

## **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**

**MBS1** 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.

**MBS2** 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**

**MBS3**

- (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**

**MBS4** 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**

**MBS5** 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**

**MBS6** 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**

**MBS7** 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**

**MBS8**

- (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.

**MBS9** Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners at their first attempt in not more than two 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, on a specified date; or
- (b) to re-submit their work for the course or courses of failure for re-assessment within a specified period; or
- (c) to repeat a year of the curriculum and present themselves for examination in the courses prescribed for the repeated year.

**MBS10** 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.

**MBS11** 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.

**MBS12**

- (a) Candidates who are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination in any paper or papers in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners or to revise and re-present

their dissertations shall be deemed to have failed and shall be recommended for discontinuation under the provisions of General Regulation G 12.

- (b) Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners in a second attempt in any course(s) or examination or in their dissertations may be required to discontinue their studies.
  - (c) Candidate who have failed more than two courses in the first attempt in an academic year may be required to discontinue their studies.
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### **Examination results**

**MBS13** 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 (MBuddhStud)**

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## **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:**

BSTC6079 Early Buddhism: a doctrinal exposition  
BSTC6002 Mahayana Buddhism

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

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

BSTC6020 Basic Pali #  
BSTC6021 Basic Sanskrit  
BSTC6022 Basic Tibetan  
BSTC6082 Studies in Pali Suttas  
BSTC6042 Advanced Tibetan  
BSTC6045 Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Elementary) #  
BSTC6059 Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Advanced) #  
BSTC6052 Study of important Buddhist meditation texts

#### **2.2 History and Doctrine**

BSTC6032 History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey  
BSTC6044 History of Chinese Buddhism  
BSTC6013 Tibetan Buddhism: history and doctrines  
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  
BSTC6081 The Theravada Abhidhamma: its philosophy and psychology  
BSTC6072 The theory of Transmigration (samsara) in Buddhist philosophy  
BSTC6033 The philosophy of the Mere-consciousness school  
BSTC6012 Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines

- BSTC6040 Appearance and reality - the Yogācāra perspective: a study of the Dharmadharmatā-vibhāga  
 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 and Bodhisatta Ideal in Theravada Buddhism  
 BSTC6083 The concept of emptiness and Prajñāpāramitā literature

### 2.3 Interdisciplinary Studies

- BSTC6058 Buddhism and society  
 BSTC6006 Counselling and pastoral practice  
 BSTC6011 Buddhist mediation  
 BSTC6034 Mindfulness, stress reduction and psychotherapy  
 BSTC6055 Buddhist psychology  
 BSTC6080 Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road  
 BSTC6028 Positioning Buddhism for today's world  
 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

#### **BSTC6079 Early Buddhism: a doctrinal exposition**

This course will be mainly based on the early Buddhist discourses (Pali Suttas) and is designed to provide an insight into the fundamental doctrines of what is generally known as Early Buddhism. It will begin with a description of the religious and philosophical milieu in which Buddhism arose in order to show how the polarization of intellectual thought into spiritualist and materialist ideologies gave rise to Buddhism. The following themes will be an integral part of this study: analysis of the empiric individuality into *khandha*, *ayatana*, and *dhatu*; the three marks of sentient existence; doctrine of non-self and the problem of Over-Self; doctrine of dependent origination and its centrality to other Buddhist doctrines; diagnosis of the human condition and definition of suffering as conditioned experience; theory and practice of moral life; psychology and its relevance to Buddhism as a religion; undetermined questions and why were they left undetermined; epistemological standpoint and the Buddhist psychology of ideologies; Buddhism and the God-idea and the nature of Buddhism as a non-theistic religion; Nibbana as the Buddhist ideal of final emancipation. The course will be concluded with an inquiry into how Buddhism's "middle position", both in theory and praxis, determined the nature of Buddhism as a religion.

## **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 Madhyamaka 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).

