



NITARThA INSTITUTE COURSE CATALOG 2019

The primary goal of Nitartha Institute is to provide students with a systematic foundation in the central teachings of the Buddhist tradition. The Institute upholds the importance of non-sectarianism and appreciation of the many forms of Buddhism and thus students of any background are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The curriculum is devoted to the in-depth study of the Buddhist view and to the contemplative practices through which students can engage these teachings and apply them to their experience. The curriculum is delivered by the Academic Affairs unit of Nitartha Institute through its four academic departments, which are based on the five traditional sciences (*pañcavidyā*) taught at Nālandā University in India:

- Department of Buddhist Studies, which combines the Science of Valid Cognition and the Inner Science of Mind,
- Department of Creativity and the Arts,
- Department of Languages, and
- Department of Healing.

The Institute offers a month-long summer program, divided into two two-week sessions. Students may come to one or both of the two-week sessions (first-time students are strongly encouraged to come to Session 1 if only coming to one session). The Institute also offers a number of regional programs: 9-day intensive or semester long courses, equivalent to one of the sessions of the summer program. Most of the curriculum at Nitartha is delivered both residentially and online, including self-paced archived online courses.

The Buddhist path is traditionally described in terms of the three trainings: view, meditation, and conduct. All three elements mutually support each other, and all three are key elements of the path. The Institute's training focuses on the first two elements, view and practice, with the intent that these will subsequently strengthen right conduct.

More information about Nitartha Institute:

- info@nitarthainstitute.org
- nitarthainstitute.org
- courses.nitarthainstitute.org

I. Science of Valid Cognition and the Inner Science of Mind—the Department of Buddhist Studies

Of the five traditional sciences taught at Nālandā, the Department of Buddhist Studies (BUD) teaches the Inner Science of Mind (*adhyātma vidyā*) and the Science of Valid Cognition (*hetu vidyā*), as taught in the shedra or monastic university tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

Buddhist Studies Curriculum Outline

Buddhist studies curriculum at Nitartha Institute consists of foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Foundation curriculum presents the views of Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika philosophical systems of the foundational Buddhism. Intermediate curriculum trains in the Mahāyana philosophical systems of Cittamātra and Madhyamaka as well as the Tathāgatagarbha tradition and the exposition of the path to enlightenment. The advanced curriculum features the in-depth study of primary texts selected from the Eight Great Treatises of Sūtra and Tantra in the Kagyū school and the Thirteen Core Indian Buddhist Treaties in the Nyingma school. The advanced curriculum is classified according to the three turnings of the wheel of dharma. With presentation courses coupled with debate training, the entire scope of the sūtra-based Buddhist Studies at Nitartha Institute consists of the following curricular levels:

- Foundation Curriculum—Core,
- Foundation Curriculum—Debate,
- Intermediate Curriculum—Core,
- Intermediate Curriculum—Debate,
- Advanced Curriculum—First Turning,
- Advanced Curriculum—Second Turning, and
- Advanced Curriculum—Third Turning.

The comprehensive, graduated nature of the curriculum is combined with an experiential approach in both traditional and western styles of instruction that include analytical meditation, debate, discussion groups, and active interaction with the faculty and students. This type of engagement with the living lineage of scholarship makes Nitartha Institute unique among the institutions offering studies in Buddhist philosophy.

Presentations, Analytical Meditation and Debate

Nitartha Institute delivers its curriculum through methods unique to the tradition of shedra education: presentations, analytical meditation and debate.

Presentations—lecturing and discussion groups—are methods for cultivating wisdom arising from hearing, among the three *prajñās*. The students are trained in the art of listening, the ability to receive the lecture content from the instructor in its entirety, impartially, not tainted by bias and by judgmental mind. In this way the student allows for a new opening to emerge on their journey of learning, allows for an opportunity to genuinely learn something new. The function of discussion groups at Nitartha is to allow for formulating questions for further lecture clarification and comprehension on the level of the first *prajñā*.

Analytical meditation is a method for cultivating the second *prajñā*, the wisdom arising from contemplation. Once the teaching was received in presentation sessions, Nitartha students are trained to examine the validity of the aspects of the view in the lab of analytical meditation: exploring the assertions, gaining confidence in the view and making it part of one's own inner

being, one's own makeup, integrating it into life. The result of the training in analytical meditation is gaining firm, unshakable certainty in the view of definitive meaning, nitartha.

