

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUDDHIST STUDIES (MBuddhStud)**

*(See also General Regulations)*

Any publication based on work approved for a higher degree should contain a reference to the effect that the work was submitted to The University of Hong Kong for the award of the degree.

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### **Admission requirements**

MBS 1. To be eligible for admission to the courses leading to the Master of Buddhist Studies, candidates

- (a) shall comply with the General Regulations;
- (b) shall hold
  - (i) a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University; or
  - (ii) another qualification of equivalent standard from this University or from another University or comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
- (c) shall satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination if required.

MBS 2. Candidates who do not hold a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University or another qualification of equivalent standard may in exceptional circumstances be permitted to register if they demonstrate adequate preparation for studies at this level and satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination.

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### **Qualifying examination**

MBS 3.

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test a candidate's formal academic ability or the candidate's ability to follow the courses of study prescribed. It shall consist of one or more written papers or their equivalent, and may include a project report or dissertation
  - (b) Candidates who are required to satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination shall not be permitted to register until they have satisfied the examiners in the examination.
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### **Award of degree**

MBS 4. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Buddhist Studies, candidates shall

- (a) comply with the General Regulations; and
  - (b) complete the curriculum and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations as set out below.
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### **Length of curriculum**

MBS 5. The curriculum shall extend over not less than one academic year of full-time study, or not less than two academic years of part-time study, with a minimum of 300 hours of prescribed work, and shall include examination by means of written papers and coursework assessment.

### **Completion of curriculum**

- MBS 6. To complete the curriculum, candidates
- (a) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work; and
  - (b) where so provided in the syllabuses, shall complete and present a satisfactory dissertation in lieu of two courses on a subject within their approved fields of study, and;
  - (c) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of examination.
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### **Title of dissertation**

MBS 7. Subject to the provisions of Regulation MBS 6(b), the title of dissertation shall be submitted for approval by not later than March 31 of the final academic year in which the teaching programme ends and the dissertation shall be presented by a date prescribed in the syllabuses; candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation represents their own work (or in the case of joint work, a statement countersigned by their co-worker(s), which shows the degree of their work) undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

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### **Examinations**

- MBS 8.
- (a) Where so prescribed in the syllabuses, coursework or a dissertation shall constitute part or whole of the examination for one or more courses.
  - (b) An assessment of candidates' coursework during their studies may be taken into account in determining their result in each written examination paper; or, where so prescribed in the syllabuses, may constitute part or whole of the examination of one or more courses.

MBS 9. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt in not more than half of the number of courses to be examined, whether by means of written examination papers or coursework assessment, during any of the academic year of study, may be permitted

- (a) to present themselves for re-examination in the course or courses of failure, with or without repeating any part of the curriculum; or
- (b) to repeat a year of the curriculum and present themselves for examination in the courses prescribed for the repeated year.

MBS 10. Subject to the provisions of Regulation MBS 6(b), candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation within a specified period.

MBS 11. Candidates who are unable because of illness to be present for one or more papers in any written examination may apply for permission to present themselves at a supplementary examination to be held before the beginning of the following academic year. Any such application shall be made on a form prescribed within two weeks of the first day of the candidates' absence from the examination.

- MBS 12. Candidates who
- (a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination in any written paper or any course examined by means of coursework assessment in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners under the provisions of Regulation MBS 9; or
  - (b) have failed to satisfy the examiners in any written paper or any course examined by means of coursework assessment at a second attempt; or

- (c) are not permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation under the provisions of Regulation MBS 10; or
- (d) have failed to submit a satisfactory new or revised dissertation under the provisions of Regulation MBS 10

may be required to discontinue their studies.

### **Examination results**

MBS 13. A list of candidates who have successfully completed all the degree requirements and are to be awarded the Master of Buddhist Studies shall be published. Candidates who have shown exceptional merit at the whole examination may be awarded a mark of distinction, and this mark shall be recorded in the candidates' degree diplomas.

## **SYLLABUSES FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUDDHIST STUDIES**

### **1. PURPOSE**

This programme offers quality teachings on the fundamental understanding and in-depth analysis of Buddhism from the textual, doctrinal and historical perspectives. It further aims to provide training in the practical usage of the Buddhist teachings in modern societies, and offers a critical review of Buddhism in Hong Kong, Mainland China and the region. Topics include history and doctrines of the different Buddhist traditions, contemporary Buddhism, and Buddhism as applied in counselling, palliative care and psychotherapy, with particular reference to current scholarly research.

### **2. PROGRAMME DURATION**

The curriculum shall extend over not less than one academic year of full-time study, or not less than two academic years of part-time study, with a minimum of 300 hours of prescribed work.

### **3. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

All courses are offered on a semester basis. Candidates must complete eight courses by selecting two compulsory foundation courses plus six elective courses, and may, subject to the provisions of Regulation MBS 6(b), select to offer a dissertation in lieu of two elective courses.

