CAS/GRS New Course Proposal Form
This form is to be used when proposing a new CAS or GRS course.

This form should be submitted to Senior Academic Administrator Peter Law (617-353-7243) as a PDF file to pgl@bu.edu. For further information or assistance, contact Associate Dean Susan Jackson (617-353-2410; sjackson@bu.edu) about CAS courses or Associate Dean Jeffrey Hughes (617-353-2690; hughes@bu.edu) about GRS courses.

DEPARTMENT OR PROGRAM: Religion

DATE SUBMITTED: 1/9/17

COURSE NUMBER: RN246

COURSE TITLE: Sex, Death, and the Buddha

INSTRUCTOR(S): April Hughes

TO BE FIRST OFFERED: Sem./Year: Fall / 2017

SHORT TITLE: The “short title” appears in the course inventory, on the Link University Class Schedule, and on student transcripts and must be 15 characters maximum including spaces. It should be as clear as possible.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is the description that appears in the CAS and/or GRS Bulletin and The Link. It is the first guide that students have as to what the course is about. The description can contain no more than 40 words.

An exploration of various Buddhist understandings of the ideal human life. Possible topics include: karma and rebirth, nonviolence and war, human and animal rights, suicide and euthanasia, as well as abortion and contraception.

PREREQUISITES: Indicate “None” or list all elements of the prerequisites, clearly indicating “AND” or “OR” where appropriate. Here are three examples: “Junior standing or CAS ZN300 or consent of instructor”; “CAS ZN108 and CAS ZN203 and CAS PQ206; or consent of instructor”; “For SED students only.”

1. State the prerequisites:

None

2. Explain the need for these prerequisites:

CREDITS: (check one)
Half course: 2 credits  □  Variable: Please describe.
X Full course: 4 credits  □  Other: Please describe.

Provide a rationale for this number of credits, bearing in mind that for a CAS or GRS course to carry 4 credits, 1) it must normally be scheduled to meet at least 150 minutes/week, AND 2) combined instruction and assignments, as detailed in the attached course syllabus, must anticipate at least 12 total hours/week of student effort to achieve course objectives.

In addition to meeting for three 50-minute class sessions, there will be regular outside reading and writing assignments that will require students to spend at least 12 hours per week outside of class time.

DIVISIONAL STUDIES CREDIT: Is this course intended to fulfill Divisional Studies requirements?

□ No.
X Yes. If yes, please indicate which division __Humanities________________ and explain why the course should qualify for Divisional Studies credit. Refer to criteria listed here and specify whether this course is intended for “short” or “expanded” divisional list.

All Religion courses at the 200-level fulfill divisional studies in the humanities. Like other 200-level religion courses, this course will introduce students to a range of Buddhist traditions as well as to approaches to thinking about religion. Students will develop a critical and reflective perspective on the religious aspects of Buddhist social ethics.

HOW FREQUENTLY WILL THE COURSE BE OFFERED?

□ Every semester  X Once a year, fall  □ Once a year, spring  □ Every other year
□ Other: Explain:

NEED FOR THE COURSE: Explain the need for the course and its intended impact. How will it strengthen your overall curriculum? Will it be required or fulfill a requirement for degrees/majors/minors offered by your department/program or for degrees in other departments/school/colleges? Which students are most likely to be served by this course? How will it contribute to program learning outcomes for those students? If you see the course as being of “possible” or “likely” interest to students in another departments/program, please consult directly with colleagues in that unit. (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course is intended to serve students in specific other programs. See FURTHER INFORMATION below about cognate comment.)

Apart from our curricular preparation of majors and contribution to undergraduate education in CAS, the Religion department serves hundreds of BU students in other schools and colleges. It is important for us to have a range of courses at both the 100 and 200 levels to meet student demand. Many
students at BU are very interested in Buddhism. This course will draw on an existing student interest in order to introduce students to a broad range of Buddhist traditions and their varying views on ethical issues.

ENROLLMENT: How many undergraduate and/or graduate students do you expect to enroll in the initial offering of this course?

25-30

CROSS-LISTING: Is this course to be cross-listed or taught with another course? If so, specify. Chairs/directors of all cross-listing units must co-sign this proposal on the signature line below.

OVERLAP:

1. Are there courses in the UIS Course Inventory (CC00) with the same number and/or title as this course?
   X No.
   ☐ Yes. If yes, any active course(s) with the same number or title as the proposed course will be phased out upon approval of this proposal.
   NOTE: A course number cannot be reused if a different course by that number has been offered in the past five years.

