

Course Code	MABS 62
Course Title	The Doctrine of Śūnyatā (Emptiness): Prajñāpāramitā Scriptures and Early Madhyamika
Aim	To educate students of the doctrine of emptiness as expounded in the Prajñāpāramitā sutras and the Early Mādhyamika School.
Content	This course introduces the doctrine of emptiness as expounded in the Prajñāpāramitā sutras and the Early Mādhyamika School. It highlights the historical fact that this doctrine was undoubtedly inspired by the Early Buddhist teachings as preserved in the Pāli suttas and Chinese āgamas. Nāgārjuna, generally regarded as the effective “founder” of the Mādhyamika School, certainly declares that his śūnyatā doctrine is none other than the Buddha’s teaching of Conditioned Co-arising (<i>pratītya-samutpāda</i>). The course will begin by examining the Śūnyatā doctrine in the <i>Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā</i> demonstrating that, just as the Early Buddhist teachings, the early portion of this text—constituting the stratum of “primitive <i>prajñāpāramitā</i> teaching” as well as the <i>Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā</i> , in fact, consistently emphasizes the doctrine of non-Self (<i>nairātmya</i>) and non-attachment rather than the term <i>śūnyatā</i> . This will be followed by a discussion on the development of this doctrine in the <i>Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā</i> where the term <i>śūnyatā</i> came to be increasingly emphasized and distinctively elaborated. In conjunction with the discussion of the <i>Aṣṭasāhasrikā</i> , important stanzas from Nāgārjuna’s <i>Mūlamadhyamaka-kārika</i> will also be critically examined.
Duration	30 hours
Method of Teaching	Lectures and class discussions
Method of Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Essay assignments ■ In-class participation
Expected Learning Outcomes	<p>At the end of this course, the student will be able to demonstrate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. a comprehensive understanding of the doctrine of <i>śūnyatā</i> in the early <i>Prajñāpāramitā</i> texts and Nāgārjunas exposition; ii. gain a proper historical perspective of the development of the <i>śūnyatā</i> doctrine from the Buddha’s teaching of <i>pratītya-samutpāda</i> in the discourses of Early Buddhism; iii. distinguish the subsequent development of the <i>śūnyatā</i> doctrine in the relatively later <i>prajñāpāramitā</i> textual materials from its earliest or primitive form in the earliest period (as discernible from the earliest portion of the <i>Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā</i>).

Recommended References	<p>Conze, Edward. (1975). <i>Further Buddhist Studies: Selected Essays</i>, Bruno Cassirer.</p> <p>_____, (1974). <i>The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts</i>.</p> <p>_____, (1967). <i>Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature</i>.</p> <p>_____, (1967). <i>Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies: Selected Essays</i>, Delhi.</p> <p>_____, (1961). <i>The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom with division Abhisamayalāṅkāra</i>, California: University of California Press.</p> <p>_____, (1960). <i>The Prajñāpāramitā Literature</i>.</p> <p>_____, (1958). <i>Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines and its Verse Summary</i>.</p> <p>_____, (1957). <i>Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā: Edited and translated with Introduction and Glossary</i>.</p> <p>_____, (1955). <i>Selected Sayings from the Perfection of Wisdom</i>.</p> <p>Edelglass, William & Garfield, Jay. (Eds.). (2009). <i>Buddhist Philosophy: Essential Readings</i>, Oxford University Press.</p> <p>Inada, Kenneth (1970). <i>Nagarjuna: A Translation of His Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā with an Introductory Essay</i>.</p> <p>Lancaster, Lewis (Eds.). (1977). <i>Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honour of Edward Conze</i>, Berkeley: Group in Buddhist Studies.</p> <p>Nagao, Gadjin M. (1989). <i>The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy</i>.</p> <p>Siderits, Mark & Katsura, Shoryu, (2013). <i>Naāgārjuna's Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakakārikā</i>.</p>
-----------------------------------	---