#### **1. Foundation courses:**

- BSTC6061. Early Buddhism
- BSTC6002. Mahayana Buddhism

#### **2. Elective courses:**

##### **2.1 Languages and Texts**

- BSTC6020. Basic Pali #
- BSTC6021. Basic Sanskrit
- BSTC6022. Basic Tibetan

- BSTC6068. Reading Pali Suttas  
 BSTC6042. Advanced Tibetan  
 BSTC6045. Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Elementary) #  
 BSTC6059. Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Advanced) #  
 BSTC6018. Chinese Buddhist texts: textual study and translation  
 BSTC6052. Study of important Buddhist meditation texts

## 2.2 History and Doctrine

- BSTC6032. History of Indian Buddhism  
 BSTC6044. History of Chinese Buddhism  
 BSTC6013. Tibetan Buddhism: history and doctrines  
 BSTC6007. Chinese Buddhist thought: a historical perspective  
 BSTC6017. The nature and function of Vinaya – its historical evolution and controversies  
 BSTC6049. Store-consciousness – the Yogācāra doctrine of the ālayavijñāna  
 BSTC6053. The Three-nature (tri-svabhāva) doctrine of the Yogācāra  
 BSTC6039. Abhidharma doctrines and controversies  
 BSTC6041. The Theravada Abhidhamma  
 BSTC6072. The theory of Transmigration (Samsara) in Buddhist philosophy  
 BSTC6046. The philosophy of the middle way (Mādhyamika) Buddhism  
 BSTC6033. The philosophy of the Mere-consciousness school  
 BSTC6051. The path to enlightenment in the Tibetan tradition – a study of Tsonghapa's Lam Rim Chen Mo  
 BSTC6073. The Buddha mind – Introduction to Tathagatagarbha  
 BSTC6074. The path of enlightenment – Fourfold Dependent Origination and profound prajna  
 BSTC6012. Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines  
 BSTC6016. Buddhist monasticism  
 BSTC6040. Appearance and reality – the Yogācāra perspective: A study of the Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga  
 BSTC6062. Buddhist logic  
 BSTC6064. Buddhist Psychology: The *citta-caitta* Doctrine of the Abhidharma and Yogācāra traditions  
 BSTC6066. Doctrines of the Early Indian Yogācāra  
 BSTC6075. The Pali commentarial literature  
 BSTC6076. The Buddha-concept in Theravada Buddhism

## 2.3 Interdisciplinary Studies

- BSTC6058. Buddhism and society  
 BSTC6006. Counselling and pastoral practice  
 BSTC6011. Buddhist mediation  
 BSTC6034. Mindfulness, stress reduction and psychotherapy  
 BSTC6050. Buddhist Iconography and art – with special reference to the Tibetan tradition  
 BSTC6055. Buddhist Psychology  
 BSTC6014. Buddhism in the west: literature, doctrinal interpretation and praxis  
 BSTC6004. The scientific foundation of Buddhist wisdom  
 BSTC6005. Buddhism, science and human welfare  
 BSTC6008. Buddhism in contemporary China  
 BSTC6010. Religion, rituals and myths  
 BSTC6015. Impact of Buddhism on Asian cultures  
 BSTC6023. Buddhist art and thought in Asian cultures  
 BSTC6028. Positioning Buddhism for today's world  
 BSTC6065. Buddhist grotto archaeology in China – a general survey  
 BSTC6063. A study of Buddhist grotto archaeology in northwest China  
 BSTC6077. Comparative theology  
 BSTC6078. Philosophy of Religion

## 2.4 Other Courses

- BSTC6025. Dissertation  
 BSTC6070. Research methodology in Buddhist Studies  
 BSTC6024. Special topics in Buddhist studies (1)  
 BSTC6030. Special topics in Buddhist studies (2)  
 BSTC6031. Special topics in Buddhist studies (3)  
 BSTC6056. Special topics in Buddhist studies (4)  
 BSTC6057. Special topics in Buddhist studies (5)

# *This is a whole-year course which is equivalent to two single-semester courses.*

Not all elective courses listed above will necessarily be offered each year.

## 4. SYLLABUSES

### A. Foundation courses

#### **BSTC6061. Early Buddhism**

This course will be mainly based on the Pali Sutta Pitaka and is designed to provide an insight into the fundamental doctrines of what is generally known as Early Buddhism. The course will begin with a description of the religious and intellectual milieu in which Buddhism originated and the nature of the Buddhist response to it. Attention will be focused on the following themes: early Buddhist view of individual existence in the light of the doctrine of dependent origination, the threefold analysis into khandha, ayatana and dhatu, and the three signs of sensient existence; Buddhist diagnosis of the human condition and Nibbana as the Buddhist ideal of emancipation, Buddhist psychology and its relevance to mental culture, theory and practice of the moral life, Buddhist ethics and the arahant ideal, undetermined questions, epistemological standpoint and the Buddhist psychology of ideologies. The course will be concluded with an inquiry as to whether Early Buddhism is a religion, philosophy, both, or neither.

#### **BSTC6002. Mahayana Buddhism**

This course aims at students without previous knowledge of Mahayana Buddhism. It provides an introduction to Mahayana Buddhism in the widest sense. After a brief look at the development of Buddhism in India after the death of the Buddha, this course concentrates on the historical, philosophical and religious origins of Mahayana Buddhism in India. These include the Bodhisattva ideal; Buddhological developments; the philosophical systematizations of the Madhymaka and Yogacara schools; the reasons for the dominant position of Mahayana Buddhism in China and an investigation on the features of the newly emerged Mahayana modernism (i.e., Japanese Buddhism).

### B. Elective courses

#### **BSTC6004. The scientific foundation of Buddhist wisdom**

This course examines how some ideas in Buddhist thoughts can be analyzed scientifically. Students will learn about how Buddhist ideas can be translated into testable research hypotheses, and how

methods in the social sciences could throw new light on these ideas. Emphases will be placed on how social science research could inform (a) discussions of the phenomenal world described in Buddhist writings and (b) the application of Buddhist wisdom in daily life. Methodological themes will be illustrated with concrete social science research examples in the following areas:

Why do we suffer? The role of subjective constructions  
 Development of expertise and wisdom  
 Language use and cognitive representation of the reality  
 Mental rigidity and creativity  
 Transformational constructionism and self-regulation

The course will end by visioning how the Buddhist religious traditions may add a new dimension to the science of the human psyche.

