**BSTC2021 BUDDHIST ETHICS (6 Credits)**

**ELECTIVE COURSE (Open to all HKU undergraduates)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Dr. Chengzhong PU</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Rm 4.03, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Hours</td>
<td>16:00-17:00pm Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pcz100@hku.hk">pcz100@hku.hk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture hours</td>
<td>Thursday 13:30 - 15:20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Venue</td>
<td>KB223</td>
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**Course Description**

Regarded as the most ethical world religion, Buddhism assigns a crucial place to morality in the daily life of its practitioners and in their pursuit of the final spiritual goal. This course introduces students to essential Buddhist moral teachings and practices, exploring their meaning and significance for contemporary living. It will begin with a brief overview of the Buddhist doctrines that are easily identifiable as ethical teachings, and then apply these teachings to social and ethical issues such as war and terrorism, abortion, and suicide.

**Course Objectives**

1. To highlight the fundamental moral values and virtues in Buddhism;
2. To discuss social and ethical issues by applying the highlighted Buddhist moral doctrines;
3. To nurture an awareness of the relevancy of Buddhism to contemporary society;
4. To practice critical skills and reflective inquiry about matters of personally and publically ethical importance.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Generate an awareness of ethical issues and act according to one’s better judgement.
2. Being equipped with a Buddhist understanding in viewing ethical issues.
3. Gain enhanced ability to rationally analyze ethical issues.
4. Being able to understand Buddhism’s relevance to modern world.
5. Build a foundation for further inquiries into Buddhism and Contemporary society.

**Required Reading:**

Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path* (on Moodle)


Ellis, Gabriel. 2019. ‘Early Buddhism and Caste.’ *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 72.1: 55–
Keown, Damien, 2022. *Buddhism and Contemporary Society*, Centre of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong. [on the moodle]

**Lecture Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction of the course: scope and limit; defining 'Ethics'. Read: pp. 21-38.</td>
<td>Page numbers refer to the Required Reading.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist Moral teachings Read: pp. 1-11.</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist Values Read: pp. 12-16.</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Buddhist Social and Mahayana Ethics Read: pp. 17-20.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist idea of equality (social) Read the uploaded article on the Moodle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist idea of equality (gender) Read: pp. 78-88.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buddhist ethics of Sexuality Read: pp. 53-68.</td>
<td>Quiz 1 Deadline for Book report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>War and Terrorism Read: pp. 69-83.</td>
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**Week 9**  
Abortion, Gene editing and Cloning  
Read: pp. 84-99; 116-131.

**Week 10**  
Suicide and Euthanasia  
Read: pp. 100-115.

**Week 11**  
Animals and the Environment  
Read: pp. 39-52.  
Deadline for Experiment

**Week 12**  
Buddhist economic ethics  
Read materials on the Moodle page  
Quiz 2

**Assessment:**  
100% coursework made up of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Submission</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Discussions</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Essay (300-450 words)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Essay (1800-2000 words)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Notes on the Assignments**

1. The quiz has twenty questions. It is in multiple-choice format, you only select the one you think is correct out of the four answers provided (eg.: Is Buddhism a religion? A, yes; B, no; C, either; D, neither). You need to use either your laptop or your phone, which must be accessible to Moodle, as the quiz is done online during a given period of time (13 minutes). **Please DO NOT miss it, as no make-up test will be arranged.**

2. The **Short Essay** (of 300-450 words) should include a list of five real-life **UNETHICAL** cases/scenarios (including those which are apparently ethical but actually unethical). Your writing of the case should consist of two parts: a clear and precise description of the case, and comprehensive and straightforward reasons why it is unethical. **DO NOT** list public scandals in the News.

3. The **Long Essay** (1800-2000 words) is your in-depth discussion of one of the cases you listed in your **Short Essay.** It can be explanatory or argumentative with reference to Buddhist moral teachings, in either case, be as critical as you can. But you can also pick a topic closely related to Buddhist ethics, **DO NOT** choose one that is used as the main topic of a lecture.

4. All your writings should be **double-spaced.** The **Long Essay** should include proper referencing and citation of AT LEAST five academic publications. Any one of the major citation formats/styles is acceptable, but you must provide page numbers in your citations or footnotes.

5. I can only comment on your draft once.

6. All your written works should be **submitted through the ‘turnitin’ on the Moodle course page.** The acceptable similarity rate is 10% (excluding bibliography and endnotes/footnotes).

7. Your writings will be graded according to these rubrics: B range grades are for
basically good writing (including clear structure and reasonable argumentation; generally correct understanding of Buddhism; readability in language, acceptable technical matters (e.g. a title page, citation convention, etc.). The A range is for papers excellence in all the above aspects.

8. The submission made after the deadline can be sent to my email. Late submission with no justifiable excuses is liable for a penalty of lowering the assignment grade: 1) within first 7 days after the deadline, one sub-grade will be deducted (e.g. A \(\Rightarrow\) A-); 2) a grade for two weeks after the deadline (A \(\Rightarrow\) B); 3) only a pass grade will be given for any submission made two weeks after the deadline. Late submission should be sent to my email inbox.

9. No plagiarism. For details, please refer to http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism

10. Faculty Grade Expectations: http://arts.hku.hk/grade_expectations.pdf

Further Readings on the course


Further Readings on Individual Lectures

1. Lecture 1:

2. Lecture 2:
   King, Sallie. 2017. “The Problems and Promise of Karma from an Engaged

3. Lecture 3:

4. Lecture 4:
Goodman, Charles. 2016a. The Training Anthology of Śāntideva: A Translation of
the Śikṣā-samuccaya, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

5. Lecture 5:

6. **Lecture 6:**  

7. Lecture 7:

8. Lecture 8:


9. **Lecture 9:**


10. **Lecture 10:**


11. **Lecture 11:**


Chapple, Christopher. 1986. ‘Noninjury to Animals: Jaina and Buddhist Perspectives,’ *Animal Sacrifices – religious Perspectives on the Use of Animals*.


12. **Lecture 12:**


**Online Sources:**

Buddhist Studies Sources in HKU’s library:

https://libguides.lib.hku.hk/c.php?g=934554

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Consequentialism

http://www.iep.utm.edu/conseque/

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Deontological Ethics

http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-deontological/

Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy entry on Psychological Egoism

http://www.iep.utm.edu/psychego/

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on Metaethics

http://www.iep.utm.edu/metaethi/