

Course Code

BUDS 5014

[Note: The content of this draft course outline may be adjusted prior to the spring 2024 term. In particular, if there is a large enrollment, units on reading scriptures may be cancelled, to allow more time for student book presentations.]

Course Title

Buddhist Studies in the West
佛教研究在西方

Classroom: ELB 202**Meeting Time:** Mondays, 7pm—9:30pm, Spring 2024 Term**Instructor:** Douglas M. Gildow**Course Description**

This course introduces foundational Buddhist teachings and provides an overview of Buddhist scriptures, a sampling of which will be read in class. The course also introduces students to academic monographs and academic book reviews, as a means of showing how research in Buddhist studies is conducted in the West.

Buddhist studies is a fundamentally multilingual academic field. Longstanding Buddhist scriptural traditions have existed in diverse languages across Asia for over two thousand years, and Buddhist concepts are notoriously difficult to translate. English has emerged as a key, common language for translating Buddhist writings and conducting scholarship on Buddhism.

This course is intended for students with a background in Buddhist studies who want to improve their abilities to read English-language scholarship and translations. The course is also intended for anyone, including those whose English is already strong, who wants an introduction to how Buddhism is studied in Western scholarship. In this course, students will practice reading about Buddhism in English, will learn about scholarly conventions for translating Buddhist terms, and will become proficient in pronouncing and composing Indic Buddhist technical terms in Romanized script.

Three interconnected sets of activities constitute the bulk of the course:

- (1) Reading an introductory textbook on Buddhism in English, with discussion of how primary sources and recent scholarship underlies the book, and with regular quizzes to check student comprehension.
- (2) Learning about book reviews of academic Buddhist studies books in English, including where to find them and how to analyze them. Students will then write a book review of an English-language academic book on Buddhism.
- (3) Examination of Buddhist scriptures in English translation, with discussion of the conventions and techniques employed in translation.

Course Syllabus

1. Course introduction: Overview of Buddhist languages and texts, and reference works for translating between languages

2. Basic Buddhism in English
3. Academic book reviews
4. Buddhist Scriptures, Early Buddhism
5. Buddhist Scriptures, Mahāyāna Buddhism
6. Review and conclusion

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Read Buddhist English-language scholarship and translations, with deeper understanding of the conventions and ambiguities in such writing;
2. Pronounce and produce (with the required diacritical marks) on computer the common Indic (mainly Pāli and Sanskrit) Buddhist terms necessary in modern scholarship; and
3. Find and evaluate English-language book reviews in Buddhist studies, and compose a book review in English.
4. Find translations of Buddhist scriptures into English, and evaluate them through informed use of the best current dictionaries and glossaries.

Assessment Scheme

1. Three quizzes: 20%
 2. Oral presentation: 20%
 3. Book review: 40%
 4. Active in-class participation: 20%
- More details regarding these means of assessment will be provided in class.

A Note on Language

The medium of instruction for this course will be English. All assignments will be in English, too. Mandarin Chinese will be used only if necessary, for example, when discussing translations from or into Chinese.

Office Hours

I am usually available to meet in my office on Fridays between 3pm and 5pm. But you need to make an appointment with me in advance. Some weeks I may be fully booked, and some weeks I might be away from my office at that time. Meetings immediately before class (or briefly after class) are also possible.

Weekly Schedule

CUL = Available online in the CUHK library website

Week 1 (Jan. 8): Course Introduction

No required readings

Recommended Reading/Review

- Gethin, Rupert. 1998. “The Buddha: The Story of the Awakened One.” *The Foundations of Buddhism*, chapter 1. CUL
- Harvey, Peter, 2013. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*.
- Sheng Yen (Ven.). 2007. *Orthodox Chinese Buddhism: A Contemporary Chan Master’s Answers to Common Questions*. [Trans., 正信的佛教]. Translated by Douglas M. Gildow and Otto Chang. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Week 2 (Jan. 15): Buddhist Scriptures and Schools

- Gethin, Rupert. 1998. “The Word of the Buddha.” *The Foundations of Buddhism*, chapter 2. CUL
- Nattier, Jan. 2008. *A Guide to the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Translations*, pp. 3-31 (Part I, Introduction).

Recommended Reading

- Bronkhorst, Johannes. 1993. “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.” In *Aspects of Buddhist Sanskrit. Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Language of Sanskrit Buddhist Texts*. Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies. (Samyag-vāk, Series, VI), pp. 396-423.

As we focus on the readings in Gethin’s textbook, we will also be examining Gethin’s endnotes, to examine the sources—both primary and secondary—which Gethin cites. This will be a key to understanding the broader world of Buddhist studies in the West. Some of these sources will be recommended as additional readings.

Week 3 (Jan. 22): Basic Buddhist Teachings

- Gethin, Rupert. 1998. “Four Truths.” *The Foundations of Buddhism*, chapter 3. CUL
- Book review packet (to be provided), selection.
- Strong, John S. 2015. *Buddhisms*, pp. 113-134 (chapter 4, “Some Permutations of the Middle Way”).

Recommended Reading

- Griffiths, Paul J. 1981. “Buddhist Hybrid English: Some Notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 4 (2): 17-32. CUL
- Schlieter, Jens. 2012. “Did the Buddha Emerge from a Brahmanic Environment?” In *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe: Encounters, Notions, and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Volkhard Krech and Marion Steinicke, 137-148. Leiden: Brill.

