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

Lecturer: Dr. Mingyuan Gao
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Office: 4.12, 4/F Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
Schedule: Friday 15:30 – 17:20
Class Venue: CPD G.02

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 influence 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. This course will also guide students to connect the Chan Buddhist thoughts with contemporary western thoughts.

Teaching and Learning Method
Lectures and class discussions.

Lecture Schedule (tentative):
Lecture 1. The Character of Chan
Lecture 2. From the Indian Dhyāna to the Chinese Chan: Dhyāna Sūtras and Bodhidharma
Lecture 3. The Inherence of the Chan tradition and the Doctrinal Background
Lecture 4. Huineng, the Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism
Lecture 5. The Platform Sutra and Southern School of Chan
Lecture 6. Two Lineages: The Hongzhou School and the Chan Practice of Shitou Xiqian
Lecture 7. Five Houses: Linji and Caodong
Lecture 8 Gong’an (Ko’an)
Lecture 9. The Integration of Chan Buddhism and the Pure Land School in the Song Dynasty
Lecture 10. The Impact of Chan Buddhism on Chinese Culture
Lecture 11. The Prevailing of Chan Buddhism and Its Spread in East Asia
Lecture 12. Zen in Western Culture
Week 13. Presentation

Course Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Class Participation</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>Attend lectures, and actively participate in class discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group Projects</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>A 5-min group presentation</td>
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<td>(Depending on the situation of quarantine, this may be changed into individual project)</td>
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<td>Mid-term essay</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. The penalized mark will not be deducted below the pass mark. For the essays whose mark is below the pass mark, no mark deduction will be made.</td>
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<td>(topics assigned, 1400-1500 words)</td>
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<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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<td>Submission deadline: the beginning of the 1st class after the reading week.</td>
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<td>Final essay (2000-2100 words)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Submission deadline: the 2nd Sunday after the last class.</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:**

42. A Comprehensive History of Chinese Buddhism: [https://www.hinduwebsite.com/buddhism/history/chinesebuddhism.as](https://www.hinduwebsite.com/buddhism/history/chinesebuddhism.as)


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

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