2. Relationship to other courses in your program or others: Is there any significant overlap between this course and others offered by your department/program or by others? (You must attach appropriate cognate comments using cognate comment form if this course might be perceived as overlapping with courses in another department/program. See FURTHER INFORMATION below.)

There is no significant overlap with current offerings in the religion department.

There is some overlap with RN 210 Buddhism. However, RN 210 focuses on Indian Buddhist thought with some attention to developments in Tibet. This course will emphasize Buddhist social ethics across a wide range of Buddhist cultures including South Asia (India), East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan), and Southeast Asia (Thailand and Cambodia).

FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT: What, if any, are the new or special facilities or equipment needs of the course (e.g., laboratory, library, instructional technology, consumables)? Are currently available facilities, equipment, and other resources adequate for the proposed course? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

No special facilities or equipment needed.
STAFFING: How will the staffing of this course, in terms of faculty and, where relevant, teaching fellows, affect staffing support for other courses? For example, are there other courses that will not be taught as often as now? Is the staffing of this course the result of recent or expected expansion of faculty? (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

This course will be offered in place of older courses that no longer meet the needs of students. Because it is an elective, if there is no faculty member available to teach it in a given year, it can simply be postponed until the following year.

BUDGET AND COST: What, if any, are the other new budgetary needs or implications related to the start-up or continued offering of this course? If start-up or continuation of the course will entail costs not already discussed, identify them and how you expect to cover them. (NOTE: Approval of proposed course does not imply commitment to new resources to support the course on the part of CAS.)

No costs.

EXTERNAL PROGRAMS: If this course is being offered at an external program/campus, please provide a brief description of that program and attach a CV for the proposed instructor.

FURTHER INFORMATION THAT MUST BE ATTACHED IN ORDER FOR THIS PROPOSAL TO BE CONSIDERED:

- A complete week-by-week SYLLABUS with student learning objectives, readings, and assignments that reflects the specifications of the course described in this proposal; that is, appropriate level, credits, etc. (See guidelines on “Writing a Syllabus” on the Center for Excellence & Innovation in Teaching website.) Be sure that syllabus includes your expectations for academic honesty, with URL for pertinent undergraduate or GRS academic conduct code(s).

- Cognate comment from chairs or directors of relevant departments and/or programs. Use the form here under “Curriculum Review & Modification.” You can consult with Susan Jackson (CAS) or Jeffrey Hughes (GRS) to determine which departments or programs inside and outside of CAS would be appropriate.

DEPARTMENT CONTACT NAME AND POSITION: April Hughes, Asst. Professor

DEPARTMENT CONTACT EMAIL AND PHONE: ADHUGHES@BU.EDU, 358-3585

DEPARTMENT APPROVAL:  

__________________________  1/24/17
Department Chair  
Date

__________________________  
Other Department Chair(s) (for cross-listed courses)  
Date
CAS/GRS CURRICULUM COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

☐ Approved  Date:____________________
☐ Tabled  Date:____________________
☐ Not Approved  Date:____________________

Divisional Studies Credit:

☐ Endorsed  
  ☐ HU  ☐ MCS  ☐ NS  ☐ SS  
☐ Not endorsed

______________________________________________________________
Curriculum Committee Chair Signature and Date

Comments:

PROVISIONAL APPROVAL REQUESTED for Semester/Year ___________________________

______________________________________________________________
Dean of Arts & Sciences Signature and Date

Comments:

CAS FACULTY:  Faculty Meeting Date: ________________________  ☐ Approved  ☐ Not Approved

______________________________________________________________
Curriculum Administrator Signature and Date

Comments:
What is the Buddhist vision for an ideal human life? This course will explore the answers to this question by examining the place of ethics and moral reasoning in Buddhist thought and practice. Examples will be drawn from a wide range of sources, from classical Buddhist texts to contemporary narratives. The topics we will examine include: karma and rebirth, peace/nonviolence and war, human and animal rights, suicide and euthanasia, abortion and contraception. No previous knowledge of Buddhism required.

Course Content Note: At times this semester we will be discussing topics that may be disturbing to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I would be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class.

Contact details and office hour policies
Office: 147 Bay State Rd., #403; phone 617-358-3585; email: adhughes@bu.edu

Email is the best way to reach me outside of class. I typically respond within 24 hours.