Debate is also a method for cultivating wisdom arising from contemplation. Nitartha debate is using a strict logical form practiced in the Buddhist universities of India and Tibet, translated into English and other Western languages. This form allows for cultivating clarity in debaters' expression, while utilizing a minimal number of words and thus limiting discursive speech. Once the students acquire intricacies of the debate form, they are amazed to possess a tool, which allows them to explore the diverse aspects of the Buddhist view with clarity and precision not experienced before.

Formats of Course Delivery

All foundation and intermediate courses are offered in each of the three semesters of the Nitartha Institute academic year—fall, spring and summer—in various modes of delivery, both inclass and online. Residential courses are offered either in a once-a-week semester format or a nine-day intensive format in spring and fall semesters. The summer term courses are conducted within a month-long summer intensive. Moreover, online classes can be taken in a self-paced manner at any time, from an archive in the Nitartha Online Campus. This varied, flexible approach to the course scheduling allows students to proceed through the foundation and intermediate levels at their own pace, either in residential or online format, in real time or self-paced manner.

Certificates of Completion

In order to complete a Nitartha Institute course, the student must officially register for the particular course, attend and actively participate in the lectures and class discussions, conduct all analytical meditations associated with the course, and submit final written exam or perform the final debate presentation. Once a certain sequence of courses is completed, Nitartha program students are awarded a certificate of completion. Nitartha Institute issues seven certificates of completion:

- Foundation Curriculum Certificate of Completion
- Foundation Debate Certificate of Completion
- Intermediate Curriculum Certificate of Completion
- Intermediate Debate Certificate of Completion
- Advanced Curriculum First Turning Certificate of Completion
- Advanced Curriculum Second Turning Certificate of Completion
- Advanced Curriculum Third Turning Certificate of Completion

The courses of the foundation, intermediate, and advanced curriculum are to be taken in sequence as detailed below. For the policy for accepting non-program students to foundation, intermediate and advanced curriculum courses, please contact the faculty member of a specific course.

Foundation Curriculum

The Foundation Curriculum serves as the entryway to the study of Buddhist philosophy. It consists of the core and debate curricula as well as training in analytical meditation.

Foundation Curriculum—Core

The core of the Foundation Curriculum consists of the series of the four Mind and Its World courses accompanied by the Clear Thinking course. Mind and Its World series—as the title evokes—is exploring the inquiring mind and its world and formulating a contemplative

worldview based on introspection. It is based on three introductory shedra textbooks: *Collected Topics*, *Classifications of Mind and the Gateway for Fresh Minds*, which, in due order, present phenomenology, epistemology and ontology of foundational Buddhism and serve as primers for the Buddhist philosophical training. *Clear Thinking* class teaches the fundamentals of debate. Upon completion of these five core foundation courses, the Nitartha Institute Foundation Curriculum Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 501 Mind and Its World I: Valid Cognition
- BUD 502 Clear Thinking
- BUD 510 Mind and Its World II: Modes of Engagement & Mental Events
- BUD 520 Mind and Its World III: Vaibhāsika Philosophical Tradition
- BUD 530 Mind and Its World IV: Sautrāntika Philosophical Tradition

Students should first take BUD 501 Mind and Its World I and BUD 502 Clear Thinking. These classes are always taught together as a pair during inclass programs, and it is recommended that online students take them concurrently as well, since the first course uses some of the methods of analysis and concepts used in the second course. After that, we recommend that students take the three remaining courses in sequential order, but they may take them in any order if that is better for their schedules, especially if they are mixing inclass and online courses.

Foundation Curriculum—Debate

Foundation Debate Curriculum offers a gradual training in all the skills needed for the performance of the art of formal debate. It consists of three foundational debate courses, which build on the elementary skills acquired in the *Clear Thinking* class. Upon completion of these four foundation debate courses, the Nitartha Institute Foundation Debate Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 502 Clear Thinking
- BUD 553 Debate I
- BUD 554 Debate II
- BUD 555 Debate III

Intermediate Curriculum

Nitartha Intermediate Curriculum continues to lay the ground for in-depth study of the great Indian treatises and their commentaries by the Kagyü and Nyingma masters. It consists of the core curriculum with four courses and the four intermediate debate courses.

