkhu Bodhi (posted on Quercus)
Satipaṭṭhāna: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness, by Bhikkhu Anālayo (posted on Quercus)
Ānāpānasati: Mindfulness of Breathing by Bhikkhu Anālayo (posted on Quercus)

Evaluation:

10 summary reflections of weekly reading (Approx. 1 DS page, 1% each, due Mondays & discussed each week)	10%
Paper (Due April 15 th ; 10 double spaced pages; guidelines and topics will be posted; based on RLG 371S readings/topics and related secondary resources)	30%
Group Oral presentation (approximately 20 minutes; 2-3 students in each group)	15%
Individual written presentation Report (Based on RLG 371F weekly reading/topic; 500 words; guidelines will be posted. Signup sheet first class)	15%
Required Seminar Attendance and Informed Participation (Includes in-class experiential component with the aim of developing Buddhist mindfulness, compassion and contemplative practices as supports in socially Engaged Buddhism; includes weekly practice logs, guidelines will be posted)	30%