

Undergraduate Course offered by Centre of Buddhist Studies in 2026–27

ELECTIVE COURSE
(OPEN TO ALL FACULTIES)

BSTC3045 Pāli language IV

Lecturer	Dr. Dipen Barua
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Offering Semester	Semester II
Schedule	Every Sunday from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Class Venue	To be confirmed

Course Description

This course enables students to independently read Pali texts with the help of dictionaries. Every assigned reading will be self-contained in its relation to Buddhist teachings and their significance. The main focus of this course is to make grammatical explanations as clear as possible, while also gaining access to Pāli original sources for textual studies research using the Pāli dictionary and vocabulary. Each lesson includes a set of readings with an accompanying glossary and grammatical notes covering different nouns and their declensions, verbs and their conjugations, compounds, primary and secondary derivatives, syntax, clause and numerals.

Course Content

Building on their learnings in Pāli Language I, II, and III, this course introduces skills to analyze and understand complex grammatical structures of Pali texts, with a special focus given to reading, understanding, and translating the selected passages from the discourses in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the *Udāna*, and the *Milindapañha*, together with their counterpart commentarial literature.

Learning Outcome

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to

- read and analyze the Pāli passages grammatically and doctrinally and their importance for the study of Pāli canonical and non-canonical literature;
- consult the many scholarly sources on Buddhist concepts and philosophy;
- enhance the knowledge of technical Buddhist terms with commentarial explanation;
- interpret original Pāli sources.

Teaching and Learning Method

Lectures, class discussions and tutorials

Prerequisite

BSTC3044 Pāli language III or teacher's approval

Assessment

50% coursework and 50% examination

- Coursework (50%):
 - Class participation (10%)
 - Homework (20%) [For homework grade, students will be given selected passages from the Pāli Canon of Commentaries, which they must prepare with full grammatical analysis at home for reading and translation in lecture 6 and 11. Please refer to the respective lecture outlines for further details]
 - Mid-term test (20%)
- The final examination (50%) will be held at the end of the semester. It is an open-book exam. Students can use lecture notes, glossaries and dictionary during the exam.

Lecture Outline for Semester II

Lesson	Contents
Lesson 1	• Introduction to the course • <i>Mahānidāna Sutta (The Great Discourse on Causation)</i> [DN II 55 – 58] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 2	• <i>Mahānidāna Sutta (The Great Discourse on Causation)</i> [DN II 59–71] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 3	• <i>Ariyapariyesana Sutta (The Discourses on the Noble Search)</i> [MN I] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 4	• <i>Ariyapariyesana Sutta (The Discourses on the Noble Search)</i> [MN I] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 5	• <i>Ariyapariyesana Sutta (The Discourses on the Noble Search)</i> [MN I] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 6	• Reading and translation of selected Pāli <i>sutta</i>/passages from the Pāli Canon or Commentaries, including their contexts, with full grammatical analysis.
No Class	Reading Week

Lesson 7	• <i>Paṭisambhidāmagga (The Path of Discrimination)</i> [selected passages] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 8	• <i>Paṭisambhidāmagga (The Path of Discrimination)</i> [selected passages] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary. Mid-term Test
Lesson 9	• <i>Netti-pakaraṇa (The Guide)</i> [selected passages] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 10	• <i>Netti-pakaraṇa (The Guide)</i> [selected passages] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart commentary.
Lesson 11	• Reading and translation of selected Pāli <i>sutta</i>/passages from the Pāli Canon or Commentaries, including their contexts, with full grammatical analysis.
Lesson 12	• <i>Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification)</i> [selected passages] ○ Guide to the text and meaning of the selected passages with grammatical analysis together with their counterpart sources from other texts. • Summary of the course and revision for the final exam.

Notes: Lecture notes and supplementary materials will be provided in class throughout the semester.

Textbooks

The Dīgha Nikāya Vol I-III, edited by T.W. Rhys Davids and J.E. Carpenter. London: PTS, 1889-2007.

The Dīghanikāya-aṭṭhakathā (Samaṅgalavilāsinī) Vol I-III, edited by T.W. Rhys Davids, J.E. Carpenter and W. Stede. London: PTS, 1968–1971.

The Majjhima Nikāya Vol I-III, edited by V. Trenckner, T.W. Rhys Davids, J. Estlin Carpenter, Robert Chalmers. London PTS, 1888-2001.

The Majjhimanikāya-aṭṭhakathā (Papañcasūdanī) Vol I – V, edited by J.H. Woods, D. Kosambi and I.B. Horner. London: PTS, 1922–1979.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga Vol I-II, edited by A.C. Taylor. London: PTS 1905–1979.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā (Saddhammappakāsinī) Vol I-III, edited by C.V. Joshi. London: PTS, 1933–1979.

The Netti-pakaraṇa, edited by Prof. E. Hardy. London: The Pali Text Society, 1902.

The Visuddhimagga, edited by Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids. London: PTS, 1975.

Recommended Readings

- Anuruddha, Kakkapalliye. *A Guide to the Study of Pali: The Language of Theravada Buddhism*. Hong Kong: Centre of Buddhism Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 2010.
- Buddhadatta, A.P. *The New Pali Course* (Parts I & II). Sri Lanka: Buddhist Cultural Centre, 1997.
- Geiger, Wilhelm. *A Pāli Grammar*. Translated by Batakrişna Ghosh. Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 1994.
- Dhammajoti, KL. *Reading Buddhist Pāli Texts: An Elementary Grammatical Guide*. Hong Kong: The Buddha-Dharma Centre of Hong Kong, 2025 (3rd edition).
- Nyanatiloka. *Buddhist Dictionary, Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1988.
- Rhys Davids, T.W. and W. Stede (eds). *Pali-English Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1993.
- Warder, A.K. *Introduction to Pali*. London: The Pali Text Society, 2001.

Pāli Dictionaries (online)

- Rhys Davids, T.W. and W. Stede (eds). *Pali-English Dictionary*. Available on Digital Dictionaries of South Asia. Updated in Mar 2021.
<https://dsalsrv04.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/pali/>
- Rhys Davids, T.W. and W. Stede (eds). *Pali-English Dictionary*. London: The Pali Text Society: <https://ancient-buddhist-texts.net/Reference/PTS/Pali-English-Dictionary.pdf>