Office hours: Mondays
Wedgesdays
Fridays

If you cannot make regular office hour times, we can find another mutually agreeable time.

Accessibility: My office is on the fourth floor. There is a small, non-wheelchair accessible elevator in 147 Bay State Rd. If you require other accommodations, please let me know.
Required Text


* Also please note that there are readings available in PDF format on our Blackboard Learn site. To access the website you will need to use your BU ID and Kerberos password.

Disabilities:
In accordance with University policy (see [http://www.bu.edu/disability/policies/index.html](http://www.bu.edu/disability/policies/index.html)), a student who requires accommodation for a documented disability of any type should meet with me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate modifications to course requirements or procedures. I strive to make my classroom disability-friendly. The more clearly I understand what will be helpful, the better I can do that.

Academic Integrity:
Every student is expected to be familiar with and comply with the BU policy on academic integrity, which can be found at: [http://www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode.html](http://www.bu.edu/cas/undergraduate/conductcode.html). I will refer any suspected case of academic misconduct to the Dean’s Office. Any assignment judged, after a hearing by the Academic Conduct panel, to be plagiarized will receive a grade of “0.” We will discuss plagiarism and independent work in class.

Helpful resources about proper use of sources can be found many places online. About using sources responsibly (and avoiding plagiarism), see the “Harvard Guide to Using Sources” ([http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do](http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do)) and Dartmouth’s RWIT page ([http://writingspeech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth](http://writingspeech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth)). The Purdue University Online Writing Lab ([https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/)), contains excellent advice on research and citation but also on broader topics including “Conducting Research” ([https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/8/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/8/)).

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: Attendance at all class sessions is necessary. Attendance will be taken daily. Together, attendance and participation will account for 10% of your grade, although if you miss a substantial number of classes your grade is subject to further deduction. If you need to miss class due to a religious holiday, that will, of course, be excused but be sure to let me know in advance. Even if you miss a class session for a valid reason you will still be responsible for any material covered or announcements given. You may want to exchange contact information with one or more of your classmates so that you can borrow notes or ask for course updates if you are absent.

Examinations: There will be three exams during the course. There will be two exams that are worth 15% each on **Friday 10/13** and **Friday 11/17**. There will be a final exam (worth 20%) scheduled during the final exam period. Each in-class exam will not be cumulative. The final exam will be cumulative, although it will emphasize the material covered after the second in-class exam. Materials for the exam will come from both the readings and lectures.
Short Papers: You will be expected to complete two short papers of 750-950 words (worth 5% each). Detailed assignment sheets with specific prompts will be distributed during the semester. There are no make-ups or re-writes and no late assignments will be accepted. The papers are due as a hard copy at the start of class on Friday 9/22 and Friday 10/27.

Long Paper: You will write one long paper of 1500-1700 words (worth 15%). A detailed assignment sheet with a specific prompt will be distributed prior to the due date. There are no rewrites. The paper is due as a hard copy at the start of class on Friday 12/1.

Presentation: You will present materials and lead a discussion once during the semester (worth 15%). This will require extra readings as well as preparing discussion questions for your classmates. All discussion leaders should plan to meet with me during hours office to discuss their plan for their assigned day as well as send the discussion questions to me for review prior to distributing them to the class. These student-led presentations and discussion days will allow us to think more carefully about the ethical issues we are exploring in this class. The eight presentation days will be as follows: Friday 10/6, Monday 10/16, Monday 10/23, Monday 10/30, Monday 11/6, Monday 11/13, Wednesday 11/29, and Monday 12/4. There will be between two to four student leaders for each presentation day and signup sheets for all presentation days will be distributed during the second week of class.

Grading Scale:
Percentages of points accumulated will be converted to letter grades according to the following scale:

- A = 94 – 100%
- A- = 90 – 93%
- B+ = 87 – 89%
- B = 84 – 86%
- B- = 80 – 83%
- C+ = 77 – 79%
- C = 74 – 76%
- C- = 70 – 73%
- D = 65 – 69%
- F = 0 – 64%

Schedule:

Wednesday, September 6 – Introduction to the course
* no readings

Friday, September 8 – Introduction to Religious Studies

Monday, September 11 – Orientalism
Wednesday, September 13 – What Does a Buddha Look Like?  
Primary Readings:  * “Consecration of a Buddha Image” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 1-23 (Book).

Friday, September 15 – Life of the Buddha  
Primary Readings:  * “The Great Departure” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 23-46 (Book).