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### **BSTC6005. Buddhism, science and human welfare**

Over the last twenty years, a fruitful and increasingly powerful dialogue has developed between Eastern and Western psychologies. This course offers an overview of these developments; explores the extent to which Western science-based understandings of human nature can be developed to provide practical elucidation of the transformation of human experience, which Buddhism promises; and discusses the implications for the promotion of peace and harmony in the world. Topics include neuroscientific, evolutionary and ecological approaches to the human being; psychological and cognitive science approaches to the nature of mind; psychosocial approaches to the nature of self: evolution and development of the ‘self system’; and scientific and psychotherapeutic approaches to ‘suffering’.

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### **BSTC6006. Counselling and pastoral practice**

This course aims at providing students with basic knowledge and understanding of the application of Buddhist theory and practices to counselling and personal transformation. It covers from the Buddhist perspective the psychology of perception, emotions and thoughts; basic skills and concepts in counselling; recent development and research in psychotherapy, and insights into caring for the dying and their carers. The course comprises lectures, seminars, exercises and Buddhist practices. Students should be prepared to participate in the practices and exercises in class in order to acquire an experiential as well as intellectual understanding of the subject.

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### **BSTC6007. Chinese Buddhist thought: a historical perspective**

The course examines the introduction, development and transformation of Buddhist thought in China, with special emphasis on the basic teachings and characteristics of the major Chinese Buddhist schools. Class will be conducted in Cantonese and Chinese will be used in examination.

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### **BSTC6008. Buddhism in contemporary China**

This course is designed to show the impact of the socio-economical and political conditions on Buddhism in China. It will focus on the rise and decline of Buddhism in modern China (18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century). This includes the revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, problems faced by the Buddhists since 1949, the remarkable changes in Buddhism after the Cultural Revolution, the place of Buddhism in current Chinese system, humanitarian Buddhism (Engaged Buddhism) and its social implications in present China, as well as Buddhism in 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**BSTC6010. Religion, rituals and myths**

This course will consider the central role of religion in the transition from traditional to industrial society and the problematic status of religion in the modern world. It will examine the contributions of classical social theorists, Marx, Weber and Durkheim, and also the more recent work on such issues as secularization, new religious movements, and alternatives to religion. It will ask: is religion in decline in the modern world?

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**BSTC6011. Buddhist mediation**

By integrating the techniques of Solution-focused brief therapy and the mediation process with Buddhist theories and practices, the course will teach a model of conflict resolution which reflects the Mahayana ideal of the practice of the Way of Bodhichitta of benefiting oneself and others in being able to resolve conflicts for oneself and for others and learn about the process of change and transformation through applications of the model. Students will acquire basic knowledge of theories and practices of Buddhism and mediation in an integral approach and apply the appropriate skills to be their own mediator and to mediate other people's dispute in their peer group or community. The model of teaching will be by lecture, demonstration by videotapes or role-plays, role-play exercises in small groups and self-reflective learning.

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**BSTC6012. Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines**

Introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the sixth century. The Heian Period: Tendai School, Kukai's Shingon School, Honen and the Pure Land School. The Kamakura Period; Nichiren and his teachings; Zen Buddhism. The Ashikagara and Edo Periods. Japanese Buddhism since Meiji.

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**BSTC6013. Tibetan Buddhism: history and doctrines**

This course aims at providing historical, doctrinal and sociological dimensions of Tibetan Buddhism. It mainly consists of the following topics: the historical context and events of the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet; the various Buddhist traditions of Tibet; their history, doctrinal differences and manifold socio-political spheres of influence; the history and institution of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lama; Tibetan sacred art and symbolism and the mysticism and religious experience.

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**BSTC6014. Buddhism in the west: literature, doctrinal interpretation and praxis**

This course discusses the introduction of Buddhism to the West; and the subsequent evolution of the major schools (including Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese Buddhism). It also examines the literary output by western scholars, their doctrinal interpretations and Buddhist praxis among the westerners.

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**BSTC6015. Impact of Buddhism on Asian cultures**

This course attempts to discuss certain aspects of the Buddhist culture, its historical evolution, and the changes which are going on now due to the influence of other cultures. It deals, in particular, with the following topics: the main features of Mahayana Buddhism, the influence of Zen Buddhism on Japanese culture, the South Asian Buddhist culture, and Bodhisattva cult in China and the Far East. Special attention will be given to the interaction, assimilation and integration between Buddhist philosophy and the Chinese culture. This will include: the influence of Buddhist philosophy on Chinese poetry, calligraphy, painting, sculpture, architecture, gardening, fencing and dancing; the vast Chinese Buddhist literature in defence of Buddhism against Confucianism and Taoism; and study of the Chinese Buddhist apocrypha.

**BSTC6016. Buddhist monasticism**

This course examines the transformation of various monastic communities in different traditions in the history of Buddhism. A very important part of this course will be the study of the origin and development of Buddhist institutions from historical, political, economical, phenomenological, sociological and cultural perspective. This will be considered particularly in the Chinese context. Special attention will be given to the democratic features of the Sangha institution, monastic economy, monastic education, the role of the Sangha in society, as well as the relationship between the Sangha and the state.

