Course Description

This course takes a global and inclusive approach to survey the origin of Buddhism in India and its
globalisation as it subsequently flowed throughout South and Southeast Asia. Who were the movers
and shakers – the monks and nuns, cakravartins (kings), scholars and mahasiddhas – who charted
and shaped the course of this mighty river of ideas, doctrines, narratives, rituals and relics?
Through selected readings, both scriptural and academic, peppered with the examination of various
forms of Buddhist practice such as art, pilgrimage and devotional practices, this course will open up
windows into the way that different countries and cultures encountered and embraced Buddhism.
Beginning with the crucial question of self-location (what do I think Buddhism is? How did I come
to have those notions?), the course aims to impart the ability to critically evaluate emic ('insider')
and etic ('outsider') perspectives of the developments and transformations of Buddhist institutions,
doctrines and practices.

The second half of this course (BSTD 102, offered in Spring 2024) tracks the transmission of
Buddhism to East Asia, Nepal and Tibet, and will specially focus on the development of Himalayan
Buddhist traditions. Taken together, the two modules will impart a broad understanding of the
foundations of the various Buddhist traditions existing today as well as a sense of their vitality and
vibrancy.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will have acquired hands-on experience of the basic skills required of
a researcher in the field of Buddhist studies, namely

1) critical reading and evaluation of different kinds of textual and visual sources;
2) persuasive writing (constructing a bibliography and proper source citation, as well as
   composing an original academic essay)
3) discussing your views with your peers in a peer-review process (Learning Cell), and
4) working synergistically in a small diverse, cross-cultural team to research a given topic and share this with a larger peer group (Group Presentation).

### Course Requirements

**How do I succeed in the course?**

- The topics of this class allow for ample class discussion in which you learn to develop an evidence-based evaluation of academic and traditional sources.
- Firstly, be prepared to read a fair bit (about 50 pages a week) and annotate these as you read, as the material in the readings will be tested in the final exam.
- Lectures will supplement the class readings. You are responsible for keeping up with all the materials covered in the lectures and in the readings.
- Occasional quizzes and reflections will ensure that you grasp the key points of the material we cover. (Counted under Class Participation)
- Active class participation and supporting of your classmates in discussions and groupwork is also an essential component of learning in this class.

### Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Class Participation &amp; Groupwork</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bibliography</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Learning Cell 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Group Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Final Assessment:</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consisting of Learning Cell 2 and Exam</td>
<td>25% each</td>
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