BSTC 2005 Buddhism in Today’s World (6 Credits)

Instructor: Dr. SIK Fa Ren  
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Offering semester: 2nd  
Time: 10:30pm-12:20pm (Tuesday)  
Venue: CPD LG.07 Centennial Campus

Course Outline
Buddhism was founded by Buddha Sakyamuni more than 2500 years ago. Since then, it has spread to various places, and has become one of the major religions in the contemporary world. Buddhism has undergone a long historical development and its practices have experienced magnificent changes. This course is designed to explore, from various perspectives, the development of Buddhism in the contemporary period. It will first give an overview of the major Buddhist doctrines, and then review its history in a concise manner. Then it will look into a number of aspects of Buddhism, including institutional developments, lay Buddhism, ritual practices, and social relationships in various areas of today’s world. Recent developments of Chinese Buddhism, which is closely concerned with human life in this world, as well as how Buddhism has transformed itself to suit the needs of the modern world, will also be explored.

Aim and Objective
The course aims at introducing the basic beliefs and practices of Buddhism to its students. Its objective is to, by critically evaluating reading materials during lectures, enable students to understand how Buddhism has constantly reinvigorated its institutional and doctrinal traditions in order to better respond to the social, political, and scientific progress of the human world.

Assessment ratio
Students are required to read the relevant papers before coming to the lecture so that they can participate in our lively discussion. The final examination is based on one essay, one presentation and lecture participation. Presentation is arranged. Each group has about 15 minutes to give a presentation. This requires students’ critical thinking on the related topics and informed participation. This is the key for the success of the course.
Also, students are going to write a term paper of about 2500 to 3000 words on one of topics discussed in lectures, or students may choose your own topic related to the course (in this case, make sure you discuss with me beforehand). Students are expected to attend all lectures on time without being late.

100% coursework, including:
(i) 70%: a short essay with 2,500-3,000 words
(ii) 30%: a presentation (each group with 15 minutes duration)

**Criteria for marking essay**
1. Good and correct understanding of the Buddhist teaching given in the lectures,
2. Clear, logical and rational presentation of your ideas and thoughts,
3. Show that you have read at least three papers in your essay either in your footnotes or endnotes and list them at the end.

**Course schedule with bibliography**

**Lecture One:** Course introduction/ Introduction of resources for the study of Buddhism

**Lecture Two:** Buddhism in Contemporary China

**Lecture Three:** Humanistic Buddhism in the Modern World (1):

**Lecture Four:** Humanistic Buddhism in the Modern World (2):

**Lecture Five:** Engaged Buddhism in the Modern World:
*Christopher Queen (1996), “Introduction: The Shapes and Sources of Engaged Buddhism” in *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation*

*David Schak and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (2005), Taiwan’s Socially Engaged Buddhist Groups (http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/2803) Development of Lay Buddhism


Lecture Six: Contemporary Social Practices of Buddhism


Lecture Seven: Reading Week

Lecture Eight: Theoretical Basis of Buddhist Rituals


Lecture Nine: Buddhist Rituals I


Lecture Ten: Buddhist Rituals II

**Lecture Eleven:** Buddhist Practice and its Benefits  

**Lecture Twelve:** Buddhism in Contemporary Hong Kong  

**Lecture Thirteen: Course Revision**

*Recommended Readings*

*(Last updated: July 19, 2017)*