

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

(See also General Regulations and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula)

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.

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 comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
- (c) shall hold
 - (i) a Bachelor's degree with honours of this University; or
 - (ii) a qualification of equivalent standard from this University or another comparable institution accepted for this purpose; and
- (d) 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.

Qualifying examination

MBS 3.

- (a) A qualifying examination may be set to test the candidates' formal academic ability or their 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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Advanced standing

MBS 4. In accordance with TPG 3 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula, Advanced Standing may be granted to candidates in recognition of studies completed successfully before admission to the curriculum. The amount of credits to be granted for Advanced Standing shall be determined by the Board of the Faculty, in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) Candidates who can produce evidence, including but not limited to transcript and course syllabus, that a course taken elsewhere is equivalent in contents to any one of the two compulsory foundation courses can apply for Advanced Standing.
- (b) Advanced Standing will only be granted to one foundation course at maximum.
- (c) Advanced Standing will only be considered if the previous studies were done within 5 years before admission to the curriculum.

- (d) Advanced Standing will not be granted for elective courses and capstone experience.
 - (e) Credits granted for Advanced Standing shall not normally be included in the calculation of the GPA unless permitted by the Board of the Faculty but will be recorded on the transcript of the candidate.
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Award of degree

- MBS 5. To be eligible for the award of the degree of Master of Buddhist Studies, candidates shall
- (a) comply with the General Regulations;
 - (b) comply with the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula; and
 - (c) complete the curriculum as prescribed in the syllabuses and satisfy the examiners in accordance with the regulations as set out below.
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Period of study

MBS 6. The curriculum shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study. Candidates shall not be permitted to extend their studies beyond the maximum period of registration of two academic years of full-time study or four academic years of part-time study, unless otherwise permitted or required by the Board of the Faculty.

Completion of curriculum

- MBS 7. To complete the curriculum, candidates
- (a) shall satisfy the requirements prescribed in TPG 6 of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula;
 - (b) shall follow courses of instruction and complete satisfactorily all prescribed written work;
 - (c) shall complete and present a satisfactory capstone experience as set out in MBS 8; and
 - (d) shall satisfy the examiners in all prescribed courses and in any prescribed form of assessment.
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Capstone experience

- MBS 8. The capstone experience is compulsory and can be conducted in the following forms:
- (a) submission of a dissertation; or
 - (b) completion of a capstone experience course which comprises an additional elective course and the submission of a portfolio.

Title of the dissertation/portfolio shall be submitted for approval by January 15 of the final academic year in which the curriculum ends and the dissertation/portfolio shall be presented by July 31 of the same year. Candidates shall submit a statement that the dissertation/portfolio represents their own work undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

Assessment

MBS 9.

- (a) Grades shall be awarded in accordance with TPG 9(a) of the Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Curricula. Only passed courses will earn credits.
- (b) Where so prescribed in the syllabuses, coursework shall constitute part or whole of the assessment for one or more courses.
- (c) 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 assessment of one or more courses.
- (d) There shall be no appeal against the results of examinations and all other forms of assessment.

MBS 10. Candidates who have failed to satisfy the examiners on 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, but no later than the end of the following semester (not including the summer semester); or
- (c) for elective courses, to take another course in lieu and satisfy the assessment requirements.

MBS 11.

- (a) Subject to the provisions of Regulation MBS 8(a), candidates who have failed to present a satisfactory dissertation in the capstone experience may be permitted to submit a new or revised dissertation within a specified period.
- (b) Subject to the provisions of Regulation MBS 8(b), candidates who
 - (i) have failed in the elective course in the capstone experience should follow Regulation MBS 10 for procedures of re-examination and/or re-submission of coursework; and
 - (ii) have failed to present a satisfactory portfolio in the capstone experience may be permitted to submit a new or revised portfolio within a specified period.

Supplementary examination

MBS 12. 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.

