

Centre of Buddhist Studies, HKU

## **BSTC2006 Buddhist Psychology and Mental Cultivation**

(6 Credits)

Minor in Buddhist Studies Programme

(The course is open to students from all faculties as a free elective)

Offering Semester: 1<sup>st</sup> Semester of 2017/2018

Day of the week: Tuesday 4:30 pm – 6:20 pm

Class dates: Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26; Oct. 3, 10, 24, 31; Nov. 7, 14, 21, 28

Venue: Knowles Building Room 223

Lecturer: Dr. G.A. Somaratne

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### **Course Description (6 credits)**

In this course, we will examine Buddhist discourses on the nature and operation of the mind. We will study basic Buddhist principles and diverse practices of mental cultivation based on ancient Buddhist texts and manuals that present unique perspectives on individual, family, and society at large and world. The main topics covered in this course include psychology of dhamma and the theory of "dependent co-arising", relation between mind and body, sensory perception and obsession, intentional actions and human wellbeing, positive thinking and self-initiative, controlling emotions and mindfulness practice, selfless being and awakened mind.

### **Objectives**

At the end of this course, students are expected to develop the ability to:

1. Explain the Buddhist teachings regarding the nature and operation of the mind.
2. Identify basic Buddhist principles, meditation practices and personality types.
3. Analyze the principles in which these diverse Buddhist meditation practices cater to different personality types.
4. Relate Buddhist ideas and principles in understanding and finding perpetual solutions to complex psychological, social, political and environmental issues in the modern world.
5. Develop an appreciative and positive attitude towards one's life, family, society and the world.

## **Lecture Topics**

<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Dhamma, Buddha, and psychology
2	Theory of dependent co-arising
3	Problem of 'my self'
4	Problem of craving
5	Name-and-Matter and Consciousness
6	Sense perception and obsession
7	Psychological analysis of social conflicts
8	Intentional actions, positive thinking and self-initiative
9	Controlling emotions and dealing with defilements
10	Mindfulness practice and working with memory
11	Personality types and meditation techniques
12	Awakened mind and awakened ones

## **Assessment**

100% coursework with the following breakdowns:

<u>Assessment Tasks</u>	<u>Weighting</u>
1. Reflective Writing based on a concept learned from Lectures 1 to 5 (1000 ~ 1200 words) (Due October 10)	20%
2. Reflective Writing based on a concept learned from Lectures 6 to 10 (1100 ~ 1300 words) (Due November 21)	30%
3. Short essay on a topic relevant to the course content (1,400 ~ 1600 words) (Due December 12)	30%
4. Attendance and participation	20%

### **Note:**

- All written assignments are to be submitted by uploading onto Moodle prior to 23:50 of the due date, late submission will be subjected to mark deduction. Files must be renamed as "LASTNAME First name", e.g., "LEUNG Chi Wai Tony". A printed copy of each assignment must also be handed over to the class instructor.

### **General expectation of student performance at the various grades:**

[http://arts.hku.hk/BAprogramme/2012/assessment/A92\\_311\\_amended\\_2014.pdf](http://arts.hku.hk/BAprogramme/2012/assessment/A92_311_amended_2014.pdf)

## What is reflective writing?

Reflective writing is evidence of reflective thinking. In this reflective thinking, you will look back at an idea, concept, or theory learned in the course and see its relevance to analyze one of your unforgettable personal experiences you had in the past or a social issue that you have been interested in. You will analyze the experience or the issue, thinking in depth and from different perspectives. You will try to explain it in relation to the model or theory from your learning in the course. You will think carefully about what the idea, concept, or theory means for you and your ongoing progress as a learner.

*Reflective writing is more personal* than other kinds of academic writing. We all think reflectively in everyday life, but perhaps not to the same *depth* as that expected in good reflective writing at university level. Reflective thinking—if done in discussion with others—can be very ‘free’ and unstructured and still be very useful. Reflective writing can be unstructured, for example when it is done in a personal diary. In assignments, it should be *a carefully-structured writing*.

