

BSTC1004 Introduction to Buddhism (6 Credits)
Undergraduate Courses offered by the Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2025-2026
Elective Course (open to all faculties)

Course Description

Buddhism is a major world religion and an important cultural heritage of mankind. Its teachings have influenced art and philosophy throughout history and have inspired contemporary psychotherapy, neuroscience, and education researchers.

This course will systematically introduce students to the essence of Buddhist teachings. Particular emphasis will be placed on the Buddha's core teachings, which include the Four Noble Truths, Dependent Origination, Prajñā wisdom, Bodhisattva ideal, etc., and their practical applications.

Offering Semester	1st Semester 2025 Fall
Lecturer	Ven. Sik Hin Hung
Office	Rm 413, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
Email	hinhung@hku.hk
Schedule	Every Friday, 4:00– 5:50 pm
Class Venue	MWT1
Teaching Assistants (TAs)	Ms. Anita Lam and Dr. Kenneth Ching
TA Emails:	bstc1004@hku.hk Students are divided amongst the TAs to answer any course-related questions via email. Please see the list for the division below: Student surnames beginning with the letters A to N : Dr. Ching Student surnames beginning with the letters O to Z : Ms. Anita Lam If you have any questions, please send them to the course email listed above and put the name of your TA in brackets at the start of the subject header. E.g. subject: [Dr. Ching] Question about bibliography formatting.

Assessment Ratio

100% coursework

Ratio	Content
35%	Two (2) Quizzes - Mid-term (weight 17%) during lecture 7 on Oct 31 and; Term-end (weight 18%) during lecture 11 on Nov 28) Note: The quizzes will cover all material presented and discussed in class.
20%	Four weekly meditation logs documenting meditation experience
35%	One essay with 2,000 - 2,500 words, including notes but excluding bibliography <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deadline: on or before Dec 5• Please read the guidelines for the final essay

Assessment Guideline for the essay:

30% - Accuracy of understanding the topic

25% - Depth of knowledge

25% - Originality / personal insight

20% - Quality of writing and presentation

Submission

- Upload a soft copy through Moodle via Turnitin

On the Cover Page (*all of the following information must be stated clearly*)

- Name
- University Number
- Essay title
- Word Count

Late Submission

- within the first 7 days after the deadline, one sub-grade will be deducted (e.g., A- > B);
- from the 8th day after the deadline and thereafter, one grade will be deducted (e.g., A- > B-).

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

Guideline for the final essay:

- Mention the Title of essay
- A table of contents
- Write an introduction followed by each [sub-] topic (heading) of your analysis and discussion as well as a conclusion.
- List of bibliography (at least 8 books/articles related to your topic)

Guideline for the final essay:

The purpose of this essay is for you to develop detailed and nuanced knowledge on one of the topics discussed throughout this course that you are particularly interested in. In this vein, the guiding questions for the paper are as follows:

- How and why is your choice of topic important to Buddhism?
- How and why is your choice of topic important to you personally?

Because it is recommended to start thinking about your topic early, two preliminary components have also been assigned. These are the book report and the essay outline, both of which will help stimulate and organize your ideas prior to writing the final essay.

As an orientation course the choice of topic is very broad. You may choose to write about purely historical or doctrinal points, taking cues from the subjects assigned to each of our twelve lessons, or you may take one of these subjects and incorporate it into a piece covering more contemporary topics. The only strict requirement is that the foundation of your essay topic must be grounded in something discussed over the course of the class, and use at least some of the suggested literature related to that topic for the basis of a critical analysis.

Your paper must contain a minimum of 8 sources, of which 5 must come from the reading list provided below. It must also include citations from or otherwise make reference to at least 1 primary source.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. The University upholds the principle that plagiarism in any form is unacceptable, and any student found plagiarizing is liable to disciplinary action and failing the assessment concerned. Please read the following webpage on "plagiarism" for details:

<http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>

HKU policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Teaching and Learning:

<https://libguides.lib.hku.hk/AI-literacy/Home>

Lesson Plan:

Week	Lesson	Date	Content
1	Lesson 1	Sept 5, 2025	I. Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeline of the development of Buddhism The Historical Buddha How does Buddhism approach learning and determining truth?
2	Lesson 2	Sept 12, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Buddhism about? The essence of Buddhist teachings and how they're organized.
3	Lesson 3	Sept 19, 2025	II. Humanity Vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karma and the circle of rebirth: how do your thought and actions shape your future
4	Lesson 4	Sept 26, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding Refuge: Learn about the Triple Gems and why they are a foundation for Buddhists
5	Lesson 5	Oct 3, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mindful Living: Explore how the Five Mindfulness Trainings can transform your daily life
6	Lesson 6	Oct 10, 2025	III. Śravaka Vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Buddha's core teaching: The Four Noble Truths and the path to ending suffering
		Oct 17, 2025	(Reading Week)
		Oct 24, 2025	(No lectures in the afternoon the day before the Information Day)
8	Lesson 7	Oct 31, 2025 (Mid-term Quiz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How everything in life is connected: The Law of dependent origination
9	Lesson 8	Nov 7, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The condition of your mind determines your wellbeing: The Twelve links of dependent origination
10	Lesson 9	Nov 14, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are you, really? The Five aggregates and the concept of non-self
11	Lesson 10	Nov 21, 2025	IV. Bodhisattva Vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bodhisattva ideal: a way of life based on compassion
12	Lesson 11	Nov 28, 2025 (Term-end Quiz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Prajñā wisdom and the deeper meaning of the Law of dependent origination Pursuing a Meaningful Life: The Six Pāramitās and the Fulfilment of Noble Purpose

Reading List:

Books and Articles

1. Anon, "The Three Treasures." *The Pluralism Project*. Harvard University, 2020. <https://pluralism.org/the-three-treasures>
2. Anālayo, Bhikkhu. *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2010.
3. Anderson, C., & Cattoi, T. (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Buddhist-Christian Studies* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003043225>
4. Appleton, N. *Jataka Stories in Theravada Buddhism: Narrating the Bodhisatta Path* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2010. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315590363>
5. Arbel, Keren. *Early Buddhist Meditation: The Four Jhanas as the Actualization of Insight*. Routledge, 2018.
6. Bhante H. Gunaratana. *Mindfulness in Plain English: 20th Anniversary Edition*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011.
7. Berkwitz, Stephen C., and Ashley Thompson. *Routledge Handbook of Theravāda Buddhism*. London ; New York: Routledge, 2022
8. Berkwitz, S.C. *South Asian Buddhism: A Survey* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203717608>
9. Bluck, R. *British Buddhism: Teachings, Practice and Development* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2006.
10. Bronkhorst, Johannes. "Did the Buddha Believe in Karma and Rebirth?" *Journal of the International Association of Buddhists*, 21 (1)(1998): 1-20.
11. Burton, D. *Buddhism, Knowledge and Liberation: A Philosophical Study* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2004. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315261201>
12. Burton, D. *Buddhism: A Contemporary Philosophical Investigation* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315222660>
13. Conze, E. *Buddhist Wisdom: The Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra*. London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1958.
14. Conze, E. *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines & Its Verse Summary*. California. 1975.
15. Dalai Lama. *How to Practice*. London: Rider Books, 2002.
16. Derris, K., & Gummer, N. *Defining Buddhism(s): A Reader* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2007.
17. Edelglass, W., Harter, P.-J., & McClintock, S. (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Indian Buddhist Philosophy* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2022.
18. Edkins, J. *Chinese Buddhism: A Volume of Sketches, Historical, Descriptive and Critical* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2001.
19. Engelmajer, P. *Women in Pāli Buddhism: Walking the Spiritual Paths in Mutual Dependence* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315752389>
20. Eliot, S.C. *Japanese Buddhism* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2002. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315026053>
21. Gethin, Rupert. *The Foundations of Buddhism*. Oxford University Press, 1998.
22. Gokhale, P.P. (ed.). *Classical Buddhism, Neo-Buddhism and the Question of Caste* (1st ed.). Routledge India, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003045090>
23. Gombrich, R.F. *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo* (2nd ed.). Routledge, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203016039>
24. Green, R. *Buddhism Goes to the Movies: Introduction to Buddhist Thought and Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203765692>
25. Harris, Sam. *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason*. W. W. Norton, 2005.
26. Harding, J.S. (ed.). *Studying Buddhism in Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203143964>
27. Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History, and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
28. Husted, W.R., Keown, D., & Prebish, C.S. *Buddhism and Human Rights* (1st ed.). Routledge, 1997.
29. Kalupahana, David J. 1992. *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
30. Karunadasa, Y. *Early Buddhist Teachings : The Middle Position in Theory and Practice*. Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2013.