Discontinuation of studies

MBS 13. Candidates who

- (a) are not permitted to present themselves for re-examination/re-submission in any written examination or coursework assessment in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners or to revise and re-present their dissertations or portfolios in the capstone experience; or
- (b) have failed to satisfy the examiners on second attempt in any coursework assessment or

- examination or in their dissertations or portfolios in the capstone experience; or
- (c) have failed more than two courses on the first attempt in an academic year; or
- (d) have exceeded the maximum period of registration as specified in MBS 6

may be required to discontinue their studies under the provisions of General Regulation G 12.

Assessment results

MBS 14. On successful completion of the curriculum, candidates who have shown exceptional merit 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 curriculum 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. CURRICULUM DURATION

The curriculum shall normally extend over one academic year of full-time study or two academic years of part-time study.

3. CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

All courses are offered on credit basis. Candidates must complete nine courses by selecting two compulsory foundation courses, six elective courses, and one course for capstone experience. Candidates have to complete a total of 63 credits for graduation.

1. Foundation Courses (9 credits each)

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

2. Elective Courses (6 or 12 credits each)

2.1 Canonical Languages and Literature

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, Doctrines and Art

- BSTC6032. History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey
- BSTC6044. History of Chinese Buddhism
- BSTC6013. Buddhism in Tibetan contexts: history and doctrines
- BSTC6039. Abhidharma doctrines and controversies
- BSTC6012. Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines
- BSTC6066. Doctrines of the early Indian Yogācāra
- BSTC6070. Research methodology in Buddhist Studies
- BSTC6075. The Pali commentarial literature
- BSTC6076. The Buddha-concept and Bodhisatta Ideal in Theravada Buddhism
- BSTC6080. Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road
- BSTC6083. The concept of emptiness and Prajñāpāramitā literature
- BSTC7002. Tantric meditation traditions in Tibet: a survey of Vajrayāna texts and practices
- BSTC7003. Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture

2.3 Interdisciplinary Studies

- BSTC6058. Buddhism and contemporary society
- BSTC6006. Counselling and pastoral practice
- BSTC6011. Buddhist mediation
- BSTC6034. Mindfulness, stress reduction and well-being
- BSTC6055. Buddhist psychology I
- BSTC7004. Buddhist psychology II

2.4 Other Courses

- 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)

3. Capstone Experience (9 credits each)

- BSTC8999. Capstone Experience: Dissertation
- BSTC8002. Capstone Experience: Tantric meditation traditions in Tibet: a survey of Vajrayāna texts and practices
- BSTC8003. Capstone Experience: Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture
- BSTC8004. Capstone Experience: Buddhist psychology II
- BSTC8006. Capstone Experience: Counselling and pastoral practice
- BSTC8011. Capstone Experience: Buddhist mediation
- BSTC8012. Capstone Experience: Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines
- BSTC8013. Capstone Experience: Buddhism in Tibetan contexts: history and doctrines
- BSTC8024. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (1)
- BSTC8030. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (2)
- BSTC8031. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (3)
- BSTC8032. Capstone Experience: History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey
- BSTC8034. Capstone Experience: Mindfulness, stress reduction and well-being
- BSTC8039. Capstone Experience: Abhidharma doctrines and controversies
- BSTC8044. Capstone Experience: History of Chinese Buddhism
- BSTC8052. Capstone Experience: Study of important Buddhist meditation texts
- BSTC8055. Capstone Experience: Buddhist psychology I
- BSTC8056. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (4)
- BSTC8057. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (5)

- BSTC8058. Capstone Experience: Buddhism and contemporary society
 BSTC8066. Capstone Experience: Doctrines of the early Indian Yogācāra
 BSTC8070. Capstone Experience: Research methodology in Buddhist Studies
 BSTC8075. Capstone Experience: The Pali commentarial literature
 BSTC8076. Capstone Experience: The Buddha-concept and Bodhisatta Ideal in Theravada Buddhism
 BSTC8080. Capstone Experience: Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road
 BSTC8083. Capstone Experience: The concept of emptiness and Prajñāpāramitā literature

This is a whole-year course which is equivalent to two single-semester courses with a total of 12 credits.

