

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Asian and International Studies  
with effect from Semester A 2017/18**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** Power and Culture in Buddhist Southeast Asia

**Course Code:** AIS5056

**Course Duration:** One semester

**Credit Units:** 3

**Level:** P5

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Medium of Assessment:** English

**Prerequisites:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* N/A

**Precursors:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* N/A

**Equivalent Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* N/A

**Exclusive Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* N/A

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

How do we understand culture and power in Buddhist Southeast Asian societies? What are the enduring arrangements of power and belief that distinguish these societies, and how have these arrangements been changed by processes of globalization, modernization and development? To help answer these questions, this course examines Buddhist Southeast Asia from the perspective of its peoples. We will discuss a range of themes, such as religion, the role of women, supernaturalism, politics, health, and violence. Moreover, we will read scholarship in history, religious studies, and anthropology in order to introduce students to debates on culture and power in Southeast Asia, particularly in the context of the study of religion, with the aim of inculcating comparative and critical reflections on cultural formations in the region.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Show an awareness of the history, and present day developments, of Southeast Asia, both at the level of the main actors and collectively as a sub-region.	20%	✓	✓	
2.	Critically analyse and interpret selected religious texts, beliefs, rituals, practices, and organizations using sociological theories, concepts, and methods to demonstrate knowledge of the intersections between religion and selected contemporary issues, including ethical, social, political, economic, and cultural issues.	20%	✓	✓	✓
3.	Develop an appreciation of culture and power as important categories of analysis in the humanities and social sciences, especially in the context of Southeast Asian Studies.	20%	✓	✓	
4	Gain a solid introduction to the interconnected histories of religious and political culture in mainland Southeast Asia, and to promote a critical understanding of their sophistication and complexity.	20%	✓	✓	✓
5	Demonstrate knowledge of the various ways that religious communities are organized, and be able to evaluate how organizational structures affect religious life.	20%	✓	✓	✓
		100%			

A1: *Attitude*

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

A2: *Ability*

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.*

A3: *Accomplishments*

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Reading assignments: The students will actively engage in the reading material.	√	√	√	√			
2	In-class discussions: Students engage in debates and explorations	√	√	√	√	√		

### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5			
Continuous Assessment: 100 %								
Active participation/discussion in class (ask questions, make comments, continue the discussion, etc.)	√	√	√	√	√		30%	
Attendance	√	√	√	√	√		20%	
Final Quiz	√	√	√	√	√		50%	
Examination: Nil % (duration: N/A, if applicable)								
							100%	

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. In-class/ out-class individual and group participation and in-class short presentation	(1) engagement in discussion and debate Sessions; (2) application of the learned theories or concepts to the history and anthropology of power and culture in Southeast Asia; (3) demonstration of good writing and oral presentational skills	Active engagement in in-class discussion, online discussion and debate session; Clear evidence of critical thinking and ability to apply cultural concepts and theories to explain the cultural phenomena; Excellent writing and oral presentation skills	Much effort putting in in-class discussion, online discussion and debate session; Some evidence of critical thinking and ability to apply cultural concepts and theories to explain the cultural phenomena; Good writing and oral presentation skills	Some effort putting in in-class discussion, online discussion and debate session; Adequate evidence of critical thinking and ability to apply cultural concepts and theories to explain the cultural phenomena; Fair writing and oral presentation skills	Passive engagement in in- class discussion, online discussion and debate session; Little evidence of critical thinking and ability to apply cultural concepts and theories to explain the cultural phenomena; Marginal writing and oral presentation skills	No effort putting in in-class discussion, online discussion and debate session; No evidence of critical thinking and ability to apply cultural concepts and theories to explain the cultural phenomena; Poor writing and oral presentation skills
2. Presentation and Quiz	(1) application of relevant examples and materials; (2) evidence of critical thinking and creativity; (3) persuasive presentation skills; (4) overall structure	Excellent knowledge of culture theories and key concepts on the history and anthropology of power and culture in Southeast Asian societies; Strong evidence of critical thinking and creativity; Excellent preparation and presentation skills; Excellent structure	Good knowledge of culture theories and key concepts on the history and anthropology of power and culture in Southeast Asian societies; Some evidence of critical thinking and creativity; preparation and presentation skills; Good structure	Adequate knowledge of culture theories and key concepts on the history and anthropology of power and culture in Southeast Asian societies; Adequate evidence of critical thinking and creativity; Adequate preparation and fair presentation skills; Fair structure	Limited knowledge of culture theories and key concepts on the history and anthropology of power and culture in Southeast Asian societies; Little evidence of critical thinking and creativity; Limited evidence of preparation and Marginal presentation skills; Poor structure	Inadequate knowledge of culture theories and key concepts on the history and anthropology of power and culture in Southeast Asian societies; No evidence of critical thinking and creativity; No evidence of preparation and poor presentation skills; Poor structure

**Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

**1. Keyword Syllabus**

*(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*

Asian Studies; Southeast Asian Studies; Religious Studies; History; Anthropology; Gender Studies; Buddhist Studies; Cultural Studies; Ritual Studies; Power Dynamics; Nationalism

**2. Reading List**

**2.1 Compulsory Readings**

*(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)*

1.	The story of Buddhism : a concise guide to its history and teachings /Donald S. Lopez, Jr. [San Francisco] : Harper SanFrancisco, c2001.
2.	Forest recollections : wandering monks in twentieth-century Thailand / Kamala Tiyavanich. Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press, c1997.
3.	The lovelorn ghost and the magical monk : practicing Buddhism in modern Thailand / Justin Thomas McDaniel. New York : Columbia University Press, 2014.
4.	The Buddhist world of Southeast Asia [electronic resource] / Donald K. Swearer. Albany : State University of New York Press, c2010.
5.	Saving Buddhism : the impermanence of religion in colonial Burma /Alicia Turner. Honolulu : University of Hawai'i Press, [2014]
6.	Tomoko Masuzawa, "Culture," in Critical Terms for Religious Studies, ed. Mark C. Taylor. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 70-93
7.	Craig J. Reynolds, "Power", in Critical Terms for Buddhist Studies, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, pp. 211-228
8.	Michael Jerryson, "Militarizing Buddhism: Violence in Southern Thailand," in Buddhist Warfare, edited by Michael K. Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 179-209.
9.	Kowanami, Hiroko. "Theravadin Religious Women" in The Life of Buddhism, 85-95
10.	Jordt, Ingrid. Mass Lay Meditation Movement: Buddhism and the Cultural Construction of Power, 2007
11.	Patton, Thomas, "The Wizard King's Granddaughters: Burmese Buddhist Female Mediums, Healers, and Dreamers." Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 83:3, 2015, pp.1-35.

**2.2 Additional Readings**

*(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)*

1.	Curators of the Buddha : the study of Buddhism under colonialism / edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Chicago, Ill. : University of Chicago Press, 1995.
2.	Buddhism and society : a great tradition and its Burmese vicissitudes / Melford E. Spiro. New York : Harper & Row, c1970.
3.	Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, The Ascendency of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast

	Asia. Chiang Mail: Silkworm Books, 2010.
4.	Nicholas Tarling, ed., <i>The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia, Vol. One, Parts 1 &amp; 2</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
5.	John Clifford Holt, <i>Spirits of the Place: Buddhism and Lao Religious Culture</i> . Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 15-75.
6.	Anne Hansen, <i>How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity in Colonial Cambodia, 1860-1930</i> . Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007.
7.	Rachelle M. Scott, <i>Nirvana for Sale: Buddhism, Wealth, and the Dhammakaya Temple in Contemporary Thailand</i> . Albany: SUNY Press, 2009.
8.	Blackburn, Anne M. 2010a. <i>Locations of Buddhism: colonialism and modernity in Sri Lanka</i> . Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
9.	Brac de la Perrière, Bénédicte. 2012. "Being a Spirit Medium in Contemporary Burma." In <i>Engaging the Spirit World in Modern Southeast Asia</i> , eds. Kirsten Endres and Andrea Lauser. New York: Berghahn Books.
10.	Collins, Steven. 1998. <i>Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities: Utopias of the Pali Imaginaire</i> . Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
11.	Hayashi, Yukio. 2003. <i>Practical Buddhism among the Thai-Lao: religion in the making of region</i> . Kyoto, Japan: Kyoto University Press.
12.	Ikeya, Chie. 2011. <i>Refiguring Women, Colonialism, and Modernity in Burma</i> . Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
13.	Pattana Kitiarsa. 2005. "Magic Monks and Spirit Mediums in the Politics of Thai Popular Religion." <i>Inter-Asia Cultural Studies</i> . 6, 2 (2005): 209-225.
14.	Pranke, Patrick. 2010 [2011]. "On Saints and Wizards — Ideals of Human Perfection and Power in Contemporary Burmese Buddhism." <i>Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies</i> 33 (1-2): 453-88.

Weekly Teaching Schedule (Topics):

Week 1: Introduction to the Course: "Power," "Culture," and "Religion"

Week 2: Foundations I: The Buddha and Mainland Southeast Asia

Week 3: Foundations II: The Buddha's teachings in Mainland Southeast Asian Contexts

Week 4: Foundations III: *Theravada* Buddhism in Mainland Southeast Asia

Week 5: Monastics and Laity I: The Power and Culture of Monkhood

Week 6: Monastics and Laity II: The Power and Culture of Meditation

Week 7: Magical Power in Buddhism I: Protection Practices

Week 8: Magical Power in Buddhism II: Spirit Mediums and Healing

Week 9: The Power (or lack thereof) of Women in Buddhism

Week 10: The Power of Buddhism in Social Engagement

Week 11: The Power of Buddhism in Politics

Week 12: Buddhist Violence in Southeast Asia

Week 13: Birth, Life, and Death