

**Society for Teaching Comparative Philosophy Panel  
American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, 2019**

- **Panel Title:** How to Point to the Moon: Teaching Undergraduates about Buddhism
- **Panel Chair:** James McRae, Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Westminster College, [james.mcrae@westminster-mo.edu](mailto:james.mcrae@westminster-mo.edu).
- **Panel Abstract:** Teaching philosophy to undergraduate students can be challenging, particularly when the subject matter is something as unfamiliar as Buddhist thought. The purpose of this panel is to offer constructive solutions to the challenge of teaching Buddhism as an academic subject in America. The panelists draw from their years of experience teaching Buddhist philosophy as well as their participation at the Buddhist East-Asia NEH Summer Institute at the East-West Center in 2018 to provide strategies for successfully incorporating Buddhist thought into philosophy classes.
- **Participant Abstracts:**
  - Mark Wells, Northeastern University
    - Title: “Who's Afraid of Teaching Buddhism?”
    - Abstract: Most philosophers teaching at the undergraduate level in America have little to no graduate training in Buddhist philosophy. This lack is taken by many such philosophers to justify their choice to not teach Buddhist philosophy in their undergraduate courses. After all, without such training how can one responsibly teach others? In this presentation, I use my own experience to demonstrate both the possibility, and feasibility, of responsibly teaching Buddhist philosophy to undergraduates without graduate training in the subject matter.
  - Lara Mitias, Antioch College
    - Title: Teaching Buddhism through Mindfulness
    - Abstract: The mindfulness movement has become very familiar to many people and students in many Colleges and Universities have often had exposure to some degree of mindfulness training. In this presentation, I offer a way to present Buddhism and Buddhist texts through the concept of mindfulness (*sati*) that can be used by teachers with no formal training in Buddhist studies or can be incorporated as a philosophy of mind/psychology module into any introductory Buddhism class.
  - Robert H. Scott, University of North Georgia
    - Title: “Teaching Buddhism in a Comparative Philosophy of Religion Course”
    - Abstract: While Philosophy of Religion may be taught effectively from a strictly western philosophical and religious perspective, I argue in favor of the inclusion of both western and non-western perspectives in Philosophy of Religion. In this presentation, I put forward a Comparative Philosophy of Religion syllabus that includes a robust module on Buddhism that brings into dialogue western philosophical ideas about God, creation, religious language, and religious experience with Buddhist perspectives on these themes.
  - James McRae, Westminster College
    - Title: “Not One, Not Two: The Challenge of Teaching Buddhism in Cross-Listed Courses”
    - Abstract: Is Buddhism a philosophy or a religion? Those who teach cross-listed courses are acutely aware of the tensions—both creative and adversarial—between these two disciplines. Students majoring in one discipline might not respond to courses designed to meet the needs of the other. This presentation investigates the ways in which Buddhism can be understood as both a religious and a philosophical tradition, then offers methodologies for addressing the needs of both disciplines simultaneously in a single course.