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

4. SYLLABUSES

A. Foundation Courses

BSTC6079. Early Buddhism: a doctrinal exposition (9 credits)

This course will be mainly based on the early Buddhist discourses (Pāli 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; Nibbāna 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.

Assessment: 60% coursework and 40% examination

BSTC6002. Mahayana Buddhism (9 credits)

This course aims to provide an introduction to Mahayana Buddhism. 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 practices of Mahayana Buddhism in India. These include the arising of Mahayana Buddhism, Bodhisattva ideal, Trikaya: the three bodies of the Buddha, Pureland Buddhism, and the philosophical systematizations of the Madhymaka and Yogacara schools.

Assessment: 80% coursework and 20% examination

B. Elective Courses

BSTC6006. Counselling and pastoral practice (6 credits)

This course aims at providing students with basic knowledge and understanding of the application of Buddhist theory and practices to counselling, in particular in a health care setting, and personal transformation in the provision of chaplaincy services. With the Four Noble Truths as the groundwork for Buddhist counselling, the course also covers practices of mindfulness and contemplation; basic skills in communication; issues on death and dying; and insights into caring for the dying and their carers. The course comprises lectures, discussions, role-plays and Buddhist practices. In order to acquire an experiential as well as intellectual understanding of the subject, students are expected to participate in class exercises as well as contemplation practices at home.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6011. Buddhist mediation (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6012. Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6013. Buddhism in Tibetan contexts: history and doctrines (6 credits)

In this course we will explore some of the main historical, doctrinal and sociological developments of Buddhism in Tibetan contexts. Lectures will cover the following topics: the historical agents and events leading to the transmission of Buddhism to Tibet; the formation and teachings of various Buddhist schools including their doctrinal differences and manifold socio-political spheres of influence; Tibetan sacred art and symbolism; tantric techniques, mysticism and religious experience.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6020. Basic Pali (12 credits)

Pāli is the language of Theravāda Buddhism commonly practiced in South and Southeast Asia. This Theravāda school of Buddhism is the only Buddhist school that has preserved a complete canon since the 3rd century B.C.E. This course is meant for those students who have no prior knowledge of the language and who wish to become familiar with Pāli expressions and idioms, and with the basic requirements to understand Pāli Buddhist texts. The main focus of the course is to introduce basic grammar together with exercises, including phonetics, parts of speech, nouns of different gender and their declension, verbs and their conjugations, participles and their functions, syntax and classification of sentences. At the end of the course the students are expected to be able to read simple Pāli sentences and understand their religious and philosophical significance in context.

Assessment: 40% coursework and 60% examination

BSTC6024. Special topics in Buddhist studies (1) (6 credits)

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

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6030. Special topics in Buddhist studies (2) (6 credits)

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

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6031. Special topics in Buddhist studies (3) (6 credits)

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

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6032. History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6034. Mindfulness, stress reduction and well-being (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6039. Abhidharma doctrines and controversies (6 credits)

The period of the Abhidharma represents the historical stage when Buddhist “philosophy” so-called truly began. A foundational knowledge of the Abhidharma doctrines will enable the students to acquire an integrated perspective of the Buddhist development as a whole: On the one hand, equipped with this knowledge which serves as a commentarial guide, they will be in a better position to comprehend the Buddhist tradition’s conceptions of the *sūtra* teachings in the preceding stage. On the other hand, they will be able to meaningfully relate the subsequent Mahāyāna development to the Abhidharma development, thereby gaining a deeper insight of the teachings of the former.

