

Undergraduate Courses offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2017-2018
ELECTIVES / INTER-FACULTY ELECTIVES
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)

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

Instructor: Dr. SIK Fa Ren

Office: Rm. 4.12, The Jockey Club Tower

Email: faren@hku.hk

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

*Chandler, Stuart (2006), 'Buddhism in China and Taiwan: The dimensions of Contemporary Chinese Buddhism' in Berkwitz, Stephen C. (ed.), *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (Santa Barbara (US): ABC-CLIO), pp.169-194.

Welch, Holmes, "Buddhism under the Communists," in *The China Quarterly*, Volume 6, June 1961, pp.1-14.

*Don Pittman, *Toward A modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001: 13-60.

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

*Don Pittman, *Toward A modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001: 13-60.

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

*Don Pittman, *Toward A modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001: 13-60.

Lecture Five: Engaged Buddhism in the Modern World:

*Christopher Queen (1996), "Introduction: The Shapes and Sources of Engaged Buddhism" in *Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist Liberation*

Movements in Asia. (New York: State University of New York Press):1-44.

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

Welch, Holmes (1967), *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950* (Harvard University Press), pp. 357-395.

Jones, C. Brewer (1999), *Buddhism in Taiwan. Religion and the State 1660-1990* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), pp.178-219.

Lecture Six: Contemporary Social Practices of Buddhism

*Chandler, Stuart (2004), *Establishing A Pure Land on Earth: The Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), pp. 43-77.

Huang, C. Julia (2003), "The Buddhist Tzu-Chi Foundation of Taiwan" in Christopher Queen, ed., *Action Dharma: New Studies in Engaged Buddhism*. (Routledge: Curzon), pp.134-151.

Lecture Seven: Reading Week

Lecture Eight: Theoretical Basis of Buddhist Rituals

Tambiah, Stanley J. (1985), "A Performative Approach to Ritual", in *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), pp.123-166.

*Walsh, Michael J., 'The Economics of Salvation: Toward a Theory of Exchange in Chinese Buddhism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Advance*, 2007, pp. 353-82.

Xueyu, 'Merit Transfer and Life after Death in Buddhism', *Ching Feng*, New Series 4.1, 2003, pp. 29-50.

Lecture Nine: Buddhist Rituals I

Stevenson, Daniel B., 'Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of Shuilu fahui, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land', in Marsha Weidner (ed.), *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp.30-70.

*Yo, Hsiang-Chou. (2001), "Chinese Buddhist Confessional Rituals: Their Origin and Spiritual Implications" in Kalupahana, David J. edited. 2001. *Buddhist thought and ritual* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), pp.173-187.

Lecture Ten: Buddhist Rituals II

Teiser, S. F. (1988), *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

Welch, Holmes (1967), *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900-1950* (Harvard University Press), pp. 197-207.

Lecture Eleven: Buddhist Practice and its Benefits

* Reader, Ian and Tanabe, George J. (1998), *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu University of Hawai'i Press), pp37-68.

Wilson, Bryan and Dobbelaere, Karel (1994), *A Time to Chant: Soka Gakkai Buddhists in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon).

Walsh, Michael J. (2007), 'The Economics of Salvation: Toward a Theory of Exchange in Chinese Buddhism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion Advance*, pp. 353-82.

Lecture Twelve: Buddhism in Contemporary Hong Kong

*Kwong, Chungwah, *The Public Role of Religion in Post-Colonial Hong Kong: An Historical Overview of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity* (Asian Thought and Culture, 53; New York: Peter Lang, 2002), pp.64-69.

Lecture Thirteen: Course Revision

*Recommended Readings

(Last updated: July 19, 2017)