

## REL5118 Studies on Chinese Buddhism

### 1. Course Code

RELS5118
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### 2-3. Course Title (both English and Chinese)

Studies on Chinese Buddhism
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中國佛教研究
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### 4. Course Description (both English and Chinese)

This course examines the theory and practice of Buddhism in the historical context of Chinese culture, focusing on the practice and influence of Buddhism in the contemporary world. We will read some of the great classics of Chinese Buddhism, supplemented by secondary studies, and then explore its pervasive influence in areas related to Chinese notions of the afterlife, philosophy, literature, as well as topics relevant to contemporary contexts, such as understanding feminism from a Buddhist perspective and humanistic Buddhism. The course is divided into three interrelated units. The first unit examines how central ideas of Buddhism (karma, afterlife, non-self, sympathetic resonance, and Buddha nature) have influenced the Chinese way of understanding the self and the world. The second unit focuses on the practice side of Buddhism, examining how the ideal of the bodhisattva has transformed and shaped the very identity and way of living for Buddhists in Chinese culture and the basic form of practice in Chinese Buddhist history. This unit is intentionally designed to transcend the sectarian framework and seek common ground for all branches of Buddhism. The third unit responds to the most recent issues in the Buddhist world, namely how Buddhism helps us understand the idea of gender, and how Buddhism is being modernized under the influence of reformist leaders such as Taixu and Yinshun. Students are encouraged to maintain a balance between the study of primary sources and secondary scholarship.

The course is intended for incoming graduate students specializing in Chinese Buddhism, as well as graduate students with a background in Buddhism, Chinese literature, East Asian history or art history, who may not have a background in Chinese Buddhism *per se*. This course is most suitable for students who want to quickly grasp the essentials in Chinese Buddhist history and thinking, and who wish to improve their ability to read classic Chinese, and also the ability to read secondary scholarship in English. The course is also intended for anyone, including those who already have a good command of English, who would like 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.

This course will be integrated with the English Language Teaching Unit's (ELTU) English Across the Curriculum (EAC) program, which will assist students with their English language learning needs.

本課程在中國文化的歷史背景下考察佛教的理論和實踐，重點關注佛教在當代世界的實踐和影響。我們將閱讀中國佛教的一些經典作品，輔以二手研究，然後探索它在與中國來世觀念、哲學、文學以及與當代語境相關的話題，如從佛教角度理解女權主義和人文主義佛教等相關領域的普遍影響。本課程分為三個相互關聯的單元。第一單元考察佛教的核心思想(因果報應、來世、無我、感應、佛性)是如何影響中國人理解自我和世界的方式的。第二單元側重於佛教的實踐方面，考察菩薩理想如何改變和塑造了中國文化中佛教徒的身份，以及中國佛教歷史上的基本實踐形式。本單元旨在超越宗派框架，為佛教的所有分支尋求共同點。第三單元回應了佛教界最新的問題，即佛教如何幫助我們理解性別觀念，以及佛教在太虛和印順等改革派領袖的影

響下如何實現現代化。從授課方法上來說，本課程鼓勵學生在學習一手文獻和二手學術研究之間保持平衡。

本課程適用於中國佛教專業的研究生，以及具有佛教、中國文學、東亞歷史或藝術史背景的研究生。本課程需要學生具備閱讀中國古典佛教文本的能力。目的是希望促使他們能提昇閱讀英語佛學著作的能力，課程還能讓學生(包括已經具備閱讀英文文獻能力的學生)了解西方學者研究佛教的情況。在本課程中，學生將練習用英語閱讀有關佛學的知識，學習翻譯佛教術語的學術慣例，並精通以羅馬化字母發音和撰寫印度佛教技術術語。

本課程將與英語教學單元(ELTU)的跨課程英語(EAC)計劃結合，為學生的英語學習提供輔助。

## 5. Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:

- a) understand fundamental Buddhist teachings;
- b) read Buddhist studies written in English and become familiar with current English scholarship on Buddhism;
- c) read Buddhist primary sources in classic Chinese;
- d) understand and critically review the methodology, research questions, and interdisciplinary tendencies in Buddhist studies;
- e) learn how to conduct and present academic research using both primary and secondary sources.