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**BSTC6017. The nature and function of Vinaya – its historical evolution and controversies**

The conflict between dismissive and dogmatic attitudes toward the practical applications of the Vinaya has existed throughout Buddhist history. It appears that both these attitudes are still being held fast, creating plenty of controversies on understanding the nature of the Vinaya and its practice. The aim of this course is to establish and clarify the true nature and function of the Vinaya. This will be done through tracing and evaluating the historically evolved transformation of the monastic codes governing the conduct of individual monks, Buddhist institution (Samgha), monastic economy, management and education at different stages in the different traditions in response to cultural, political, geographical and social diversities. Among other things, this course intends to demonstrate that so long as the true spirit of the Vinaya is not violated, adaptation and changes of the Vinaya were and remain crucial for the survival of Buddhism in modern times.

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**BSTC6018. Chinese Buddhist texts: textual study and translation**

This course is designed to help students to read Chinese Buddhist texts in classical Chinese. It will provide guidance for students who are interested in the translating selections from Chinese Buddhist canon. Translation of texts in the Buddhist Canon requires both language skills and an expert understanding of the Buddhist Literature. Through seminars and discussion tutorials students will consider in depth a selection of Buddhist texts of their choice. It will train them in the capacity for the original research.

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**BSTC6020. Basic Pali**

This is an introductory course meant for those who have no knowledge of the language of Pali. The purpose of this course is to make the students more and more familiar with Pali idiom. It enables them to understand the Buddhist Sutras compiled in Pali. Duration of this course is one academic year which is divided into two semesters. In the first semester, basic grammar is taught along with Pali exercises. The course contents include the following: Pali phonetics, parts of speech, different nouns and their declension, different verbs and their conjugation, participles and their function, absolutes, sandhi, syntax and classification of sentences. The second semester is mainly devoted to the understanding and translating of selected Pali Sutras and to build up sufficient vocabularies for the students.

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**BSTC6021. Basic Sanskrit**

The course aims at introducing students to the basics of Sanskrit grammar as a foundation for reading Sanskrit texts. It involves the completion of weekly Sanskrit/English and English/Sanskrit exercises and the preparation of short passages for reading.



**BSTC6022. Basic Tibetan**

The purpose of this course is to provide a working knowledge of Tibetan grammar and an ability to read the standard Tibetan texts. The major emphasis will be on the study of Buddhist texts preserved in the Tibetan Tripitaka. The course will begin with grammatical exercises and guidance for students to read simple Tibetan texts.

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**BSTC6023. Buddhist art and thought in Asian cultures**

This course offers an examination of the spread of Buddhist traditions through India and South East (Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia) and Central Asia (Silk Road), concentrating on their character and historical impact on indigenous cultures and religions. Covering the length and breadth of Asia, the phenomenally diverse artistic traditions are considered both from the iconography and contextual approaches, as well as the standard stylistic and developmental approaches.

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**BSTC6024. Special topics in Buddhist studies (1)**

This course is offered from time to time. Students should consult the Centre of Buddhist Studies on the content of the course on offer.

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**BSTC6025. Dissertation**

The dissertation shall be a critical study within the field of Buddhist Studies and shall be 20,000-24,000 words in length. The title of dissertation shall be submitted for approval by not later than March 31 of the final academic year in which the teaching programme ends and the dissertation shall be presented by July 31 of the same year. Candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation represents their own work (or in the case of joint work, a statement countersigned by their co-worker(s), which shows the degree of their work) undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree. The examiners may also prescribe an oral examination on the subject of the dissertation.

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**BSTC6028. Positioning Buddhism for today's world**

Buddhism has come a long way since Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma in Barnes, India. This course will first examine how Buddhism has historically adopted itself to suit the needs, customs and mentality of different people in different lands. The class will then explore together the relevancy of Buddhism in our time and how to promote it in light of today's social, educational, and political environment. Methods and techniques of presentation of the new syllabus for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination of Buddhist Studies to high school students will also be discussed. Classes will be conducted in Cantonese and Chinese can be used in coursework assessment.

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**BSTC6030. Special topics in Buddhist studies (2)**

This course is offered from time to time. Students should consult the Centre of Buddhist Studies on the content of the course on offer.

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**BSTC6031. Special topics in Buddhist studies (3)**

This course is offered from time to time. Students should consult the Centre of Buddhist Studies on the content of the course on offer.

**BSTC6032. History of Indian Buddhism**

The course aims at providing students with a general, but not superficial, knowledge in a wide background, of the history of Indian Buddhism, in order to help them to understand more the various aspects of Buddhist culture and belief. It covers the period from the time of Sakyamuni, the development of every stage, until its declining and the final disappearance in India in the 13th century. The focus will be on the origin of Buddhism, the nikaya Buddhism, the rising of Mahayana, and its significance to the forming and development of Chinese Buddhism. It is hoped that some Sino-Indian cultural analyses and discussion can be included at some points in teaching or lectures.

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**BSTC6033. The philosophy of the Mere-consciousness school**

It is through examining the historical background, establishment, development, achievement and influence of the Mere-consciousness school that the course aims at providing students a clear and full picture of the fundamental thought of the mere-consciousness (Vijñaptimātrata) system of the Mahāyāna Buddhism through which students may comprehensively understand what Buddhism is and what Buddhists should do to achieve their objective of lives. It deals mainly with the following basic concepts: the phenomena of life of an individual sentient with special emphasis on the existence and operation of the store-consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna), the sixth and seventh consciousnesses together with the six kinds of mental associates (caittas); the phenomena and reality of the Universe; the process of transmigration (samsāra); the paths towards liberation and enlightenment; the nature, the subtle body and the pure land of Buddha (Mahā-bodhi and Mahā-nirvāna) with special emphasis on the transformation of defiled consciousnesses of ordinary sentient beings into pure wisdom of Buddhas; the methodology, the characteristics and the evaluation of the philosophy of the Mere-consciousness School. Classes will be conducted in Cantonese and Chinese will be used in examination.

