Buddhas, bodhisattvas, deities, monks, nuns, and the Buddhist laity are deeply embedded within and influenced by their familial relations, despite the common portrayal of Buddhism as a religion of asceticism, detachment, and renunciation. Across Asia throughout history, various configurations of "family" play a most central role in Buddhist ritual activity, religious motivation, social engagement, and political transformation. In Spring 2018 the Seminar in Buddhism will consider the relationship of Buddhism and the Family, a broad subfield of Buddhist Studies that has received significant attention from scholars in recent years. Through readings of primary Buddhist texts in translation as well as secondary sources, participants in the Seminar will explore the crucial and often controversial histories of family matters in Asian Buddhisms from antiquity to the present.

A further objective of the Seminar is to scrutinize and learn scholarly practices from recent work in the academic study of Buddhism. Here we are interested in how scholars construct and defend Buddhological arguments based on readings of different types of historical, literary, or ethnographic evidence.

Seminar Requirements and Assessment

i) Preparation and Contribution to Seminar Discussion

Students should plan to come to each seminar meeting having read and taken notes on all required readings. This is crucial. Failure to actively participate in seminar discussion each week will result in a significant reduction in your final grade.

ii) Response Paper Assignments and Leading Seminar Discussion (20%)
Each undergraduate student is required to submit two, approximately 2–3 page response papers during the semester, each worth 10% of the final grade. Graduate students will submit two response papers of 4–5 pages in length.

These response paper assignments entail:

a) Preparing a detailed critical response to the day's reading(s).
Note that your response papers should address not only the content of the reading(s), but also the author's methodology, sources, and approach to her topic. That is, your response should focus as much on what the author tells us about Buddhism and the Family as on how she tells us (e.g., through the use of particular forms of evidence and argumentation).

b) It is recommended that graduate student response papers engage with at least one reading listed as "recommended" (where applicable), in addition to the core required readings.

c) All response papers should include as an appendix no less than two critical questions about the reading, to be raised in seminar.

Students will initiate seminar discussion on the days on which their response papers are due.

Students will choose due-dates for their response papers in class on January 24, and the first set of response papers will be due January 31.

iii) Midterm Paper (30%)

All students will submit a paper responding to Alan Cole, *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*, due in class on March 7. Undergraduate papers should be 5–6 pages in length; graduate papers should be 10–12 pages in length. A satisfactory paper will contextualize and critically assess Cole's presentation and argument in light of other readings considered in the seminar prior to March 7. Graduate students are strongly encouraged to draw on both required and "recommended" readings.

Please note that although we will discuss Cole's book in seminar on March 7, you should not leave the reading of this text (~279 pages, including endnotes) until that week. This is a midterm assessment project, and it is recommended that you start reading the book no later than the week of February 21.

iv) Final Research Paper (50%)

*Important dates to bear in mind:*

- *February 21:* begin (or continue) reflection/research
- *March 21:* continue research
- *March 28:* finalized paper description and annotated bibliography due
- *April 18 & 25:* presentations
- *May 4:* papers due by 5:00 p.m.
Undergraduate participants in the seminar will write one 12–15-page research paper on the topic of Buddhism and the Family. Graduate students must submit a paper of 20–25 pages in length. This paper should incorporate original research in the development of an original scholarly argument related to the relationship of Buddhism and the Family, and may pertain to any (premodern/modern) era or cultural/geographical area. It is expected that your paper will enter into dialogue with required or recommended readings listed on the seminar syllabus, although your primary and secondary sources should also include materials identified through independent research.

A 500-word synopsis of your paper, accompanied by an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources to be used, will be due in class on March 28.

For undergraduates: minimally three primary and four secondary sources must support your paper, and in your bibliography 1–2 sentences should be given for each source explaining how it will be incorporated into your argument.

For graduate students: minimally four primary and six secondary sources must support your paper, and in your bibliography 1–2 sentences should be given for each source explaining how it will be incorporated into your argument.

Primary sources are defined broadly, and may comprise any historical artefact, literary/scriptural text, imagery/iconography, biography, event/performance/ritual, film, reportage/news item, ethnography, etc.

Students will present their research projects to the class for discussion and critique on April 18 & 25.

Further details about this project will be discussed in seminar, and all students are encouraged to speak with Dr. Lammerts during office hours well in advance of the bibliography due date.

A word of advice: Plan well in advance for this project, discuss your proposed project and bibliography with Dr. Lammerts, and you should encounter no difficulty.

Weekly Topics and Readings

*note #1:

Readings below are divided into two sections: required and recommended. All required readings are, or will shortly be, available via Sakai > Resources > Readings.

Recommended readings are provided a) as further reading for graduate students, and b) to assist all students in locating additional sources for their final research papers.

*note #2:

Readings marked by † are on two-hour undergraduate reserve in Alexander Library.

January 17: Introduction to the Seminar

January 24: Early Indic Imaginaries


Additional recommended resource:


January 31: Mothers of the Buddha(s)

**Response A & B**


Additional recommended resources:


February 7: Viśvaṃtara/Bisvaṃtara/Vessantara Jātaka

**Response C & D**


iii) The recent Thai short story "Matsii," by Sri Dao Ruang, in: 

Additional recommended resources:


February 14: The World Renouncer? Monks, Nuns, and their Families

**Response E & F**


(Selections from medieval Japanese *setsuwa* tales in class:

†Yoshiko Dykstra, *Buddhist Tales of India, China, and Japan: A Complete Translation of the Konjaku Monogatarishū (Japanese Section)*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.)

Additional recommended resources:


February 21: No seminar meeting. Use this week to begin reading Cole, Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism (on which your midterm paper is due on March 7), and reflect on possible topics for your final paper.

February 28: East Asian Narratives and The Ghost Festival

Response G & H


In-class Film & Discussion:
"The Spirits' Happy Days: Buddhist Festivals for the Dead in Southeast China," directed by Ingmar Heise and Han Zhang (University of Bristol, 2013).

Additional recommended resources:


Film: "Caring for the Beyond Two Buddhist Festivals for the Deceased," directed by Gregory Kourilsky, Patrice Ladwig (documents similar types of Buddhist festivals in Laos)
https://data.bris.ac.uk/data/dataset/x4mw2br1zdua15evd3vr7r3xo

March 7: Filial Transformations

MIDTERM PAPER DUE

Seminar Discussion:
Additional recommended resources:


**March 14:** Spring recess. No seminar meeting.

**March 21:** No Class. Research Week.

March 28: The Zen of the Family

**Response A, B, C, D**

**RESEARCH PAPER SYNOPSIS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**


Additional recommended resource:


**April 4:** Domestic Ritual

**Response E, F, G, H**


(Materials on medieval Burmese inscriptions and Newar Buddhist marriage ritual in class.)
April 11: Film and discussion: "The Yamaguchi Story: Buddhism and the Family in Contemporary Japan," directed by Jamie Hubbard

Before coming to class, please read the study guide for the film: [https://www.smith.edu/yamaguchi/study_guide.pdf](https://www.smith.edu/yamaguchi/study_guide.pdf)

April 18: PRESENTATIONS I

April 25: PRESENTATIONS II

May 4: Final Research Papers Due by 5:00 PM.