

(2014-2015)

**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 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.

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.

- (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) Candidates who have failed more than two courses in the first attempt in an academic year 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:**

BSTC6079. Early Buddhism: a doctrinal exposition  
 BSTC6002. Mahayana Buddhism

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

## 2.1 Languages and Texts

- BSTC6020. Basic Pali #
- 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
- BSTC7001. Readings in Buddhist Tibetan texts (Elementary) #

## 2.2 History and Doctrine

- BSTC6032. History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey
- BSTC6044. History of Chinese Buddhism
- BSTC6013. Tibetan Buddhism: history and doctrines
- BSTC6039. Abhidharma doctrines and controversies
- BSTC6012. Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines
- 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
- BSTC7002. Tantric meditation traditions in Tibet: a survey of Vajrayāna texts and practices

## 2.3 Interdisciplinary Studies

- BSTC6058. Buddhism and society
- BSTC6006. Counselling and pastoral practice
- BSTC6011. Buddhist mediation
- BSTC6034. Mindfulness, stress reduction and well-being
- BSTC6055. Buddhist psychology I
- BSTC6080. Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road
- BSTC7003. Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture
- BSTC7004. Buddhist psychology II
- BSTC7005. Architecture and Buddhist spirituality: a historical perspective

## 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

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### **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.

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### **BSTC6002. Mahayana Buddhism**

This is a foundation course. Its main aim is to provide a foundational knowledge of Mahāyāna Buddhism for students with no or little background in Buddhist Studies. At the end of the course, students are expected to have acquired sufficient fundamental knowledge on the Mahāyāna tradition, to be able to better understand and appreciate the other more specialized courses on the various specific historical and doctrinal aspects within the vast tradition of the Mahāyāna, and indeed within the whole spectrum of the courses offered by CBS. In keeping with this aim, its contents are chiefly focused on the historical and doctrinal development in early Indian Buddhism — the source for all later development. The course begins with a survey on the contemporary theories of the origins of the Mahāyāna, and proceeds to examine the conception and formulation of the Bodhisattva Ideal in the earliest extant Mahāyāna texts, such as the *Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, *Ugra-pariprcchā*, etc. (including those preserved in Chinese translation). It further examines the question of the Primitive *Prajñāpāramitā*, the emptiness doctrine (*śūnyatā*) expounded by Nāgārjuna, the doctrines of the early Yogācāra and *tathāgatagarbha* thoughts. Other fundamental Mahāyāna doctrines examined include the *trikāya*, the six *pāramitās*, and the ten-stage progression (*daśabhūmi*). Some important scriptures are also selected for discussion, including the *Diamond-cutter sutra*, the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*.

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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 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 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.

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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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**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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### **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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### **BSTC6034. Mindfulness, stress reduction and well-being**

This course aims at providing students with basic knowledge and understanding of the mindfulness in Buddhism and the application of mindfulness training in stress reduction and fostering well-being. This is an experiential as well as a theoretical course which covers the latest research and theories on mindfulness training in the health sector. Students will take part in exercises based on the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Programme and discuss readings prescribed for the course. They are expected to deepen their experience through home practice and apply them in their daily lives.

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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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#### **BSTC6042. Advanced Tibetan**

This course aims at students with basic knowledge of literary Tibetan and grammar. It will cover advanced features of Tibetan grammar and syntax, complex sentences and specialized Buddhist vocabulary. Students will be introduced to reading and translating select passages from different genres of Tibetan literature.

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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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#### **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 (大完滿椎擊三要訣). 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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#### **BSTC6055. Buddhist psychology I**

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).

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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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### **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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### **BSTC6075. The Pali commentarial literature**

The course is designed to critically examine and analyze different aspects of the Pali commentaries. The course consists broadly of the following two areas: I. a textual analysis of the commentaries; II. examination of contents of the commentaries. 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' (*sabbāññuta-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’ (*abhinhāra*), ‘18 impossible states of birth for a bodhisatta’ (*atthārasa-abhabbaṭṭhāna*), and others.

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

The Pali Canon contains many discourses relating to Early Buddhism. Reading the canonical texts is therefore the direct method of learning the teachings of the Buddha. This course is meant for those interested in gathering more direct information from the Pali texts on early Buddhism. The knowledge of Pali is not a precondition for enrolment for this course as important linguistic terms are explained in the course of reading. *Suttas* (discourses) representing various aspects of Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist *Saṅgha* (community of monks and nuns), and early history of Buddhism are selected from the Pali Canon for reading and discussion. The following *suttas*, which are subject to change from time to time, are prescribed for this course: *Cūlahatthipadopama* and *Cūlavedalla suttas* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, *Aputtaka-sutta* and *Kaccāyanagotta-sutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya*, *Vyagghapajja*, *Meghiya* and *Uposatha suttas* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, *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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### **BSTC7001. Readings in Buddhist Tibetan texts (Elementary)**

This is an introductory course on learning how to read Tibetan Buddhist texts and does not require prior knowledge of literary Tibetan. It is run for one full academic year that is divided in two consecutive semesters. In the first semester students learn to read and write Tibetan, while acquiring a practical understanding of grammar and the ability to translate sentences and short passages mainly from Tibetan

to English, but also from English to Tibetan. In the second semester students are trained to translate texts and selected passages from various genres of Tibetan Buddhist literature, while learning additional grammar and specialized Buddhist terms in their doctrinal contexts.