Intermediate Curriculum—Core

The core of intermediate curriculum consists of four courses summarizing the ground, path and fruition of the Mahāyāna: *Chittamātra*, *Madhyamaka*, *Paths and Bhūmis*, and *Buddha Nature*. Upon completion of these four intermediate core courses, the Nitartha Institute Intermediate Curriculum Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 601 Chittamātra Philosophical Tradition: Appearances Are Mere Mind
- BUD 610 Madhyamaka Philosophical Tradition: Not Even a Middle
- BUD 620 Paths and Bhūmis: The Path to Enlightenment
- BUD 630 Buddha Nature: Luminous Heart of the Tathāgata

It is recommended that students take all four intermediate courses in the order listed above, though it is fine to take Buddha Nature before Paths and Bhūmis. Moreover, it is permissible to take the other courses out of order to meet individual scheduling needs.

Intermediate Curriculum—Debate

The four courses of intermediate debate consist of debating the views of the four Buddhist philosophical traditions: Vaibhāsika, Sautrāntika Cittamātra and Madhyamaka, within the boundaries of individual systems, as well as between them and will enact great debates the tradition has preserved. Upon completion of these four intermediate debate courses, the Nitartha Institute Intermediate Debate Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 653 Vaibhāsika Debate
- BUD 654 Sautrāntika Debate
- BUD 655 Cittamātra Debate
- BUD 656 Madhyamaka Debate

Advanced Curriculum

With a firm basis in the Buddhist philosophical views acquired in the foundation and intermediate levels, Nitartha Advanced Curriculum represents the actual study of the principal Indian śāstras with authoritative commentaries by leading Kagyü and Nyingma masters. It consists of the Core Advanced Curriculum and the Extended Advanced Curriculum.

The Core Advanced Curriculum is aligned with each of the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma and it is preferred to take the advanced courses in the sequence listed below. However, it is permissible to take them out of order.

Students who completed an advanced curriculum course as an audit student can upgrade their audit status to credit status if they (1) first complete the foundation and intermediate curricula, (2) then review the advanced course materials for the course and write or rewrite the final exam, and (3) pay the difference between the audit and the present credit course tuition. If they submitted the exam at the time of taking the course for audit, they should rewrite the exam in the light of their current level of understanding and integration of the course material.

Advanced Curriculum—First Turning

The four first-turning courses of the Nitartha Advanced Curriculum present an in-depth study of two treatises: Abhidharmakośa by Vasubandhu and Pramānavārttika by Dharmakīrti, which constitute the cornerstone of the shedra studies. Upon completion of these four courses, the Nitartha Institute Advanced Curriculum First Turning Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 681 Abhidharmakośa I: Treasury of Abhidharma
- BUD 682 Abhidharmakośa II: Treasury of Abhidharma
- BUD 690 Pramānavārttika I: Commentary on Valid Cognition
- BUD 691 Pramānavārttika II: Commentary on Valid Cognition

Advanced Curriculum—Second Turning

The eight second-turning courses of the Nitartha Advanced Curriculum present an in-depth study of two seminal Mahāyāna treatises of the shedra studies: Madhyamakāvatāra by Chandrakīrti and Abhisamayālamkāra by Maitreya. Upon completion of these eight courses, the Nitartha Institute Advanced Curriculum Second Turning Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 700 Madhyamakāvatāra I: Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 701 Madhyamakāvatāra II: Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 702 Madhyamakāvatāra III: Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 703 Madhyamakāvatāra IV: Entrance to the Middle Way
- BUD 710 Abhisamayālamkāra I: Ornament of Clear Realization
- BUD 711 Abhisamayālamkāra II: Ornament of Clear Realization
- BUD 712 Abhisamayālamkāra III: Ornament of Clear Realization
- BUD 713 Abhisamayālamkāra IV: Ornament of Clear Realization

Advanced Curriculum—Third Turning

The three third-turning courses of the Nitartha Advanced Curriculum consist of in-depth study of three treatises by Maitreya: Madhyāntavibhāga, Dharmadharmatāvibhāga and the Uttaratantra, as well as sūtras of the third turning. Upon completion of these three courses, the Nitartha Institute Advanced Curriculum Third Turning Certificate of Completion is awarded:

- BUD 760 Madhyāntavibhāga: Distinction between the Middle and Extremes
- BUD 770 Dharmadharmatāvibhāga: Distinction between Phenomena and the Nature of Phenomena
- BUD 780 Uttaratantra & Sūtras of the Third Turning: The Highest Continuum

Extended Advanced Curriculum

Nitartha Institute is committed to transmission of the entire breadth of Kagyü and Nyingma lineages of scholarship. The Institute will continually teach new advanced texts of the Indian tradition with their Tibetan commentaries related to all Three Turnings.