This course has as its scope the Abhidharma development in the northern tradition. It focuses primarily on the doctrines of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas and the Dārṣāntika-Sautrāntikas. While detailing the Abhidharma controversies, the relevant doctrines of the Mahāsāṃghikas and Vātsīputrīya-Sāṃmitīyas, etc., will also be discussed. 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, such as the tri-temporal existence of all dharma-s (*sarvāstivāda*), simultaneous causality, the ontological status of the cittaviprayukta-saṃskāra-s, the avijñapti and the unconditioned dharma-s, etc. The discussion on these controversies will mainly be based on the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, supplemented with commentarial material from the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*, the **Nyāyanūsārā* of Saṃghabhadra, the *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣā-prabhāvṛtti*, and the *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośa-vyākhyā* of Yaśomitra. By studying these controversies, the students will gain a deeper insight into the doctrinal and spiritual concerns of the ancient masters in this period, and how these concerns fervently stimulated progressive articulation and development of Buddhist thoughts.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6042. Advanced Tibetan (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 25% coursework and 75% examination

BSTC6044. History of Chinese Buddhism (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6045. Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Elementary) (12 credits)

The design of this course is guided by 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 interest 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 course proceeds, the student is being gradually and systematically introduced to both Buddhist textual material on the one hand, and elementary grammar on the other.

For pedagogical reason, all vocabularies, examples and passages for the exercises in each lesson (except, understandably, the first one or two) are selected from the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, particularly the *Aṣṭasāharikā*, to ensure linguistic and contextual homogeneity as much as possible. The selection is made 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). Occasionally, however, the need arises to select a few sentences from other Buddhist sources (such as the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*). Hybrid Sanskrit passages will be excluded.

As the student learns and attempts the graded passages, all the grammars involved will be analyzed and doctrines explained to him in a gradual build-up manner. In each exercise, one section also consists of passages from the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*, selected to match the student's level of grammatical comprehension reached in the particular lesson. This is to take advantage 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 can be an advantage if the student already has some familiarity with elementary Sanskrit grammar. However, neither familiarity with Buddhist scriptures and Classical Chinese nor knowledge of Sanskrit is an absolute prerequisite of this course.

Assessment: 50% coursework and 50% examination

BSTC6052. Study of important Buddhist meditation texts (6 credits)

Meditation is an integral part of the study and practice of Buddhism. This course will read and study important Buddhist texts related to the practice of meditation from various traditions. Passages will be selected from texts such as: the *Satipatthana Sutta*, *Visuddhimagga*, *Sandhinirmochana Sutra* (Sutra of the Explanation of the Profound Secrets, 解深密經), *The Treatise on the Two Entrances and Four Practices* 《菩提達磨略辨大乘入道四行》, *The Three Statements that Strike the Essential Points* by *Garab Dorje*. Students will also be introduced to the actual practice of meditation.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6055. Buddhist psychology I (6 credits)

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).

Assessment: 40% coursework and 60% examination

BSTC6056. Special topics in Buddhist studies (4) (6 credits)

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

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6057. Special topics in Buddhist studies (5) (6 credits)

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

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6058. Buddhism and contemporary society (6 credits)

This course examines various contemporary social issues from the Buddhist perspectives. It starts with Buddhist attitudes towards society and social issues in order to dispel the misunderstanding that Buddhism has nothing to do with society but only an ascetic tradition for individual salvation. Then followed by discussions on special topics such as 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 original Buddhist texts and analyzed in the light of Buddhist thought and practice.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6059. Readings in Buddhist Sanskrit texts (Advanced) (12 credits)

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).