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### **B. Elective courses**

#### **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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#### **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 Bodhicitta 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 mode 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**

This course introduces students to the history, teachings, practice, and institutional realities of Japanese Buddhism. The course will focus its special attention on the introduction of Buddhism to Japan, Prince Shotoku's contribution to its spread, the Taika Reforms, the Nara Buddhism, its formation and further development in the Heian and Kamakura periods, its transformation in the Edo period, its encounter with modernity in the Meiji period, and recent developments within Japanese Buddhism since the end of World War II. The founders of different schools of Buddhist thought such as Saicho, Kukai, Honen, Shinran, Eisai, Dogen, Nichiren and others together with their main teachings are also examined. The course will further examine the Buddhist impact upon the ways of thinking of the Japanese people with a view to understanding Japan and her culture.

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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.

**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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**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.

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**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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**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.

### **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.

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### **BSTC6032      History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey**

An objective understanding of the development of any Buddhist tradition presupposes a proper historical perspective. The course is designed to provide students with a general, but not superficial, survey of Indian Buddhism from a historical perspective highlighting all the important developments up to the emergence of Mahāyāna. The main themes for the course include: the origins of Buddhism and the Indian Background; process of the compilation of the Canon; the classification of the Buddha's teachings; the Councils; the popularization of Buddhism; the emergence and development of the major Buddhist sects; King Asoka and his contribution to the Buddhist cause; spread of Buddhism outside India; rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and other related topics.

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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.

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### **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(vibhaṅga)*. 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.

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### **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...

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**BSTC6044 History of Chinese Buddhism**

This course examines the major events and thoughts in the history of Chinese Buddhism with a particular emphasis on the establishment of Chinese Buddhist Schools. A major aim is to show how Buddhism has been gradually and successfully incorporated into and became one of the three pillars of Chinese thought and culture. The important Chinese Buddhist masters will also be examined against their historical background to show their contribution to the development of Chinese Buddhism.

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**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.

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**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.

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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 (paratrantra-svabhāva) and the Accomplished/Perfected Nature (pariṇiṣpanna-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.

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**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 examines various contemporary social issues from the Buddhist perspectives. The topics discussed include: the foundation for a peaceful society, war and peace, social ethics, material wealth, environment, family, gender, suicide and euthanasia, death, etc. Each topic is discussed by drawing material from the canonical Buddhist texts and analyzed in the light of Buddhist thought.

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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).

### **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.

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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, *viññapti-mātratā* and *āśrayaparāvṛtti*. In a given semester, however, a specific doctrine may also be singled out for detailed consideration.

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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.

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### **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 (*viññapti-matrata*). 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.

## **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-aṭṭhakatha*; 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.

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## **BSTC6076     The Buddha-concept and Bodhisatta Ideal in Theravada Buddhism**

This course is designed to examine from a historical perspective the Buddha-concept and Bodhisatta Ideal from the earliest Canonical texts to the exegetical literature of Theravada Buddhism. For this, the main topics for examination will include: the Buddha's biography; beginnings of his apotheosis; 'great man' (*mahāpurisa*); 'great compassion' (*mahākaruṇā*); 'four confidences' (*catu-vesārajja*); 'omniscient knowledge' (*sabbaññuta-ñāṇa*); 'spiritual power' (*ñāṇa-bala*) and 'physical power' (*kāya-bala*); '80 minor bodily marks' (*asīti-anuvyañjana*); and '18 qualities of the Buddha' (*aṭṭhārasabuddhadhamma*). The course will also examine the Bodhisatta Ideal, an integral part of the Buddha-concept in Buddhism, and the topics for discussion will include the 'perfections' (*pāramitā*), 'aspirations' (*abhinīhāra*), '18 impossible states of birth for a bodhisatta' (*atthārasa-abhabbaṭṭhāna*), and others.

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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.

