

UG Course Info 26/27

Zhouyang Ma

BSTC1004 Introduction to Buddhism (Spring)

Course Description

Buddhism, being a major world religion, is an important cultural heritage of mankind. Its teachings have not only influenced art and philosophy throughout history, but have also become a source of inspiration for contemporary researchers in the fields of psychotherapy, neuroscience and education.

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

Assessment Methods

Assessment: 100% coursework

Assessment method	Type of assessment (e.g. description of assignment)	Weighting (%)
1. Two quizzes	Students will take two quizzes through the semester on core concepts and content covered in the previous sessions. The first is at week 5 and the second is at week 10. Each is worth 20%.	40%
2. Vlog	Students are required to produce a Vlog on Buddhism, relating their daily experience to it, at midterm.	25%
3. Reflective essay	Students will write a 2000–2500-word reflective essay, including notes but excluding bibliography.	35%

Weekly Lecture Schedule

Lecture 1: Introduction, Life of the Buddha

Lecture 2: Early Buddhist Teachings, Monastic Communities, Vinaya

Lecture 3: Canonization, Abhidharma, Early Spread of Buddhism

Lecture 4: Rise of Mahāyāna, Bodhisattva Ideal, and Madhyamaka

Lecture 5: Skillful Means, Buddha Nature, and Yogācāra

Lecture 6: Development of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia

Lecture 7: Buddhism in Central and East Asia

Lecture 8: Chan Buddhism

Lecture 9: Tantric Buddhism

Lecture 10: Buddhism in Tibet

Lecture 11: Buddhism in Contemporary Societies, Conclusion

Reference Books

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17. Derris, K., & Gummer, N. *Defining Buddhism(s): A Reader* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2007.
18. Edelglass, W., Harter, P.-J., & McClintock, S. (eds.). *The Routledge Handbook of Indian Buddhist Philosophy* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2022.

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20. Engelmajer, P. *Women in Pāli Buddhism: Walking the Spiritual Paths in Mutual Dependence* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315752389>
21. Eliot, S.C. *Japanese Buddhism* (1st ed.). Routledge, 2002.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315026053>
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<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203016039>
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https://arts.hku.hk/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/grade_expectations.pdf

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