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

Buddhism in Today’s World (6 Credits)

Instructor: Dr. SIK Fa Ren
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Email: faren@hku.hk
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 readings before coming to each lecture so that they can participate in our lively discussion. The final examination is 100% coursework including class participation and one essay.

The class participation comprises group discussion and five worksheets which require input of individual and team effort. During five selected lectures, students in their own groups will have 10-15 minutes for group discussion before working on a worksheet. The worksheets submitted should demonstrate students’ understanding
and critical thinking on the related topics and informed participation. This is the key for 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 their own topics related to the course (in this case, make sure you discuss with the lecturer beforehand).

All students are expected to attend the lectures on time without being late.

100% coursework, including:
75% a term paper with 2,500-3,000 words
25 % class participation (five worksheets, each contributes 5% to the final grading)

Criteria for Marking the Term Paper:
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. In-depth analysis and personal input,
4. 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 (21st Jan): Course introduction/ Introduction of resources for the study of Buddhism

Lecture Two (4th Feb): Current studies of Chinese Buddhism
Readings:

Lecture Three (11th Feb): Buddhism in Contemporary China
Lecture Four (18th Feb): Humanistic Buddhism in the Modern World (1):

Lecture Five (25th Feb): Humanistic Buddhism in the Modern World (2):

Lecture Six (3rd Mar): Contemporary Social Practices of Buddhism

Lecture Seven (10th Mar): Reading Week

Lecture Eight (17th Mar): Engaged Buddhism in the Modern World:
*David Schak and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (2005), Taiwan’s Socially Engaged Buddhist Groups (http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/2803)Development of Lay Buddhism

Lecture Nine (24th Mar): Theoretical Basis of Buddhist Rituals
Lecture Ten (31st Mar): Buddhist Rituals I

Lecture Eleven (7th Apr): Buddhist Rituals II

Lecture Twelve (14th Apr.): Buddhist Practice and its Benefits

Lecture Thirteen (21th Apr): Buddhism in Contemporary Hong Kong

Lecture Fourteen (28th Apr): Course Revision

*Recommended Readings