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**BSTC6034. Mindfulness, stress reduction and psychotherapy**

This course aims at providing students with basic knowledge and understanding of the application of Buddhist mindfulness training in stress reduction and psychotherapy. It will cover the latest research and theories of the last two decades on mindfulness training in the health sector. This is a practical as well as theoretical course. Students will take part in the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Programme. They will participate in the practices and exercises during class, in order to acquire an experiential as well as intellectual understanding of the subject.

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**BSTC6039. Abhidharma doctrines and controversies**

The early part of the course will outline the historical and doctrinal background necessary for understanding the controversial doctrines to be examined in details subsequently. The bulk of the course that follows will focus on selected controversial doctrines of importance, which include:

- (i) Tri-temporal existence of all dharmas (*sarvāstitva*);
- (ii) Thought (*citta*) and thought-concomittants (*caitta*) - their ontological status, etc;
- (iii) Theories of perception;
- (iv) Karma theories of the Sarvāstivāda and the Sautrāntika;
- (v) *Arhats* and the Buddha : The difference in their Wisdom (*prajñā*);
- (vi) Theories of causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*);
- (vii) The Path of Spiritual Progress

Some adjustment may be made on the inclusion of the actual topics for discussion depending on the progress of the class. The discussion on the controversies will primarily be based on the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, supplemented with commentarial material from the *Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣā*, the *\*Nyāyānusārā* of Saṃghabhadra, the *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣā-prabhāvṛtti*, and the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośa-vyākhyā* of Yaśomitra.

**BSTC6040. Appearance and reality – the Yogācāra perspective: A study of the Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga**

This course is a study of the Yogācāra doctrines of Appearance and Reality, or Phenomena and Numena, as expounded in the *Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga* (*vibhāṅga*). This work is one of the fundamental texts of the Yogācāra school. Traditionally ascribed to Maitreya, it is believed to be most probably authored by Asanga, the systematizer of the school. Its purported analysis of *dharma* versus *dharmatā* is explicitly explained at the outset as that of *Samṣāra* and *Nirvāṇa*. *Dharma*-s or phenomena, though in reality non-existent, are manifested on account of our mental discrimination (*vikalpa*). *Dharmatā* or Reality (*tathatā*) is the absence of the falsely superimposed duality of the perceiver and the perceived. Having first established the anitheses of *Samṣāra* and *Nirvāṇa*, the text proceeds to explain how the Real is to be revealed through a process of transforming the unreal born of discrimination. This process, known as ‘*āśraya-parāvṛtti*’, is further explained in terms of foreign defilements and *tathatā* – and in this respect, the text aligns itself with the doctrinal stance of the intrinsically pure nature of the mind.

In consideration of the fact that the majority of students here are familiar with the Chinese language, the study will primarily be based on the Chinese version of Venerable Fa Zun (辨法法性論), in consultation with the Tibetan original and Vasubandhu’s commentary. However, the whole course will be conducted in English, and the students are not expected to have any knowledge of the Tibetan or Chinese language; although knowledge of Chinese will be an advantage.

**BSTC6041. The Theravada Abhidhamma**

The course will begin with a review of the antecedent factors that led to the emergence of Abhidhamma as a technical systematization of the Buddhist teachings contained in the Pali Suttas. This will be followed up with a discussion of the following themes: dhamma realism as the Abhidhamma view of reality and its connection with the early Buddhist analysis of the world of experience into khandha, ayatana, and dhatu; the role of analysis (*bheda*) and synthesis (*sangaha*) in the Abhidhamma methodology; levels of reality and degrees of truth (*sammuti* and *paramattha*); the category of the conceptual and the theory of expression (*pannatti*); analysis of mind into consciousness (*citta*) and its invariable concomitants (*cetasika*); analysis of matter into primary (*mahabhuta*) and secondary (*upada*) elements; theory of material clusters (*rupakalapa*); theory of moments as the Abhidhamma version of the early Buddhist doctrine of impermanence; *bhavaṅga* and the Abhidhamma theory of perception. The course will take into consideration parallel data in the Sarvastivada Abhidharma as well as the Sautrantika critique of Abhidharmic interpretations. The course will be concluded with an examination of how the Abhidhamma integrates philosophy, psychology and ethics into a framework of a programme for liberation.

**BSTC6042. Advanced Tibetan**

This course aims at students with basic knowledge of Tibetan language. It teaches the fundamentals of Tibetan grammar and syntax, in addition to expanding vocabulary, particularly Buddhist terms. It introduces more complex sentences and more technical vocabulary. It is mainly devoted to the understanding and translating of selected Tantric literature, Tibetan autograph, poet and history, etc.

**BSTC6044. History of Chinese Buddhism**

This course examines the Chinese development and interpretation of Buddhist thought in a historical perspective, with a special emphasis on the teachings and practices. The major figures and their contributions to the formation and development of schools, important and influential sutras and the cults of important divinities will also be examined.

**BSTC6045. Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Elementary)**

This course is based on the reasonable assumption that the most interesting and rewarding way to learn Classical Sanskrit as a beginner is to actually read some simple Sanskrit texts that interests him, under the guidance of a teacher. Classical Buddhist Sanskrit texts have their own styles, idiomatic expressions and technical terminologies with which the student must first be familiarized. As the student reads, he is being gradually introduced to both Buddhist textual material on the one hand, and elementary grammar on the other.