## 6. Course Syllabus

### Week One: Introduction and Methodology

**In-class Reading:** *Liaofan sixun* 了凡四訓.

Recommended Reading: Gimello, Robert M. "Random Reflections on the 'Sinicization' of Chinese Buddhism." *Society for the Study of Chinese Religions* 5 (1978): 52–89.

### Unit One: Key Concepts

### Week Two: Karma and Rebirth 因果與輪迴

In-class Reading: Selections from *Mingbaoji* 冥報記, *Xuanyanji* 宣驗記, and *Youminglu* 幽冥錄

Recommended Reading: Gjertson, Donald E. *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi*. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. Berkeley: The Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1989.

### Week Three: Non-self 無我 and Non-duality 不二

In-class Reading: *Shen bumie lum* 神不滅論.

Recommended Reading: Park, Jungnok. *How Buddhism Acquired a Soul on the Way to China*. Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies Monographs. Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2012.

Dennett, Daniel C. "Where Am I?" in *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981). Originally published 1978.

**Week Four: Sympathetic Resonance 感應**

In-class Reading: Selections from *Xi guanshiyin jingyanji* 繫觀世音應驗記 and *Lūxiang gantong lu* 律相感應通錄

Recommended Reading: Sharf, Robert. “Chinese Buddhism and the Cosmology of Sympathetic Resonance” in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i, 2002, 77–136.

**Week Five: Buddha Nature 佛性**

In-class Reading: *The Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論, selection from *Baoxinglun* 寶性論

Recommended Reading: Buswell, Robert E. Jr. “Icchantika.” In Robert E. Buswell Jr., ed. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. New York: MacMillan Reference, 2004, 351.

Gregory, Peter N. *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity: An Annotated Translation of Tsung’mi’s Yüan jen lun with a Modern Commentary*. Kuroda Institute Classics in East Asian Buddhism. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995, 148–175.

**Unit Two: Practice**

**Week Six: Observing Precepts 持戒**

In-class Reading: Selections from *Canyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 and *Fanwangjing* 梵網經

Recommended Reading: Schopen, Gregory. 1984. “Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of ‘Sinicization’ Viewed from the Other Side.” *T’oung Pao* 70: 110–126.

**Week Seven: Bodhisattva Path 菩薩道**

In-class Reading: Selections from *The Lotus Sutra* 法華經.

Kubo, Tsugunari, and Akira Yuyama, trans. *The Lotus Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), Chapter 2 (23–46), Chapter 3 (47–78), and Chapter 11 (167–177).

Recommended Reading: Chün-fang Yü. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 293–354.

**Week Eight: Chan Buddhism 禪宗**

In-class Reading: *The Platform Sutra* 壇經

Yampolsky, Philip B. *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch: The Text of the Tun-huang Manuscript with Translation, Introduction, and Notes*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967, 125–143.

Recommended Reading: McRae, John R. “The Story of Early Ch’an.” In Kenneth Kraft, ed., *Zen: Tradition and Transition*. New York: Grove Press, 1988, 125–139.

Morinaga Sōkō. “My Struggle to Become a Zen Monk.” In Kenneth Kraft, ed., *Zen: Tradition and Transition*, New York: Grove Press, 1988, 13–29.

**Week Nine: *Nianfo* 念佛**

In-class Reading: *Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經

Recommended Reading: Charles Jones. Chapter 2, “What Is the Chinese Pure Land Tradition?” *Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: Understanding a Tradition of Practice*. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2019, 5–34.

Daniel Getz, “Shengchang’s Pure Conduct Society and the Chinese Pure Land Patriarchate.” In *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, edited by Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2003, 52–76.

**Unit Three: Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography**

**Week Ten: Journey to the West**

In-class Reading: Selections from *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記

Recommended Reading: selections from *Journey to the West* 西遊記

Kate Hartmann, *Making the Invisible Real: Practices of Seeing in Tibetan Pilgrimage*, Oxford University Press, 2025. Introduction.

**Week Eleven: Mt. Wutai as a Sacred Site**

In-class Reading: Selections from *Cantiantai wutai shanji* 參天台五臺山記

Recommended Reading: Kate Hartmann, *Making the Invisible Real: Practices of Seeing in Tibetan Pilgrimage*, Oxford University Press, 2025. Chapter 1 and 2.