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## **BSTC6080     Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road**

This course introduces students to the splendors of Buddhist art and architecture from the perspective of its historical and cultural heritage. It offers a comprehensive survey of its transmission from India, Central Asia through the Silk Road to China, South, Southeast and East Asia. The major Buddhist caves in China will be examined, and special attention will also be paid to the interaction between Buddhist doctrine and art, literary expressions and images. As a major emphasis, the course will be on exploring the main traditions of Chinese Buddhist art and its interaction with the Western world.

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## **BSTC6081     The Theravada Abhidhamma: its philosophy and psychology**

The course will begin with an inquiry into the antecedent factors that led to the emergence of the Abhidhamma, both as an expository methodology and a body of thought that came to be formally embodied in the Abhidhamma literature. This will be followed up with a discussion of the following themes: the philosophy of the Abhidhamma with the *dhamma*-theory as its ontological foundation; *dhamma* realism versus common-sense realism; analysis (*bheda*) and synthesis (*sangaha*) and their centrality to Abhidhamma methodology; theory of conceptual constructs: the concept-as-naming, and

the concept-as-meaning; the two truths as consensual and ultimate and their parity of status; the goal-oriented psychology of the Abhidhamma; analysis of psychological experience into cognitive acts and their analysis in turn into bare consciousness and concomitant mental factors; definition of consciousness and classes of consciousness; mental factors: the ethically variable, ethically unwholesome, and ethically beautiful; the mind-body relationship and the pre-eminence of mind; *bhavanga*-consciousness and the cognitive process; analysis of matter into basic factors and the denial of material substance; theory of material clusters as the Theravada version of atomism; theory of instantaneous being: the three instants of arising, presence, and ceasing; the nature of time and space as conceptual constructs; doctrine of conditional relations as the synthesis-based approach to the *dhamma*-theory. The course will take into consideration, where necessary, parallel data in the Sarvastivada Abhidharma as well as the Sautrantika critique of Abhidharma interpretations. The course will be concluded with an examination of how the Abhidhamma integrates philosophy, psychology, and ethics into a framework of a well-knit programme for liberation.

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### **BSTC6082      Studies in Pali Suttas**

This course is meant for those who are interested in gathering more information on early Buddhism. The duration of the course is one semester. Three hour question paper will be set for the candidate at the end of the period. Assessment of the course content historically and culturally is expected. Literary value also is examined. Language of the suttas stipulated would not be a barrier for the candidate in this study as important linguistic terms are explained in the course of reading. From time to time suttas are selected from the Canon. Until further notice following suttas are prescribed for this study: Cūlahatthipadopama and Cūlavedalla suttas of the Majjhimanikāya, Aputtakasutta and Kaccāyanagottasutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya, Vyagghapajja, Meghiya and Uposatha suttas of the Aṃguttaranikāya, Maṅgala, Parābhava and Vasala suttas of the Suttanipāta, Subhā Jīvakaṃbavanikā from the Therīgāthā and Bhikkhunīkhandhaka from the Saṃyuttanikāya.

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### **BSTC6083      The concept of emptiness and Prajñāpāramitā literature**

Emptiness is an important concept in Buddhist teaching. In the early canonical texts, the concept was often used in association with the teaching of the three marks of existent (impermanence, suffering and no-self) as a kind of practice for those on the path to arhathood. However, in the Mahayana texts, it is through the realization of the emptiness (*sunyata*) of phenomena that the Bodhisattvas develop the *prajnaparamita* or perfect wisdom.

This course will study and examine the concept of emptiness and follow its development from the early canonical texts like the Nikaya and Sutta Nipata to its blossoming in the *prajnaparamita* literatures like *Astasahasrika*, Heart Sutra and Diamond Sutra. The course will conclude with a study of the Chinese commentary of the Diamond Sutra by Mahasattva Fu of the Liang dynasty so that students would get a more complete picture of the development of the concept of emptiness and its relationship with *prajnaparamita* literatures.

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