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'SELF' & 'NO SELF' IN ASIAN AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHY DR. PHILIP BOLD

Whereas many Hindu philosophers have argued that 'self' (*atman*) is the fundamental reality (*brahman*), Buddhist philosophers have famously rejected the Hindu doctrine with the thesis that there is 'no self' (*anatman*). This controversy in Asian philosophy has obvious connections to Western thought, especially David Hume's famous argument (and disagreement with Descartes) that there is 'no self'. Yet very little has been done to connect these philosophical traditions and create a cross-cultural dialogue on this deep issue – one which Buddhists have suggested should profoundly change the way we live, while Western philosophers have mostly treated it as a marginal ontological issue. – The aim of this course is to draw from each of these traditions in addressing the questions (1) whether any of us has a 'self' and (2) how our answer to that question should affect our ethical lives. Most of the course will survey historical works in each of these philosophical traditions. The end of the course will involve a critical reading of Jay Garfield's recent *Losing Ourselves: Learning to Live without a Self* (2022).