**Unit Four: Text and Collective Memory**

**Week Twelve: Buddhist Catalogue and Buddhist Canon**

In-class Reading: Wilkinson, G. Taishō Canon: Devotion, Scholarship, and Nationalism in the Creation of the Modern Buddhist Canon in Japan. In Wu J. & Chia L. (Eds.), *Spreading Buddha's Word in East Asia: The Formation and Transformation of the Chinese Buddhist Canon*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016, 284-310.

Recommended Reading: 方廣錫, 《古籍數位化視野中的〈大正藏〉與佛典整理》, 《上海師範大學學報 (哲學社會科學版)》04 (2015): 17-25.

**Week Thirteen: Conclusion and class presentation**

**7. Course Components**

**Teaching Modes and Learning Activities**

## REL5118 Studies on Chinese Buddhism

On-site face-to-face	Percentage of time
<i>Lectures on-site face-to-face (hybrid no)</i>	100%
Guest speaker: TBD	Included in lecture time
<i>Last class presentation</i>	Include in lecture time
<b>Learning activities</b>	
<i>Lecture on-site face-to-face</i>	40%
<i>Assigned recommended reading</i>	60%
<b>Out-of-classroom</b>	
One Fieldtrip	Included in lecture time

### 8. Assessment Type, Percentage and Rubrics

Assessment Type	Rubrics	Percentage
In class discussion and attendance	Students are expected to finish reading assignment and be prepared to participate in class discussion	30%
Weekly Reading Report	The weekly reading report is due 11:59 pm before the class day. Students must submit at least 8 reports throughout the semester.	20%
In-Class Presentation	The in-class presentation will be given in the class, depending on the actual enrollment, student may present alone or in pair.	10%
Final Project	<p>The Final Paper should further develop an outline you propose in the middle of the class. It should have distinct sections to introduce the topic and develop the argument, a conclusion, and a bibliography that contains only sources cited in the paper. The Final Paper should be 20 to 25 pages in length, based on a minimum of 15 sources.</p> <p>While you are encouraged to discuss the paper topics with your classmates and share sources for the written assignment, the final work submitted for evaluation must be the result of your own research and writing. All the sources such as books, articles, websites, lectures, and communications with your peers and the instructor, must be cited following the standard citation practices of art history (ref: Chicago Manual Style). If you receive any help with your writing, you must also acknowledge this assistance. You will receive an instruction with detailed guidelines for completing the assignment.</p>	40%

9. Required and Recommended Readings

**Required Readings (in class order):**

*Liaofan sixun* 了凡四訓

*Mingbaoji* 冥報記

*Xuanyanji* 宣驗記

*Youminglu* 幽冥錄

*Shen bumie lun* 神不滅論

*Xi guanshiyin jingyanji* 繫觀世音應驗記

*Lūxiang gantong lu* 律相感通錄

*The Awakening of Faith* 大乘起信論

*Baoxinglun* 寶性論

*The Lotus Sutra* 法華經

*Canyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規

*Fanwangjing* 梵網經

*The Platform Sutra* 壇經

*Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經

*Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記

*Cantiantai wutai shanji* 參天台五臺山記

**Recommended Readings:**

Buswell, Robert E. Jr. "Ichchantika." In Robert E. Buswell Jr., ed. *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (New York: MacMillan Reference, 2004), 351.

Chu, William. 2006. "A Buddha-shaped Hole: Yinshun's (1906-2005) Critical Buddhology and the Theological Crisis in Modern Chinese Buddhism." PhD dissertation, UCLA, 2006.

Chün-fang Yü. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, 293–354.

Dennett, Daniel C. "Where Am I?" In *Brainstorms: Philosophical Essays on Mind and Psychology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981[1978].

Gimello, Robert M. "Random Reflections on the 'Sinicization' of Chinese Buddhism." *Society for the Study of Chinese Religions* 5 (1978): 52–89.