Monday, September 18 – Life of the Buddha  
Primary Readings:  * “Death of the Buddha” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 46-59 (Book).

Wednesday, September 20 – Buddhist Values  
Primary Readings:  * “The Refuges and Precepts” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 60-88 (Book).

Friday, September 22 – Buddhist Values  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 88-122 (Book).  
** Short Paper Assignment due at the start of class as a hard copy **

Monday, September 25 – Mahāyāna  
Primary Readings:  * “Heart Sūtra” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 123-134 (Book).

Wednesday, September 27 – Mahāyāna  
Primary Readings:  * Hurvitz, *Lotus Sūtra* parables (PDF)

Friday, September 29 – Mahāyāna  
Primary Readings:  * “Amitabha and his Pure Land” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 134-149 (Book).

Monday, October 2 – Animals and Vegetarianism  
Primary Readings:  * “The Evils of Meat Eating” and “The Gift of Food” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 150-170 (Book).

Wednesday, October 4 – Animals and Vegetarianism  
Primary Readings:  * “The Story of Aśokavarna” (PDF).  
Secondary Readings:  * Harvey, pages 170-186 (Book).
Friday, October 6 – Animals and Vegetarianism
* Student presentations and discussion

Tuesday, October 10 – Economics
Primary Readings:  * “The Story of Mendhaka” (PDF).

Wednesday, October 11 – Economics
Primary Readings:  * “Rules Governing Monastic Funerals & the Problem of Inheritance” (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 206-238 (Book).

Friday, October 13 – Exam

Monday, October 16 – Economics
* Student presentations and discussion

Wednesday, October 18 – War and Peace
Primary Readings:  * “The Perfection of Nonduality” (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 239-255 (Book).

Friday, October 20 – War and Peace
Primary Readings:  * Writings of Nichiren (PDF).

Monday, October 23 – War and Peace
* Student presentations and discussion

Wednesday, October 25 – Suicide and Euthanasia
Primary Readings:  * Jātaka Tales (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 286-310 (Book).

Friday, October 27 – Suicide and Euthanasia
Primary Readings:  * Jātaka Tales (PDF).
** Short Paper Assignment due at the start of class as a hard copy **

Monday, October 30 – Suicide and Euthanasia
* Student presentations and discussion
Wednesday, November 1 – Abortion and Contraception
Primary Readings: * “Memorializing One’s Mizuko” (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 311-328 (Book).

Friday, November 3 – Abortion and Contraception
Primary Readings: * Interview with a Thai Nun (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 328-352 (Book).

Monday, November 6 – Abortion and Contraception
* Student presentations and discussion

Wednesday, November 8 – Sexual Ethics
Primary Readings: * “The Laywoman Sujātā” and Scripture in Forty-two Sections (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 353-383 (Book).

Friday, November 10 – Sexual Ethics
Primary Readings: * “Songs of the Female Elders” and “Uppalavanna/Alavika Suttas” (PDF).

Monday, November 13 – Sexual Ethics
* Student presentations and discussion

Wednesday, November 15 – Queering Sex and Gender
Primary Readings: * “Dragon Princess Story” from the Lotus Sūtra (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 411-419 (Book).

Friday, November 17 – Exam

Monday, November 20 – Long Paper Exercise
* Work on drafting your long paper

Wednesday, November 22 – NO CLASS for the Thanksgiving holiday

Friday, November 24 – NO CLASS for the Thanksgiving holiday
Monday, November 27 – Queering Sex and Gender
Primary Readings: * “The Goddess chapter” from the *Vimalakirti Sūtra*
Secondary Readings: * Harvey, pages 419-434 (Book).

Wednesday, November 29 – Queering Sex and Gender
* Student presentations and discussion

Friday, December 1 – Ecology
Primary Readings: * “Debates over the Sentience of Grasses and Trees” (PDF).
** Long Paper Assignment due at the start of class as a hard copy **

Monday, December 4 – Ecology
Primary Readings: * Dalai Lama, “A Buddhist Concept of Nature” (PDF).
Secondary Readings: * Kraft, “Greening Buddhist Practice” (PDF).

Wednesday, December 6 – Ecology
Secondary Readings: * Toni Huber, “Green Tibetans: A Brief Social History” (PDF).

Friday, December 8 – Ecology
* Student led discussion

Monday, December 11 – Review
* no readings

** Final Exam – Date to be announced **