In this course, the student will first be introduced to short passages selected on the basis of (i) simplicity in terms of grammatical structure and doctrinal meaning, and (ii) the existence of corresponding Chinese versions (particularly those translated by Xuan Zang and Kumarajiva). Hybrid Sanskrit passages will be excluded. As he reads the graded passages, all the grammars involved will be analyzed and doctrines explained to him. After a gradual build up, long passages from the Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra deemed appropriate for the student's level will be taken up for analysis.

Advantage will be taken from the fact that most students here can understand basic Classical Chinese, and some can even memorize most of the passages from Kumarajiva's version of the Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra. It will also be an advantage if the student already has some familiarity with the elementary Sanskrit grammar. However, neither familiarity with Buddhist scriptures and Classical Chinese nor knowledge of Sanskrit is an absolute prerequisite of this course.

**BSTC6046. The philosophy of the middle way (Mādhyamika) Buddhism**

The Mādhyamika Buddhism is the most important foundation in the studies of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought. The course aims at giving students a clear and full picture of the basic thought of the Mādhyamika system established by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. The lectures of the course will deal with the approach of studies, the historical background of the Mādhyamika Buddhism, the examination of svabhāva, śūnyata, ātman, the material world, the mental world, the relations, the time, the space, the ultimate reality and the way to nirvāna. The Methodology of the Mādhyamika Buddhism will be discussed. Besides lectures and discussion, students will be guided to read certain important chapters of the mūlamadhyamakakārika, the Dvādaśamukha-śāstra and the Sata-śāstra. Classes will be conducted in Cantonese and Chinese will be used in coursework assignment.

**BSTC6049. Store-consciousness — the Yogācāra doctrine of the ālayavijñāna**

The doctrine of the ālaya-vijñāna is one of the most important and distinguishing doctrines of the Yogācāra. This course focuses on the early Indian development of the doctrine. Its main content includes: 1. The historical evolution of the doctrine from Abhidharma Buddhism, particularly the contribution from the Sautrāntika. 2. The nature and functions of the ālaya-vijñāna as expounded in the fundamental texts of the school, and the importance of the doctrine for the school's central thesis of vijñapti-mātratā. 3. The doctrine of the transformation of the ālaya-vijñāna and its active cognitive evolutes (the pravṛtti-vijñāna) expounded as āśraya-parāvṛtti.

**BSTC6050. Buddhist Iconography and art – with special reference to the Tibetan tradition**

This course aims at presenting students the vast scope of Buddhist iconographic and national art traditions in the main realms of Dharma spread, starting from the first images of the Buddha. Main emphasis is laid on the later Mahayana and Vajrayana developments in India and Tibet, where thousands of icons with complicated symbolism were coined. The students will come to know how the images are created, consecrated and used within the tradition, how to identify and read hundreds of iconographic elements such as mūdra, āsana, etc. and how to relate the meaning of symbolism and art with the Buddhist doctrinal points.

**BSTC6051. The path to enlightenment in the Tibetan tradition – a study of Tsonghapa’s Lam Rim Chen Mo (菩提道次第廣論)**

In all Tibetan Buddhist schools – Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug – practices are basically classified into Sutra and Mantra paths. All four schools have instructive literature to both Sutra and Mantra. The present course will survey the most elaborate Guide on Sutra: Lam rim Chen mo (“A Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path”) produced by the founder of the Gelug School, Tsongkhapa Lobsan Drakpa (1357-1419), with references to the corresponding literature of other schools. This text covers practices for 3 scopes of persons (lesser, middling and great) in 3 parts, and separately treats shamatha and vipashyana.

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**BSTC6052. Study of important Buddhist meditation texts**

Meditation is an integral part of the study and practice of Buddhism. This course will include the study of important Buddhist texts related to the practice of meditation from various traditions so that students will be able to see their differences and similarities. Passages will be selected from texts such as: the Satipatthana Sutta (念處經), Visuddhimagga (清淨道論), Liu men jiao shou xi ding lun (六門教授習定論), Da mo er ru si xing guan (達摩二入四行觀), and the Three statements of Garab Dorje (大圓滿椎擊三要訣). Students will also be introduced to the actual practice of meditation. Students taking this course are expected to have a good command of classical Chinese.

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**BSTC6053. The Three-nature (tri-svabhāva) doctrine of the Yogācāra**

The Three-nature (tri-svabhāva) doctrine is one of the central doctrines of the Yogācāra school. These three natures — the Imagined Nature (parikalpita-svabhāva), the Other-dependent Nature (paratantra-svabhāva) and the Accomplished/Perfected Nature (pariṣpanna-svabhāva) — were developed mainly as a response to the earlier, Madhyamaka, doctrine that "all are empty" (sarvam śūnyam). This Three-nature doctrine, taking the Madhyamaka doctrine to be as much an extreme as the Ābhidharmika doctrine of "all exists (sarvam asti)", therefore represents the Yogācāra interpretation of the Buddha's teaching of the Middle Way.

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**BSTC6055. Buddhist Psychology**

This course takes a psychological perspective to introduce Buddhism as a moral and psychologically healthy way of life. The early Buddhist way of life as practiced by the Buddha and his disciples is introduced through selected readings from English translations of the original Pali texts Majjhima Nikaya and Anguttara Nikaya. This source is chosen over other more theoretically oriented secondary sources on the belief that the early Buddhist way of life provided the experiential (and empirical) basis for Buddhist philosophy. The narrative format offers lively and concrete examples of problem solving in daily life that are easily understood by most readers and more importantly- less readily misunderstood. Theories and important concepts in Buddhism are introduced later in the course to bind together the rather loosely organized teachings of the Nikaya texts. Finally, the epistemological foundation of Buddhism is introduced through selected readings from the Yogacara tradition (in particular the Thirty Stanzas) and compared with recent developments in theoretical psychology (in particular social constructionism).