- Gjertson, Donald E. *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi*. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. Berkeley: The Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1989.
- Gregory, Peter N. 1995. *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity: An Annotated Translation of Tsung' mi's Yüan jen lun with a Modern Commentary*. Kuroda Institute Classics in East Asian Buddhism. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Hartmann, Kate. *Making the Invisible Real: Practices of Seeing in Tibetan Pilgrimage*, Oxford University Press, 2025.
- Jones, Charles. *Chinese Pure Land Buddhism: Understanding a Tradition of Practice*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019.
- McRae, John R. "The Story of Early Ch'an." In Kenneth Kraft, ed., *Zen: Tradition and Transition*. New York: Grove Press, 1988, 125–139.
- Morinaga Sōkō. "My Struggle to Become a Zen Monk." In Kenneth Kraft, ed., *Zen: Tradition and Transition*. New York: Grove Press, 1988, 13–29.
- Park, Jungnok. *How Buddhism Acquired a Soul on the Way to China*. Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies Monographs. Oakville, CT: Equinox, 2012.
- Schopen, Gregory. "Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of 'Sinicization' Viewed from the Other Side." *T'oung Pao* 70 (1984): 110–126.
- Sharf, Robert. "Chinese Buddhism and the Cosmology of Sympathetic Resonance" in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*. University of Hawai'i, 2002.

### Some Web Resources

Digital Dictionary of Buddhism

<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>

CBETA

<http://www.cbeta.org/>

SAT Taisho Database

<http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/index.html>

Thesaurus Literaturae Buddhicae

<https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php?page=library&bid=2>

Marcus Bingenheimer tools

<http://mbingenheimer.net/tools/indexTools.html>

Buddhist Authority Database

<http://authority.ddbc.edu.tw/>

Sutta Correspondence Project

<http://suttacentral.net/>

International Dunhuang Project

## REL5118 Studies on Chinese Buddhism

<http://idp.bl.uk/>

Chinese Buddhist Canonical Attributions database

<https://dazangthings.nz/cbc/>

### 10. Feedback for Evaluation

An end-of-term university course evaluation will be conducted online.

Student comments and feedback to the instructor are always welcomed, whether through emails or personal meetings.

### 11. Course Schedule

Class/ week	Date	Topic	Requirements
1/1	5 Jan	Introduction and Methodology 課程介紹	Recommended reading
2/2	12 Jan	Karma and Rebirth 因果與輪迴	Weekly Reading and Report
3/3	19 Jan	Non-self 無我 and Nonduality 不二	Weekly Reading and Report
4/4	26 Jan	Sympathetic Resonance 感應	Weekly Reading and Report
5/5	2 Feb	Buddha Nature 佛性	Weekly Reading and Report
6/6	9 Feb	Observing Precepts 持戒	Weekly Reading and Report
7/7	23 Feb	Bodhisattva Path 菩薩道	Weekly Reading and Report
8/8	2 Mar	Chan Buddhism 禪宗	Weekly Reading and Report
<b>Fieldtrip: Location TBD</b>			
9/9	9 Mar	<i>Nianfo</i> 念佛	Weekly Reading and Report
10/10	16 Mar	Journey to the West 西天取經	Weekly Reading and Report
11/11	23 Mar	Mt. Wutai as a Sacred Site 五臺山	Weekly Reading and Report
12/12	30 Mar	Buddhist Catalogue and Buddhist Canon 佛教目錄與藏經	Weekly Reading and Report
13/13	13 Apr	Conclusion and Class Presentation	In class presentation

### 12. Contact Details for Teacher

<b>Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:</b>	
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Name:	Xingyi Wang
Office Location:	KKB 312
Telephone:	
Email:	xingyiwang@cuhk.edu.hk
Teaching Venue:	ELB_302
Website:	
Other information:	

### 13. Details of Course Website

Course Website	
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### 14. 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.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- 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.
- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.
- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

**15. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

<b>Use of AI by default</b>	<p><b>All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks</b></p> <p><b>(Approach 1)</b></p> <p>For assignments and assessment tasks that count towards the final course grades, students are not allowed to submit work which is produced with the collaboration of or supported by the use of any generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT)*.</p> <p>Any breach of the regulations will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will be handled according to the University's <i>Procedures for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty</i>.</p> <p>In case of queries, students should seek advice from the course teacher.</p>
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**16. Guideline on sharing lecture recordings**

<b>Guideline on sharing lecture recordings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The copyright of any lecture recordings shared in the course, whether they are produced by teachers, students, or peer note-takers, belongs to the University.</li><li>• Students should not share these recordings with others without obtaining prior written consent from the teacher(s).</li></ul>
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