Week 4 (Jan. 29): Monks, Nuns, and Lay Followers

- Gethin, Rupert. 1998. "The Buddhist Community." *The Foundations of Buddhism*, chapter 4. CUL
- Clarke, Shayne Neil. 2014. *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms*, pp. 1-36 (chapter 1).
- Book review packet (to be provided), selection.
- Quiz #1

Recommended Reading

- Kuan, Tse-fu. 2015. "Tradition and Adaptation: Translating Indic Buddhist Texts into Modern Chinese." *Archiv Orientalni* 83, pp. 281-316.

Week 5 (Feb. 5): The Buddhist Cosmos

- Gethin, Rupert. 1998. "The Buddhist Cosmos." *The Foundations of Buddhism*, chapter 5. CUL
- Book review packet (to be provided), selection.

Recommended Reading

- Zhu, Qingshi. 2017. "Buddhist Chinese (Buddhist Hybrid Chinese)." In *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*.

Feb. 12, No class. Happy Chinese New Year!**Week 6 (Feb. 19): A Distinctive ("Central"?) Buddhist Teaching**

- Gethin, Rupert. 1998. "No Self." *The Foundations of Buddhism*, chapter 6. CUL
- Book review packet (to be provided), selection.
- Quiz #2

Recommended reading

- Yu, Ying-shih. 1987. "'O Soul, Come Back!' A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (2): 363-395.

This week we will also discuss which doctrines, if any, are most "central" (or: foundational, basic, unique, etc.) in Buddhism (and when, where, among whom, etc. they were central), and how the answers to such questions could be determined.

Week 7 (Feb. 26): Academic Book Reviews in English

- Possible workshop on reading and writing book reviews.

- Students will choose an English-language academic book to review for this course.
- Book review packet (to be provided), selection.
- Open time for student questions

Week 8 (March 4): Pāli Suttas

- Pāli suttas in English translation. File name: Four Pali Suttas.
- Optional student presentation

Week 9 (March 11): Mahāyāna Buddhist Scriptures, 1

- Selections of two sūtras in English translation, and comparison with Chinese versions (*Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* [TG]; *Lotus Sūtra*). File names: Grosnick 1995 (English and Chinese translations of the TG sūtra); Lotus Sūtra selection.
- Optional student presentation
- Quiz #3

Week 10 (March 18): TBD

- Content of this day's class is kept open, so we can adjust flexibly to conditions.
- Possibly student presentations, depending on class enrollment.
- Otherwise, additional reading such as chapter 7 in Gethin 1998, or sample book reviews.

Week 11 (March 25): Student Oral Presentations

- Ten minutes per student, on one or more chapters from your "book review" book.

April 1, No class. Happy Easter Monday!

Week 12 (April 8): Mahāyāna Buddhist Scriptures, 2, plus student oral presentations

- The *Diamond Sūtra* in English translation, with optional comparison with Chinese versions. File name: Diamond Sutra, English translation. If you want to read the most important Chinese translation of the *Diamond Sūtra*, too, it is T 235 (available on the CBETA or SAT websites).
- Student presentations, as needed to complete them by the end of term.

Week 13 (April 15): Conclusion and Student Oral Presentations

- Final course review and wrap-up.
- Ten minutes per student, on one or more chapters from your “book review” book.

April 22: Book review is due, uploaded to VeriGuide by 11:59pm.

Required Readings

Book Review Packet. To be provided.
 Gethin, Rupert. 1998. *The Foundations of Buddhism.* New York: Oxford University Press.
Translations, Buddhist Scriptures. To be provided.

Recommended Readings

Bronkhorst, Johannes. 1993. “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.” In *Aspects of Buddhist Sanskrit. Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Language of Sanskrit Buddhist Texts.* Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies. (Samyag-vāk, Series, VI), pp. 396-423.

Griffiths, Paul J. 1981. “Buddhist Hybrid English: Some Notes on Philology and Hermeneutics for Buddhologists.” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 4 (2): 17-32.

Harvey, Peter, 2013. *An Introduction to Buddhism Teachings, History and Practices.* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

Kuan Tse-fu. 2015. “Tradition and Adaptation: Translating Indic Buddhist Texts into Modern Chinese.” *Archiv Orientalni* 83, 281-316.

Lopez, Donald S. 2015. *The Norton Anthology of World Religions: Buddhism.* New York: Norton.

Mizuno, Kogen. 1982. *Buddhist Sutras: Origin, Development, Transmission.* Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Co.

Salomon, Richard. 2018. *The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra: An Introduction with Selected Translations.* Somerville: Wisdom Publications.

Sheng Yen (Ven.). 2007. *Orthodox Chinese Buddhism: A Contemporary Chan Master's Answers to Common Questions.* [Trans., 正信的佛教]. Translated by Douglas M. Gildow and Otto Chang. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books.

Strong, John. 2015. *Buddhisms: An Introduction.* London: Oneworld Publications.

Yü, Chün-fang. 2020. *Chinese Buddhism: A Thematic History.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Zhu, Qingshi. 2017. “Buddhist Chinese (Buddhist Hybrid Chinese).” In *Encyclopedia of Chinese Language and Linguistics*, edited by R. P. E. Sybesma, Wolfgang Behr, Yueguo Gu, Zev J. Handel, Cheng-Teh James Huang and James Myers, 1:318-330. Leiden: Brill.

Grade Descriptor

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others,

resulting in overall substantial performance.

- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:	Professor
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Teaching Venue:	ELB 202

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

Feedback for Evaluation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ End-of-term university course evaluation will be conducted in class. ♦ Students' comments and feedback on the course through e-mails or personal meeting with the instructor are always welcomed.
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