## A possible structure for reflective writing

Reflective writing can be broken down into three parts:

- *Description*: What happened? What is being examined?
- *Interpretation*: What is most important / interesting / useful / relevant about the object, event, issue or idea? How can it be explained in relation to the Buddhist concept or *theory*?
- *Outcome*: What have I learned from this? What does this mean for my future?

This is just one way of structuring reflective writing. There are others. What is important is your own creativity. Whichever approach to reflection you use, try to bear in mind the following four key points:

- Reflection is an *exploration* and an *explanation* of events—not just a description of them.
- Reflective writing involves ‘*revealing*’ *anxieties, errors and weaknesses*, as well as *strengths and successes*. This is fine, if you show some understanding of possible causes, and explain how you plan to improve.
- It is necessary to select just the most *significant parts of the event or idea* on which you are reflecting. If you try to ‘tell the whole story’ you are likely to use up your words on description rather than interpretation.

## **Grading**

Grade for this assignment will be decided based on creativity, clarity and organization of the presentation, accuracy in explaining or interpreting the Buddhist theory or concept, depth in reflection, and application of the concept to review and improve your personal life.

## **Final Short Essay Assignment**

### **30% of the course grade**

This is an academic paper. You select your own topic. You undertake a small research into the chosen topic and write a comprehensive essay. You do well if you ask a good question or questions and try to answer it/them by consulting scholarly works, Buddhist discourses and course content. You could also use your own observations/ experiences to clarify things.

### **Grade descriptors for an 'A' grade:**

- has chosen a topic relevant to the course content;
- shows familiarity with the topic;
- knows how to contextualizes the topic within the larger psychological or related studies field/s;
- explains the concepts thoroughly and accurately;
- brings in intellectual discussions/debates to explain the topic;
- uses relevant sources;
- provides sufficient, consistent, and relevant notes and bibliography following academic norms (minimum of 5 sources must be used; one referencing system must be followed);
- writes beautifully, clearly and persuasively;
- is innovative and critical in approach.

**Due:** Tuesday 12 December 2017

**Start your work early and submit it before the deadline.**

### **Recommended Reading List**

1. Analayo, Bhikkhu (2010) *Satipatthana: The Direct Path to Realization*. Cambridge: Windhorse Publications.
2. Bodhi, Bhikkhu (1993) *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
3. Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2000) *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

4. Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2012) *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Ariṅuttara Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
5. Bodhi, Bhikkhu (2015) *Dhamma Reflections: Collected Essays of Bhikkhu Bodhi*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publications Society.
6. Boisvert, Mathieu (1995) *The Five Aggregates: Understanding Theravāda Psychology and Soteriology*. Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
7. Bronkhorst, Johannes (1998) *Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
8. Burton, David (2004) *Buddhism, Knowledge and Liberation: A Philosophical Study*. England: Ashagate Publishing Ltd.
9. Choong, Mun-Keat (2000) *The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.
10. Collins, Steven (1982) *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
11. Collins, Steven (1998) *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
12. Davids, Rhys (1978) *Birth of Indian Psychology and Its Development in Buddhism*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
13. De Silva, Padmasiri (2014) *An Introduction to Buddhist Psychology and Counselling*. London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
14. Fuller, Paul (2005) *The Notion of Diṭṭhi in Theravāda Buddhism: The Point of View*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
15. Gethin, R.M.L. (2001) *The Buddhist Path to Awakening (Classics in Religious Studies)*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications.
16. Gethin, Rupert (1998) *The Foundations of Buddhism*. USA: Oxford University Press.
17. Gokhale, B. G. (1994) *New Light on Early Buddhism*. London: Sangam Books.
18. Gombrich, Richard (2006) *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings*. New York: Routledge.
19. Gombrich, Richard (2009) *What the Buddha Thought*. London: Equinox Publishing.
20. Govinda, Lama Anagarika (1961) *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy and Its Systematic Representation According to Abhidhamma Tradition*. London: Rider & Company.
21. Govinda, Lama Anagarika (1961) *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy and Its Systematic Representation According to Abhidhamma Tradition*. London: Rider & Company.
22. Hamilton, Sue (1996) *Identity and Experience: the Constitution of the Human Being according to Early Buddhism*. London: Luzac Oriental.
23. Hamilton, Sue (2000) *Early Buddhism: A New Approach - The I of the Beholder*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.
24. Hart, W. (1987) *The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation as taught by S.N.Goenka*. San Francisco: Harper.