Assessment: 50% coursework and 50% examination

BSTC6066. Doctrines of the early Indian Yogācāra (6 credits)

This course introduces the students to the doctrinal development of Indian Yogācāra up to the period of Dharmapāla. The survey begins with a brief survey of the doctrinal contribution from the Sarvāstivādins in the milieu of the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā*, particularly the early *yogācāras*. It will then proceed to examine the doctrines in the Basic Section (本地分; **maulī bhūmiḥ*) of the *Yogācāra-bhūmi*, which on the whole constitutes the earliest stratum of the textual sources of the Yogācāra as a Mahayāna school. Particular emphases are laid here on its doctrines of the two intrinsic natures, *prajñaptivāda-svabhāva* and *nirabhilāpya-svabhāva*, and its epistemological doctrines — both representing a realistic standpoint characteristic of this Section. This will be followed by a study of the relatively more developed doctrines in the texts of the Maitreya-Asaṅga complex and of Vasubandhu, *et al.*, including: the system of eight consciousnesses (particularly the *ālaya-vijñāna* doctrine), the Threefold Intrinsic Nature, the Threefold Absence of Intrinsic Natures, *vijñaptimātratā* and *āśraya-parāvṛtti*. The course will end with a discussion on the developed doctrines in Xuanzang's **Vijñaptimātra-siddhi* (成唯識論).

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6070. Research methodology in Buddhist Studies (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6075. The Pali commentarial literature (6 credits)

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 *Sīhala-aṭṭhakathā*; the date of the composition of *Sīhala-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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6076. The Buddha-concept and Bodhisatta Ideal in Theravada Buddhism (6 credits)

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' (*aṭṭhārasa-abhabbatthāna*), and others.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6080. Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC6082. Studies in Pali Suttas (6 credits)

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 *Samyuttanikāya*, *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 *Samyuttanikāya*.

Assessment: 40% coursework and 60% examination

BSTC6083. The concept of emptiness and Prajñāpāramitā literature (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC7001. Readings in Buddhist Tibetan texts (Elementary) (12 credits)

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.

Assessment: 60% coursework and 40% examination

BSTC7002. Tantric meditation traditions in Tibet: a survey of Vajrayāna texts and practices (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC7003. Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture (6 credits)

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.

Assessment: 100% coursework

BSTC7004. Buddhist psychology II (6 credits)

This course investigates an important piece of work in the Mahayana Yogacara tradition-- “Cheng Wei Shi Lun/ 成唯識論”, so as to better understand and practice the Buddha’s teaching as elucidated in the suttas, and taught in Buddhist Psychology I (BSTC-6055). This work was chosen because knowledge integrated with practice- the definition of “Yogacara” itself, is also our approach in Buddhist Psychology. The book is a synopsis of Yogacara teachings in seventh century India, as encountered by the Chinese Tripitaka Master Xuan Zang in his epic journey to the West. We shall learn from this 7th century work the concept of “mind” in its widest and most comprehensive context: as biological, individual and cultural knowledge. We shall learn that psychological concepts such as consciousness and the subconscious, memory and plasticity, and nature and nurture had been postulated in ancient India over a millennium earlier than in the West. We shall see how these psychological concepts may provide the foundations for understanding Buddhist epistemology in particular its core concept of “emptiness”. But these concepts are not introduced to us as “given facts”, “discovered truths”, or “dictated by authority”. Concepts are established and debated upon according to accepted Buddhist thinking and teaching. Evidence is cited, alternative view-points are debated, and hypotheses eliminated in a systematic and vigorous way. Most importantly we shall learn to see Buddhist psychology as a body of acts leading to the Buddhist goal, and not just as an “academic study” in the conventional sense. A reader who had gone through the book cannot help being amazed how the book can achieve all these without violating the Buddha’s teaching, and in addition can serve as a source of inspiration, or even a wake-up call for modern students of psychology. Because of its systematic and comprehensive approach, the book is also a useful tool for integrating various Buddhist schools and terminologies, in particular Chinese Buddhist terms. Although a previous English translation exists- a monumental and excellent piece of work by the Hong Kong University scholar Wei Tat, an alternative translation from a psychological perspective is provided by the lecturer so as to integrate Yogacara thinking with Buddhist psychology, as taught in Buddhist Psychology I.

