

BSTC2021 BUDDHIST ETHICS (6 Credits)

ELECTIVE COURSE (Open to all HKU undergraduates)

Lecturer	Dr. Chengzhong PU
Office	Rm 4.03, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus
Office Hours	15-1600pm Wednesday
Email	pcz100@hku.hk
Lecture hours	13:30-15:20 pm, Thursday
Class Venue	KB223

Course Description

Regarded as the most ethical world religion, Buddhism assigns morality a crucial place 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 their meaning and significance for contemporary living. It begins with a brief sketch of the Buddhist doctrines which can be easily identified as ethical teachings, and continues with the application of such teachings in some social and ethical issues such as war and terrorism, abortion, suicide, etc.

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 Readings:

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

Brown, Clare & Laszlo Zsolnai. 2018. 'Buddhist economics: An overview'. *Society and Economy* 40: 4, pp. 497–513.

Charles Hallisey, "Paramitas," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (on moodle)
 Damien Keown 2006. *Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Ellis, Gabriel. 2019. 'Early Buddhism and Caste.' *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 72.1: 55–71.

Sizemore, Russell F. and Donald K. Swearer (eds) *Ethics, Wealth and Salvation: A Study in Buddhist Social Ethics* (University of South Carolina Press, 1990)

List of Further Readings is included in the syllabus uploaded to Moodle

Lecture Schedule

Week	Date	Content	Remarks
Week 1		Introduction of the course: scope and limit; defining 'Ethics'.	.
Week 2		Buddhist Moral teachings I	
Week 3		Buddhist Moral teachings II	
Week 4		Buddhist Values	
Week 5		Further Buddhist values and qualities	
Week 6		Buddhist idea of equality (social)	
		Reading Week	
Week 7		Buddhist idea of equality (gender)	
Week 8		War and Terrorism	
Week 9		Abortion, Gene editing and Cloning	
Week 10		Suicide and Euthanasia	
Week 11		Animals and the Environment	
Week 12		Buddhist economic ethics	

Assessment: 100% coursework made up of the following:

Components	Ratio	Submission Deadline
Class Attendance and Discussions	10%	

Short Essay (200-400 words)	25%	
Longer Essay (1500-1900 words)	45%	
Quiz	20%	

Further Notes on the Assignment

1. The quiz has twenty questions. It is in the format of multiple choices, you only select the one you think 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 hand phone accessible to the Moodle because the quiz is done online during a given period of time (12 minutes). **Please DO NOT miss it as no make-up test will be arranged.**
2. The **Short Essay** (of 200-500 words) should include a list of five real-life **UNETHICAL** cases (including those which are apparently ethical but actually unethical), each should be accompanied by one line explaining why it is unethical or immoral. The reason can be either conventional or Buddhist. Avoid listing cases obviously of the Law nature.
3. The **Longer Essay** (1200-1700 words) is your discussion with anyone on one of the cases you listed in your **Short Essay**. It can be explanatory or argumentative with reference to Buddhist moral thought, in either case, be as critical as you can.
4. All your writings should be **double-spaced**. The **Longer Essay** should include proper referencing and citation (no need of a bibliography section). Any one of the major citation formats/styles such as Chicago Manual of Style or Humanities is acceptable, and in-text citation should have page numbers.
5. All your written works should be submitted through the 'turn-it-in' on the Moodle course page. The acceptable similarity rate is 10% (excluding bibliography and endnotes/footnotes).
6. 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, conventions of other matters, etc.)). The A range is for papers excellence in all the above aspects.
7. 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 assignment grade: 1) within first 7 days after the deadline, one sub-grade will be deducted (e.g. A ⇒ A-); 2) a grade for two weeks after the deadline (A ⇒ B).
8. No plagiarism. For details, please refer to <http://arts.hku.hk/current-students/undergraduate/assessment/plagiarism>

List of Further Readings will be provided on the Moodle