25. Harvey, Peter (1990) *An Introduction to Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
26. Harvey, Peter (1995) *The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvana in Early Buddhism*. Richmond: Curzon Press.
27. Harvey, Peter (2000) *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
28. Jayatilleke, K.N. (1980) *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
29. Jayasuriya, W.F. (1976) *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism: An Introduction to the Abhidhamma*. Kuala Lumpur.
30. Johansson, Rune E.A. (1979) *The Dynamic Psychology of Early Buddhism*. Oxford: Curzon Press.
31. Kalupahana, David J. (1987) *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
32. Kalupahana, David J. (1992) *A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
33. Kalupahana, David J. (2007) *A Sourcebook of Early Buddhist Philosophy*. Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre.
34. Kalupahana, David J. (2009) *Karma and Rebirth: Foundations of the Buddha's Moral Philosophy*. Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre.
35. Karunadasa, Y. (2010) *The Theravāda Abhidhamma*. Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong.
36. Karunadasa, Y. (2013) *Early Buddhist Teachings: The Middle Position in Theory and Practice*. Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong.
37. Karunadasa, Y. (2015) *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*. Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong.
38. Karunaratne, W.S. (1988) *Theory of Causality in Early Buddhism*. Nugegoda, Sri Lanka: Indumati Karunaratne.
39. Ñāṇamoli, Bikkhu (1999) *The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga (Vipassanā Meditation and the Buddha's Teaching)*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
40. Ñāṇananda, Bhikkhu (1986) *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society.
41. Nyanaponika Thera (1956/1996) *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*. Boston: Weiser Books.
42. Pande, G.C. (1957) *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*. Allahabad: University of Allahabad.
43. Payutto, Phra Prayudha (1995) *Buddhadhamma: Natural Laws and Values for Life*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
44. Rahula, W. (1959/1978) *What the Buddha Taught*. London: the Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd, 1978.
45. Ronkin, Noa (2005) *Early Buddhist Metaphysics: The Making of a Philosophical Tradition*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

46. Saddhatissa, H (1971) *Buddhist Ethics*. New York: George Braziller.
47. Sujato, Bhikkhu (2005) *A History of Mindfulness: How insight worked tranquillizing in the Satipatthāna Sutta*. Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation.
48. Varma, Vishwanath Prasad (1973) *Early Buddhism and Its Origins*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers.
49. Walshe, Maurice (1995) *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Digha Nikaya*. London: Wisdom Publications.
50. Webster, David (2005) *The Philosophy of Desire in the Buddhist Pali Canon*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

### **Recommended Internet Resources**

1. An Entrance to the World of Buddhism [[www.buddhistdoor.com](http://www.buddhistdoor.com)]
2. Buddhism and Science [[www.mindandlife.org](http://www.mindandlife.org)]
3. Journal for mindfulness practitioners [[www.inquiringmind.com](http://www.inquiringmind.com)]
4. Mindfulness teachers talks [[www.dhammaseed.org](http://www.dhammaseed.org)]
5. Access to insight [[www.accesstoinsight.org](http://www.accesstoinsight.org)]
6. Buddhist Dictionary [[glossary.buddhistdoor.com](http://glossary.buddhistdoor.com)]
7. Translations of the Buddha's discourses [<http://suttacentral.net/>]

*(Last updated: July 19, 2017)*