

Science, Buddhism, and Life (GE 1353)

Course Introduction

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Structure of this course

- GE Course in Area 3
- Interactive Lectures + In-class Discussions in Tutorial Sessions (10 weeks)
- Group Project (presentation in weeks 11 & 12)
- Attend a Buddhist seminar

Syllabus

Week	Topic	Lecturer
1	Historical Background related to Buddhism	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
2	The Life of the Buddha	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
3	Early Buddhist Teachings (I)	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
4	Early Buddhist Teachings (II)	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
5	Early Buddhist Teachings (III)	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
6	Theory of Scientific Method (I)	Dr. H. Hirao
7	Theory of Scientific Method (II)	Dr. H. Hirao
8	Theory of Scientific Method (III)	Dr. H. Hirao
9	Science and Buddhism (I)	Dr. Y. W. Lam
10	Science and Buddhism (II)	Dr. Y. W. Lam
11	Group Presentation (I)	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
12	Group Presentation (II)	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong
13	Revision	Dr. Alex C.-Y. Wong

Assessment Tasks / Activities

- Continuous Assessment: 70%
 - In-class Discussions: 20%
 - Group Critique Writing: 20%
 - Group Project: 20%
 - Buddhist seminar written report: 10%
- Examination (**1 hour**): 30%
 - **cheat sheet allowed**

In-class Discussions (20%)

- 3 hrs of interaction per week: 2-hr lecture + 1-hr tutorial
- At the beginning of each lecture, a topic and related keywords / guidelines / hints will be given to the whole class
- Students have to form groups of 3-5; they have to search related materials and organize them into a PowerPoint file in 1.5-2 hours
- After submitting the PowerPoint file, the lecturer will discuss the topic with the whole class

Example of In-class Discussion Topic

- Topic: Historical Background related to Buddhism

Period	Events
c. 7000 – 6000 B.C.E.	Early agriculture in Indus Valley area
c. 2300 – 2000 B.C.E.	Peak of Indus Valley civilization
c. 2000 – 1500 B.C.E.	Indo-European migrations to Europe, Iran and India
c. 1200 – 900 B.C.E.	Composition of the Rigveda (<i>R̥gveda</i> , 梨俱吠陀), Yajurveda (<i>Yajurveda</i> , 夜柔吠陀), Samaveda (<i>Sāmaveda</i> , 娑摩吠陀), Atharvaveda (<i>Atharvaveda</i> , 阿闍婆吠陀)
c. 1000 – 800 B.C.E.	Composition of the Brahmanas (<i>Brāhmaṇa</i> , 梵書)
c. 900 – 600 B.C.E.	Composition of the Aranyakas (<i>Āraṇyakas</i> , 森林書)
c. 600 – 300 B.C.E.	Composition of the Upanishads (<i>Upaniṣad</i> , 奧義書)
c. 560 – 483 B.C.E.	Gautama Buddha

Example of In-class Discussion Topic

- Keywords / Guides / Hints:
 - Indus Valley civilization
 - Dravidian, Aryan
 - Varna
 - Vedas
 - Upanishads
 - Ashrama, Dvija
 - Brahman, Atman
 - Samsara, Karma, Dharma, Moksha, Yoga
 - Sramana

Group Critique Writing (20%)

- Students have to form groups of 3-5 and write a critique on a selected Buddhism scripture
- The critique should contain:
 - Summary and the major teaching of the scripture
 - Your interpretation
- Length of the critique: less than two A4 pages

Group Project (20%)

- Students form groups of 3-5 and prepare a 8-12 mins presentation in weeks 11 & 12
- A topic related to Science and/or Buddhism (you should obtain approval from the course leader on your topic before start doing anything)
- Order of presentation will be determined by random drawing in weeks 11 & 12

Attend a Buddhist Seminar (10%)

- Attend a Buddhist Seminar, or watch a Buddhist Seminar / Video on WWW
- No limitation on the language used in the seminar
- Submit a written report (less than two A4 pages) by week 12
- Discuss what you learnt from the seminar / video
- Language used in writing the report: English; in view of the inconsistent translation from Sanskrit or Pali to English, you are allowed to put down the keywords / important terms in your preferred language to supplement your answer

Examination (30%)

- 1-hr examination
- Several short questions
- You are allowed to bring one 'cheat sheet' (A4 size, double-side) into the examination room. There is no restriction on what you put down on this sheet, or how you prepare it
- Answer should be in English. However, in view of the inconsistent translation from Sanskrit or Pali to English, you are allowed to put down the keywords / important terms in your preferred language to supplement your answer