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### **BSTC7002. Tantric meditation traditions in Tibet: a survey of Vajrayāna texts and practices**

The emergence of Vajrayāna in seventh and eighth-century India, also known as Tantric Buddhism, marked a systematic movement of religious practice, interpretation and understanding of the Buddha's teachings. A prolific production of esoteric scriptures requiring initiation and exegesis by lay or monastic tantric masters infused Mahāyāna Buddhism with new training techniques and ways of conceptualizing the soteriological goal of Buddhism. Tantras spread with various Buddhist traditions across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Central Asia, China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia. In this course we will discuss the historical transmission of Indian Buddhist tantras to Tibet at the times of the Tibetan empire and during the medieval times. We will examine some representative Vajrayāna teachings and practices as they were received and developed in Tibetan monastic schools and lay tantric settings: Geluk (lower and higher tantras), Kagyu (*Six Dharmas of Naropa and Mahāmudra*), Sakya (*Lamdre and the Hevajra Tantra*) and the meditative tradition of the *Great Perfection*, or *Dzogchen*, as it was systematized in the Nyingma and Bön.

Prerequisites: Prior completion of at least one of the following courses: BSTC6002, BSTC6013, BSTC6032, BSTC6079, or with consent of instructor.

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### **BSTC7003. Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture**

This course is a theme-based study of Buddhist art and cultural relics preserved in the Dunhuang Grottoes. It will examine the development of Buddhist art in Dunhuang from the historical, iconographical and doctrinal perspectives. The main themes discussed in the course include: the early Buddhist narrative art, the Maitreya cult, the illustration of *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra* and *Lotus Sūtra*, the representation of Pure Land, the Guanyin faith and Bodhisattva path, the development of Esoteric art, Dunhuang art in the Tubo period, Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai, the sacred calligraphy and printing culture, and some other related topics. The cultural interaction with Central Asia, and the impact from central China Ch'ang-an on the development of Dunhuang art and culture will be examined. The course aims to introduce to the students the unique value of Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture as a time capsule of Silk Road history under the influence of Buddhism.

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### **BSTC7004. Buddhist psychology II**

Based on the perspective and materials of BSTC6055, this course aims to further the understanding of the Buddha's teaching as elucidated in the early suttas through a psychological investigation of a wider range of relevant studies in science and philosophy. The former include the works of Jean Piaget and Kenneth Gergen (representing respectively the constructivist and social constructionist approaches in psychology) and that of Konrad Lorenz (evolutionary epistemology). The latter include the work of John Dewey from the modern West, and "Cheng Wei Shi Lun" and "Zhuangzi" from the ancient East. These studies are intended to help us interpret the suttas in more familiar languages, and to see Dukkha in relation to modern conditions as well as arising from inherent human weaknesses. It will also be shown that better understanding of the suttas will revert to benefit science and philosophy (in particular psychology) fundamentally and in a variety of ways: by providing an overall organizational framework and epistemology to integrate their various "approaches"; by providing an empirical yardstick for evaluating ideas and practices (that of cessation of dukkha); by integrating theory and practice in psychology; in general by helping us see the problems of modern society (Dukkha and its Arising) in a new light; and hence how we should act (Cessation and the Path).

Prerequisite: BSTC6055

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**BSTC7005. Architecture and Buddhist spirituality: a historical perspective**

Based on the teachings of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, this course is an interdisciplinary study of Architecture and Buddhism using physical buildings to explain Buddhist philosophies. The Vimalakirti Sutra says, “All the different kinds of earthly desires are all the seeds of the Buddha”. The course will begin with an introduction to the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism and clarification of the relationship for the three schools of Madhyamaka, Yogacara and Tathagatagarbha (Buddha-nature). Subsequently, spirituality is explained and discussed in each of the three schools of Madhyamaka, Yogacara and Tathagatagarbha illustrated with examples from the study of architecture like architectural styles, theories of architecture, functionality, historical references and construction technology. The spirit of modernism, technology, symbolism, sustainability and humanity in architectural studies are revealed to be embraced in corresponding views of various Buddhist philosophies from the three schools of Madhyamaka, Yogacara and Tathagatagarbha with reference from Sutras and Shastras. The course will also cover Buddhist Architecture in Asia such as India, China (including Tibet) and Japan etc.