Instructor: Dr. SIK Fa Ren
Office: Rm. 4.12, The Jockey Club Tower
Email: faren@hku.hk
Time: 10:30pm-12:20pm (Tuesday)
Meeting Venue: LE1

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.
Class participation comprises one piece of worksheet (E-class) OR one book presentation (face-to-face teaching) which entirely relies on the input of students’ individual effort.

1) A worksheet submitted is 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.
2) Book presentation requires students to show their understanding on the readings. Each student will have 10 minutes for presenting their work.

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 lectures on time without being late.

100% coursework, including:
35% class participation
65% a term paper (2,500-3,000 words)
*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 Expectations in 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 (7 Sep)
Introduction of resources for the study of Buddhism

Lecture Two: Current studies of Chinese Buddhism (14 Sep)
Readings:

Lecture Three: Buddhism in Contemporary China (21 Sep)

Lecture Four: Humanistic Buddhism in the Modern World (28 Sep)

Lecture Five: Contemporary Social Practices of Buddhism (5 Oct)

Reading week (12 Oct)
Lecture Six : Engaged Buddhism in the Modern World (19 Oct)
*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 : Theoretical Basis of Buddhist Rituals (26 Oct)

Lecture Eight : Buddhist Practice and its Benefits (2 Nov)

Lecture Nine : Buddhist Rituals I (9 Nov)

**Lecture Ten : Buddhist Rituals II  (16 Nov)**

**Lecture Eleven : Buddhism in Contemporary Hong Kong (23 Nov)**

**Lecture Twelve : Course Revision (30 Nov)**

*Recommended Readings*