

CENTRE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES

BSTC0001. Making sense of Ch'an (Zen) (6 credits)

To many people, Ch'an (禪) has an aura of unspeakable romanticism. This course will examine the position of Ch'an within the more comprehensible framework of orthodox Buddhist Teachings, its development in Chinese history, the patriarchs (祖師) and the influences of Ch'an on Chinese thought and culture. The beauty and function of Ko'an (公案) and Ch'an poetry (禪詩) will also be studied so that students will get a feeling of the unspeakable romanticism. In addition, the practical usage of Ch'an in daily life will be explored: Ch'an and mind development, Ch'an and self-awareness and how to make Ch'an more accessible to modern society.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

BSTC0002. Life and Buddhism (6 credits)

Our goal in life, whether it is for personal excellence, financial success or national glory, is in essence a search for happiness, for ourselves and for others. Misguided notions of happiness lead to dire consequences, resulting in suffering and unhappiness for the individual and the community. This course examines how the ancient wisdom of Buddhism teaches us the art of happiness in daily life from the following three aspects: (1) Personal cultivation (topics including the cause for suffering life and happy life, the Buddhist way of living well and dying well, the reality of life, moral causation, Threefold training, and morality in both Mahayana and Theravada traditions), (2) Improvement of human relationship (topics including the four immeasurables, social implication of the five precepts and six perfections) and (3) Improvement of social environment (topics including Buddhist perspective of wealth, Buddhist attitude towards war and peace and Buddhist ideal society).

Assessment: 100% coursework.

BSTC0003. Buddhism and contemporary moral problems (6 credits)

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This course is designed to introduce students to the foundations of Buddhist values and ethics, and to apply Buddhist ethics to examine a broad range of contemporary moral problems, for instance suicide, abortion, and euthanasia; money and work; sexuality and marriage; sexual equality; animals and environment; war and peace. Students will be guided to develop critical thinking in understanding and resolving moral dilemmas, and making responsible decisions.

Assessment: 100% coursework.

BSTC0004. The art of living (6 credits)

Psychologists have proposed a set of developmental tasks for young adults in western societies which are also applicable for university undergraduate students. They include the following: (a) developing autonomy or independence from parents; (b) sex-role identity; internalized morality; (c) emotional independence and maturity; (d) peer relationships; and (e) career choice and uncertainty in our technological era. This course will examine and discuss how to apply Buddhist wisdom and knowledge of social psychology to enlighten and empower students in four aspects: (a) promoting self-understanding and self-affirmation/exploring the impact of significant people on ones life; (b) establishing and maintaining positive interpersonal relationships with peers and seniors; (c) developing emotional intelligence and well-being to deal with life problems and adversities; (d) exploring the meaning of life; and (e) making responsible moral choices in our pluralistic society.

Assessment: 100% coursework.