BSTC2005 Buddhism in Today’s World (6 Credits)

Instructor: Dr. SIK Fa Ren  
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Email: faren@hku.hk  
Time: 15:30 – 17:20 1st Semester (Friday)  
Meeting Venue: KB223

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 go through the assigned readings before joining each lecture so that they can participate in the class discussion and raise their own questions with foundational ideas about each designated topic. Final assessment of this course is 100% coursework including class participation and one term paper, both components are equally important and conducive to the final result.

Class participation comprises 3 worksheet which entirely rely on input of students’ individual effort. After the lectures which would be offered before the readings, students should work on one worksheet with a discussion topic that corresponds to the theme(s) of the relevant lecture. Worksheet submitted are expected to demonstrate students’ informed participation, as well as
comprehension and critical thinking on the related topics. Good fulfilment of this component is one of the keys leading to the success in this course, and attending each lecture is the crucial step to achieve good result for the worksheets.

In addition, students are required 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 e-lectures on time without being late.

**100% Coursework, including:**
50% a term paper (2,500-3,000 words)
50% class participation (1 piece worksheet)
*Guidelines for the coursework will be provided in due course.*

**Criteria for Marking the Term Paper:**
1. Good and correct understanding of the Buddhist teaching and historical information given in the lectures.
2. Clear, logical and rational presentation of your ideas and thoughts.
3. Personal input with in-depth analysis.
4. Show that you have read at least three academic references (PowerPoints or notes of lectures are not counted) in your paper either in your footnotes or endnotes and list them at the end.

**Grade Descriptors of Faculty of Arts:**
http://arts.hku.hk/grade_expectations.pdf

**Academic Honesty:**
Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. The University upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable and any student found plagiarizing is liable to disciplinary action in addition to failing the assessment concerned. Please read the following webpage on "plagiarism" for details:
http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism
Course schedule with bibliography

Lecture One: Course introduction (1 Sep)

Introduction of resources for the study of Buddhism

Lecture Two (8 Sep): Current studies of Chinese Buddhism

Readings:

Lecture Three (15 Sep): Buddhism in Contemporary China


Lecture Four (22 Sep): Humanistic Buddhism in the Modern World


Lecture Five (29 Sep) : Contemporary Social Practices of Buddhism


Lecture Six (6 Oct): 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 Seven (13 Oct): Theoretical Basis of Buddhist Rituals**


**Lecture Eight (20 Oct): Reading week**

**Lecture Nine: Buddhist Practice and its Benefits (27 Oct)**


**Lecture Ten: Buddhist Rituals I (3 Nov)**


**Lecture Eleven: Buddhist Rituals II (10 Nov)**


*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

Lecture Twelve (17 Nov): Buddhism in Contemporary Hong Kong and Course Revision and Breaking the Boundary


Lecture Thirteen (24 Nov): Course Revision

*Recommended Readings

Further Reading


Prip-Möller, Johannes (1967), *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries: Their Plan and Its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press).


Stephen C. Berkwitz (ed.), *Buddhism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (Santa Barbara (US): ABC-CLIO).


Tong, Chee Kiong and Kong, Lily (Sep., 2000), 'Religion and modernity: ritual transformations and the reconstruction of space and time', Social & Cultural Geography, pp. 29 - 44.


Watson, James L. and Rawski, Evelyn S. (ed.) (1988), Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China (Berkeley: University of California Press).

Welch, Holmes (1968), Buddhist Revival in China (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).


3) E-Journals

Journal of Buddhist Ethics. Free. This is a web based academic journal for free distribution. Web address: http://www.jbe.gold.ac.uk/


Buddhist Studies Review. HKU Library. Published twice a year by the UK Association for Buddhist Studies, started form 1984. S 294.3 B927 S9

The Eastern Buddhist. HKU Library. Published twice a year by the Eastern Buddhist Society in Kyoto, Japan, started from 1965. S 294.3 E13 B9

Contemporary Buddhism. HKU Library. Published twice a year, Richmond, England: Curzon, c2000- S 294.3 C761 B

Website Recourses
JSTOR The Scholarly Journal Archive. This Archive needs subscription, so use it through HKU Electronic Recourses. http://www.jstor.org/jstor

NII Scholarly and Academic Information Navigator. Mostly Free. The National Institute of Informatics (Japan) has incorporated approximately 2.8 million full text articles (PDF) in NII-ELS, from 1,000 published academic journals. Currently NII has obtained permission of 271 academic societies. NII-ELS also provides full text (PDF) of Research Bulletins of Japanese universities. All of the full text articles incorporated in NII-ELS are available through CiNii along with bibliographical information on other academic papers.


Digital Sanskrit Buddhist Canon. Free for download and reading from The University of The West website: http://www.uwest.edu/sanskritcanon/index.html