31. Keown, Damien. *A Very Short Introduction to Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
32. Langenberg, A. *Birth in Buddhism: The Suffering Fetus and Female Freedom* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315512532>
33. Marques, J. *Business and Buddhism* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315767437>
34. Pelden, K. *The Nectar of Manjushri's Speech: A Detailed Commentary on Shantideva's Way of the Bodhisattva*. Boston: Shambala, Padmakara Translation Group, 2010.
35. Queen, C., & Williams, D.R. *American Buddhism: Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship* (1st ed.). Routledge, 1999.
36. Rahula, W. *What the Buddha Taught*. London: the Gordon Fraser Gallery Ltd, 1978.
37. Rizzo, R. *Buddhism in Indonesia: A Study of Multiple Revivals* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003389514>
38. Robinson, R., Johnson, W. *The Buddhist Religions: A Historical Introduction*. New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997.
39. Schober, J., & Collins, S. (eds.). *Theravāda Buddhist Encounters with Modernity* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315637600>
40. Schumann, H.W. *The Historical Buddha*. London: Arkana Penguin Books, 1989.
41. Shields, J.M. *Critical Buddhism: Engaging with Modern Japanese Buddhist Thought* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315574912>
42. Somaratne, G. A. *The Buddha's Teaching: A Buddhistic Analysis*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.
43. Tikhonov, V., & Brekke, T. (eds.). *Buddhism and Violence: Militarism and Buddhism in Modern Asia* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203111024>
44. Thich Nhat Hanh. *Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha*. Parallax Press, 1991.
45. Thich Nhat Hanh. *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.
46. Williams, Paul. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: A Doctrinal Foundations*. London: Routledge, 2008.
47. Yin-shun; transl. Yeung, W.H. *The Way to Buddhahood*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1998.

References and Internet Resources

If you find any link is broken, please use Google search to find it as the links sometimes change.

1) Encyclopaedias

Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, eds., Robert E. Buswell, Jr., Ed New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2003. 2 vols. This encyclopedia describes the Buddhist worldview, basic teachings, and practices of Buddhism, as well as its different schools and sects. This *Encyclopedia* needs subscription, so use it through [HKU Electronic Recourses](#).

Encyclopaedia of Religion. Lindsay Jones, Ed. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005. 15 vols. This *Encyclopedia* needs subscription, so use it through [HKU Electronic Recourses](#).

Encyclopedia Britannica Online. This *Encyclopædia* needs a subscription, so use it through [HKU Electronic Recourses](#). <http://search.eb.com/>

2) Dictionaries

Digital Dictionary of Buddhism, eds., Charles Muller. Free for online checkups. This is an internet-based dictionary similar to the *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* by Soothill and Hodous, but it has many more entries. If you know the Chinese Buddhist technical terms but do not know how to translate them into English, please visit Muller's DDB website address: <http://www.acmuller.net/ddb/>.

Users can access the search function with the user ID of "guest" (case-sensitive, no quotes), leaving the password area blank, allowing 10 searches in 24 hours. To search Sanskrit and other terms containing diacritics, type in the term in simple ascii.

A Dictionary of Buddhism, eds., Damien Keown. This Dictionary needs a subscription, so use it through
[HKU Electronic Recourses](#)

《佛光大辭典》線上查詢 **Free for online search** for Chinese Buddhist Terms explained in traditional Chinese <http://sql.fgs.org.tw/webfbd/>

Accessinsight. This website is entirely dedicated to teaching Theravada Buddhism, including the Pali Canon, Theravada text archive, and sources. Most of the Pali texts are translated into English for free distribution. Website address: www.accesstoinsight.org/

3) Academic Journals

Journal of Buddhist Ethics. **Free.** This is a web-based academic journal that is distributed for free. Web address: <http://www.jbe.gold.ac.uk/>

Journal of Global Buddhism. **Free.** This is a web-based academic journal that is distributed for free. <http://www.globalbuddhism.org/dig.html>

Taisho Edition of Chinese Tripitaka 佛教大正藏. **Free.** If you can read classical Chinese and wish to refer to the original Chinese texts, please visit <http://www.cbeta.org/index.htm>. This website includes volumes 1-55 & 85 of the *Taisho Edition of Chinese Tripitaka* and volumes 1-88 of Shinsan Zokuzokyo (Xuzangjing 續藏經). Now, the database is still developing.

Buddhist Digital Library and Museum. 臺灣大學佛學數位圖書館暨博物館. **Free.** There is a good collection of academic articles some with full texts in both Chinese and English. It is a good place to relevant academic articles for your study. Website address: <http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/DBLM/index.htm>. Please go to the database.

The Internet Sacred Text Archive. **Free** You can find the old texts of almost all major religions in the world on this site, and you can download and copy the full texts if you wish. For instance, you can find the *Sacred Books of the East*. Website Address: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/>

Mahayana Buddhist Sutras in English. **Free.** On this site, you can find some popular Chinese Mahayana texts translated into English. Website address: <http://www4.bayarea.net/~mtlee/>