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**BSTC6056. Special topics in Buddhist studies (4)**

This course is offered from time to time. Students should consult the Centre of Buddhist Studies on the content of the course on offer.

**BSTC6057. Special topics in Buddhist studies (5)**

This course is offered from time to time. Students should consult the Centre of Buddhist Studies on the content of the course on offer.

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**BSTC6058. Buddhism and society**

This course concentrates on the various aspects of Buddhist social philosophy and its historical development. It consists of various topics, such as the twofold process of society (origin and dissolution), the Buddha and society, the Buddhist stratification of society, social implication of the five precepts, Buddhist perspectives on morality, ethics and economics, Buddhism and peace, the environment, and human rights.

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**BSTC6059. Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Advanced)**

This is a one-year course designed as a sequel to “Basic Sanskrit” (BSTC6021) and “Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Elementary)” (BSTC6045). Accordingly, the intending student must possess a pass in at least one of these two courses. It is mainly devoted to selected readings in Indian Buddhist texts particularly the Buddhacarita, Bodhicaryāvatāra, Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra, Mūla-madhyamakārikā, Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi (Viṃśikā and Triṃśikā).

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**BSTC6062. Buddhist Logic**

The course aims to give students a clear perspective of the historical background, the development, the main areas and the basic structure of Buddhist Logic (Hetu - vidyā, 因明) established by Dignāga (陳那) and Dharmakīrti (法稱). Lectures and discussions will be emphasized on the comparison of Buddhist syllogism with Aristotelian syllogism, the problems derived from the inductive and deductive aspects of Buddhist Logic, and the possibility to establish a quantificative formula to solve those problems especially related to logical truth-value. Classes will be conducted in Cantonese and Chinese will be used in the coursework assessments.

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**BSTC6063. A study of Buddhist grotto archaeology in northwest China**

This course will introduce early Buddhist grottoes at Kucha, western corridor of Gansu, and Dunhuang, which are important for the study of grottoes in China. This course will cover types and distribution of grottoes at Kucha, contents of the murals at Kizil, questions concerning the Dunhuang caves, division of caves and themes of the murals at Dunhuang in the Northern and Southern dynasties, study of the stone stupas during Beiliang, grottoes of the western corridor in the early periods, and Caves at Bilingshi etc. Classes will be conducted in Mandarin and Chinese will be used in the coursework assessments.

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**BSTC6064. Buddhist Psychology: The *citta-caitta* Doctrine of the Abhidharma and Yogācāra traditions**

The Buddhist doctrines are well known for their systematic and thorough analysis of the human mind. The Abhidharma tradition, represented by the Theravāda, Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika schools, and the Yogācāra tradition, are particularly developed doctrinally in this respect. This course examines, from a comparative perspective, the *citta-caitta* doctrines of the Abhidharma schools and the Yogācāra tradition. For the former, the main source will be the Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya, the Mahāvibhāṣā and the \*Nyāyānusāra; for the latter, the Yogācāra-bhūmi-śāstra, the Abhidharmasamuccaya and Sthiramati's commentary.

**BSTC6065. Buddhist grotto archaeology in China – a general survey**

The Chinese Buddhist grotto is a valuable cultural relic in China most worthy of study and research. This course will introduce different types, divisions and typical groups of Buddhist grottoes in China. It will also cover the methodology of handling basic material for field work, the study of Buddhist grotto chronology and iconography, special topics in the field, and Buddhist archaeological principles and methods etc. Classes will be conducted in Mandarin and Chinese will be used in the coursework assessments.

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**BSTC6066. Doctrines of the Early Indian Yogācāra**

The Yogācāra is one of the most important Buddhist traditions originating in India. It is a tradition essentially founded on the meditational insight of the great Indian masters, with a rich and complex doctrinal development contributed by the broad Sarvāstivāda-Sautrāntika Abhidharma tradition and the emerging Indian Mahāyāna thoughts. This course is designed as an introduction to the earlier phase of the Indian development the School. It focuses mainly on the thoughts of the Maitreya-Asanga complex, with their further articulation by such great masters as Vasubandhu and Sthiramati. The major doctrines to be examined include: the system of eight consciousnesses, the three Intrinsic Natures and the threefold Absence of Intrinsic Natures, vijñapti-mātratā and āśrayaparāvṛtti. In a given semester, however, a specific doctrine may also be singled out for detailed consideration.

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**BSTC6068. Reading Pali Suttas**

This course is meant for those who are willing to gather more information on individual and social dimensions of early Buddhism. The course duration is one semester. Three hour question paper will be given at the end of the period. The assessment of the course content historically and culturally is expected. Literary value also is examined. Language of the suttas would not be a barrier for the candidate as the important linguistic terms of the suttas are explained in the course of reading. The following suttas are prescribed for this study: The first three suttas and the Dārucīriya sutta of the Udāna; Madhupiṇḍika sutta of the Majjhimanikāya; Sigālovāda sutta of the Dīghanikāya; Vasala sutta and Metta sutta of the Suttanipāta; Candā and Vāsetṭhī Therīgāthā.

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**BSTC6070. Research methodology in Buddhist Studies**

Getting acquainted with certain research methods and techniques is fundamental to any meaningful academic preoccupation with Buddhism. Due to the immense complexity of Buddhism as an ancient and wide-spread historical phenomenon and as a living world religion, a huge array of methodical approaches and research tools can prove to be fruitful in examining certain varieties and aspects of Buddhism. This course, however, is limited to providing an introduction to some of the most fundamental methodological devices employed in investigating the history of pre-modern Buddhist doctrines and philosophy. Moreover, major emphasis will be laid on the problems involved in studying Indian Buddhist thought.