Prerequisite: BSTC6055

Assessment: 50% coursework and 50% examination

C. Capstone Experience

BSTC8999. Capstone Experience: Dissertation (9 credits)

The purpose of the dissertation is to enable candidates to demonstrate the overall knowledge and skills they have learned from the curriculum through a guided independent research of a substantial piece of academic work. Candidates will be assessed on their capacity to define a topic for analysis and examination, to articulate a coherent scheme and logical arguments of the issues involved, to gather the necessary information, and to examine and present their ideas in a satisfactory way.

The dissertation shall be 10,000-15,000 words in length. The title of dissertation shall be submitted for approval by January 15 of the final academic year in which the curriculum 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 undertaken after registration as candidates for the degree.

Assessment: 100% coursework

- BSTC8002. Capstone Experience: Tantric meditation traditions in Tibet: a survey of Vajrayāna texts and practices (9 credits)**
- BSTC8003. Capstone Experience: Dunhuang Buddhist art and culture (9 credits)**
- BSTC8004. Capstone Experience: Buddhist psychology II (9 credits)**
- BSTC8006. Capstone Experience: Counselling and pastoral practice (9 credits)**
- BSTC8011. Capstone Experience: Buddhist mediation (9 credits)**
- BSTC8012. Capstone Experience: Japanese Buddhism: history and doctrines (9 credits)**
- BSTC8013. Capstone Experience: Buddhism in Tibetan contexts: history and doctrines (9 credits)**
- BSTC8024. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (1) (9 credits)**
- BSTC8030. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (2) (9 credits)**
- BSTC8031. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (3) (9 credits)**
- BSTC8032. Capstone Experience: History of Indian Buddhism: a general survey (9 credits)**
- BSTC8034. Capstone Experience: Mindfulness, stress reduction and well-being (9 credits)**
- BSTC8039. Capstone Experience: Abhidharma doctrines and controversies (9 credits)**
- BSTC8044. Capstone Experience: History of Chinese Buddhism (9 credits)**
- BSTC8052. Capstone Experience: Study of important Buddhist meditation texts (9 credits)**
- BSTC8055. Capstone Experience: Buddhist psychology I (9 credits)**
- BSTC8056. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (4) (9 credits)**
- BSTC8057. Capstone Experience: Special topics in Buddhist studies (5) (9 credits)**
- BSTC8058. Capstone Experience: Buddhism and contemporary society (9 credits)**
- BSTC8066. Capstone Experience: Doctrines of the early Indian Yogācāra (9 credits)**
- BSTC8070. Capstone Experience: Research methodology in Buddhist Studies (9 credits)**
- BSTC8075. Capstone Experience: The Pali commentarial literature (9 credits)**
- BSTC8076. Capstone Experience: The Buddha-concept and Bodhisatta Ideal in Theravada Buddhism (9 credits)**
- BSTC8080. Capstone Experience: Chinese Buddhist art along the Silk Road (9 credits)**
- BSTC8083. Capstone Experience: The concept of emptiness and Prajñāpāramitā literature (9 credits)**

This course comprises an additional elective course and the submission of a portfolio. The purpose of this course is to enable candidates to demonstrate the overall knowledge and skills they have learned from the curriculum through the writing of a portfolio. Candidates must complete the elective course concerned (the one shown in the course title) and the related coursework/examination. Candidates will also need to submit a portfolio of 10,000–12,000 words.

This elective course should be treated as a major component in preparing the portfolio. The portfolio should be compiled by revising, integrating and consolidating three or four individual papers (of 2,500 to 3,000 words each) from a total of two to four different courses with a mission statement (of 1,000 words) explaining how these essays contributed to the candidates' understanding of a specific theme in the area of Buddhist Studies within the context of the curriculum. The title of the portfolio shall be submitted for approval by January 15 of the final academic year in which the curriculum ends and the portfolio shall be presented by July 31 of the same year. The elective course will contribute 6 credits while the portfolio will contribute 3 credits in the capstone experience.

Assessment of the portfolio: 100% coursework

Assessment of the elective course: 40-100% coursework and 0-60% examination