Undergraduate Course offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2023-24
ELECTIVE COURSE
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)

BSTC2028 Making Sense of Chan Buddhism (6 Credit) (Semester 2)

Lecturer: Dr. Ben Luk
Email: benluk@hku.hk
Schedule:
Venue:

Course Description
Chan Buddhism is the most important and influential Buddhist school in China. It is characterized by its enigmatic stories and dialogues about religious epiphany, known as gong’an. This course introduces the origin, development, basic doctrines, and cultural influences of Chan Buddhism and some eminent Chan masters such as Bodhidharma, Huineng, and Mazu Daoyi. Students will be guided to appreciate and decipher a number of well-known gong’an stories.

Course Objectives
After completing the course, students will acquire solid knowledge of Chinese Chan Buddhism and be able to connect this form of Buddhism with the culture and history of China and East Asia. This course will lay a foundation for students to study further Chinese Buddhism and culture, and the thought of East Asia.

Teaching and Learning Method
Lectures and class discussions.

Lecture Schedule (tentative):
Lecture 1. Dual Roots of Chan Buddhism: Philosophical Basis and the Legacy of Meditation Practice
Lecture 2. Bodhidharma: The First Patriarch of Chan Buddhism
Lecture 3. The East Mountain School (東山法門)
Lecture 4. Shenxiu (神秀) and The Northern School
Lecture 5. Huineng (慧能): The Sixth Patriarch (638-713)
Lecture 6. Two Lineages: The Hongzhou School (洪州宗) and the Shitou School (石頭宗)
Lecture 7. Five Houses: Weiyang (滄仰), Linji (臨濟), Caodong (曹洞), Yunmen (雲門) and Fayan (法眼)


Lecture 9. The Origin and Significance of Gong’an Collections

Lecture 10. The Prominent Chan Masters in Song Era: Dahui Zonggao (大慧宗杲) (1089 – 1163) and Hongzhi Zhengjue (宏智正覺) (1091–1157)

Lecture 11. The Integration of Chan Buddhism and the Pure Land School in the Song Dynasty

Lecture 12. The Transmission of Chan Buddhism across the East Asia

Course Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Class Particiation</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>Attend lectures, and actively participate in class discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz and Group Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10% for short quiz and 10% for group presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term essay (1000-1200 words)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Word limit: For the essays (excluding bibliography) that exceed the specified maximum length by 10% or under the minimum word count without the approval of the course instructor, the mark will be deducted by 5 percentage points. No mark deduction will be made for those essays below pass mark.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final essay (2000-2200 words)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Timelines: For the essays submitted later than the deadline without approval of the course instructor, the mark will be deducted by 2 percentage points per day. The penalized mark will not be deducted below the pass mark.</td>
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Faculty Grade Expectations: [http://arts.hku.hk/grade_expectations.pdf](http://arts.hku.hk/grade_expectations.pdf)

Plagiarism: 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](http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism)

Disability
Any student who has a documented disability and may require special arrangements (seating, testing, later submission, etc.) should consult the instructor in person at the beginning of the course so that provisions can be made.

**Recommended Reference Books**


**Online Sources:**

52. A Comprehensive History of Chinese Buddhism: https://www.hinduwebsite.com/buddhism/history/chinesebuddhism.as


55. Film: Biography of the Sixth Patriarch Hui-neng. (English subtitle). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMceiRBHhjY

56. Film: Biography of Master Bodhidharma. (English subtitle). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kOvLb4YnRI