During the first three weeks of the semester, major recent methodological controversies will be discussed. Afterwards, a detailed and practical introduction to research skills still regarded by many scholars as the most fundamental ones, namely, textual criticism and editorial technique, will be given. Indian Buddhist texts are preserved in many different languages, including the Buddhist variety of Classical Chinese. Examples and exercises will be drawn predominantly from those languages and texts to which the participants are already accustomed.

**BSTC6072. The Theory of Transmigration (Samsara) in Buddhist philosophy**

Transmigration – or more properly, rebirth – is one of the most essential teachings of Buddhism. It has important impact on the development of the Buddhist thought in many aspects. The course aims to provide students with a clear and full picture of the basic doctrine of transmigration inspired by the Indian tradition and established by early Buddhism under the non-self doctrine, and shows how it is developed by the various schools of the Hinayana and Mahayana, and how it is finalized by the Yogacara based on the doctrine of mere-consciousness (*vijnapti-matratā*). In particular, it discusses the doctrinal difficulty arising from the Buddhist standpoint which denies the existence of a divinely endowed soul and of any eternal self. It addresses such major issues as the agent of transmigration and of karma and retribution, etc. Classes will be conducted in Cantonese and Chinese will be used for coursework assessments.

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**BSTC6073. The Buddha mind – Introduction to Tathagatagarbha**

This is an introduction to Tathagatagarbha which is a synonym with the terms of Buddha nature, Bodhicitta, profound prajna, complete enlightenment, etc, yet the term Tathagatagarbha emphasizes on the result of enlightenment and the nature of equanimity. Hence, this is the explanation of the path of Buddhism from the Buddha's state of realization. The course will go through the understanding of Tathagatagarbha, the meaning of contemplative practice, the actualization and the qualities of the Buddha mind. Reference is based on Lankavatara Sutra, Uttaratantra, Diamond Sutra (Vajracchedika Prajna Paramita Sutra), Vimalakirti Sutra and Manjusri-nama-samgiti, etc. The course will be conducted through lectures, discussions and appropriate contemplation.

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**BSTC6074. The path of enlightenment – Fourfold Dependent Origination and profound prajna**

This course explains the systematic approach to Buddhahood through foundation (view), path and result. The overview of enlightenment is understood through the meaning of the Heart Sutra in terms of practices and realization, introducing the sequential Five Paths and the Mantric Path. The detail explanation of the way to enlightenment lies in Nagarjuna's fourfold dependent origination as the foundation, Maitreya's yogacara as the path focusing on consciousness and Tathagatagarbha as the result. Dharma terms are explained through the course. Reference is also made to Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyakakarika and Dharmadhatustava, various treatises from Maitreya Yogacara and Srimala Sutra, etc. The course is conducted through lectures, discussions and appropriate contemplation.

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**BSTC6075. The Pali commentarial literature**

The course is designed to critically examine and analyse different aspects of the Pali commentaries. The course consists broadly of the following two areas: I. a textual examination of the commentaries; II. an examination of the commentaries' contents. Under the first category the following areas of study will be examined: the sources of the present Pali *Aṭṭhakathā* known collectively as the *Sīhaḷa-aṭṭhakathā*; the date of the composition of *Sīhaḷa-aṭṭhakathā* and the sequence of their translation into Pali after the fifth century A.C.; the commentators, Buddhaghosa, Dhammapāla, etc. - their lives and works; etc. The second category will include: individual concepts as reflected in the commentaries; different interpretations between Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla; doctrinal and other differences between the Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri fraternities; value of the Pali commentaries as source-material for the Study of Buddhism, etc.



**BSTC6076. The Buddha-concept in Theravada Buddhism**

This course examines the Concept of the Buddha including his life in an analytical and detailed way as found in the Pali texts of Theravada Buddhism from the earliest period through the Pali commentarial period. The main topics examined will include: the examination of materials for the study of the Buddha-concept in the *Sutta-Pitaka* and *Vinaya-Pitaka*; the beginnings of the life of the Buddha and its systematization; the concept of past and future Buddhas; the concepts of *mahapurisa*, *dasabala*, *catu-vesarajja*, etc.; beginnings of the apotheosis of the Buddha; special characteristics attributed to the Buddha such as *asiti-anuvyanjana*, *satapunna-lakkhana*, *attharasa-(avenika-)buddhadhamma*, *sabbannuta-nana*, *paramita*, *mahakaruna*, etc.

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**BSTC6077. Comparative theology**

The course introduces diverse visions of the absolute, and explores reflections on the absolute and religion by leading thinkers of the Christian and Buddhist traditions. It approaches these theologies from the standpoint of the postmodern condition, which includes religious pluralism, perspectivalism, deconstruction, and feminist critiques. The goal of the course is to teach a methodology for developing one's own religious ideology in the face of pluralism, perspectivalism, and secularism characteristic of today's intellectual milieu.

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**BSTC6078. Philosophy of Religion**

An attempt to bring rational justification and clarification to religious beliefs and practice, focusing primarily on the concepts from European philosophy and from the Buddhist tradition. Topics will include: conceptions of the absolute, faith and reason, death and immortality, miracles and supernatural power, karma, the problem of evil, and religious pluralism. The course will employ examples from a variety of religious traditions. In addition, the course will examine the notion of religion and the enterprise of philosophy of religion from various perspectives.