The Extended Advanced Curriculum courses are not required for earning any of the Advanced Curriculum Certificates of Completion, but are part of the training for students who aspire to be authorized as Nitartha Institute faculty.

The courses of the Extended Advanced Curriculum are offered either at the summer Institute, or in the fall/spring semester weekly format, or the 9-day intensive format. These courses are also offered from the archive as self-paced online courses.

Buddhist Studies Department Course Listing

Foundation Curriculum

BUD 500 Analytical Meditation

Foundation Curriculum—Core

BUD 501 Mind and Its World I: Valid Cognition

BUD 510 Mind and Its World II: Modes of Engagement & Mental Events

BUD 520 Mind and Its World III: Vaibhāṣika Philosophical Tradition

BUD 530 Mind and Its World IV: Sautrāntika Philosophical Tradition

BUD 540 Classifications of Reasons

Foundation Curriculum—Debate

BUD 502 Clear Thinking

BUD 553 Debate I

BUD 554 Debate II

BUD 555 Debate III

Intermediate Curriculum

BUD 600 Methods of Analytical Meditation

Intermediate Curriculum—Core

BUD 601 Cittamātra Philosophical Tradition: Appearances Are Mere Mind

BUD 610 Madhyamaka Philosophical Tradition: Not Even a Middle

BUD 620 Paths and Bhūmis: The Path to Enlightenment

BUD 630 Buddha Nature: Luminous Heart of the Tathāgata

Intermediate Curriculum—Debate

BUD 653 Vaibhāṣika Debate

BUD 654 Sautrāntika Debate

BUD 655 Cittamātra Debate

BUD 656 Madhyamaka Debate

Advanced Curriculum—First Turning

BUD 681 Abhidharmakośa I: Treasury of Abhidharma

BUD 682 Abhidharmakośa II: Treasury of Abhidharma

BUD 690 Pramānavārttika I: Commentary on Valid Cognition

BUD 691 Pramānavārttika II: Commentary on Valid Cognition

Advanced Curriculum—Second Turning

BUD 700 Madhyamakāvātāra I: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 701 Madhyamakāvātāra II: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 702 Madhyamakāvātāra III: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 703 Madhyamakāvātāra IV: Entrance to the Middle Way
BUD 710 Abhisamayālamkāra I: Ornament of Clear Realization
BUD 711 Abhisamayālamkāra II: Ornament of Clear Realization
BUD 712 Abhisamayālamkāra III: Ornament of Clear Realization
BUD 713 Abhisamayālamkāra IV: Ornament of Clear Realization

Advanced Curriculum—Third Turning

BUD 760 Madhyāntavibhāga: Distinction between the Middle and Extremes
BUD 770 Dharmadharmatāvibhāga: Distinction between Phenomena and the Nature of Phenomena
BUD 780 Uttaratantra & Sūtras of the Third Turning: The Highest Continuum

Extended Advanced Curriculum

BUD 704 Catuḥśataka: Four Hundred Verses
BUD 705 Madhyamakālamkāra: Ornament to the Middle Way
BUD 706 Bodhicāryāvātāra: Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life
BUD 707 Madhyamaka Śāstra: The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way
BUD 714 Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra: Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sutras
BUD 781 Dharmadhātustava: In Praise of Dharmadhātu
BUD 796 Beacon of Certainty
BUD 797 Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies: A Lamp of Essential Points

Buddhist Studies Department Course Descriptions

Foundation Curriculum

BUD 500 Analytical Meditation I

Course Description:

This course is a systematic training in the meditation of special insight in the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Having first established a ground of clam abiding, we will engage in analytical vipaśyanā or insight meditation into how our use of conceptuality contributes to the creation of karma and kleśa, and how to reverse that process by contemplating identitylessness, emptiness. No required texts

Foundation Curriculum—Core

BUD 501 Mind and Its World I: Valid Cognition – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course explores the criteria of a valid cognition and its various classifications, based on the teachings of the Pramāna tradition, or Buddhist epistemology. We will analyze our consciousness and determine to what degree it is in agreement with its observed object or not; when our mind is direct or not; what the difference is between non-mistaken, non-deceiving, conceptual and non-conceptual types of awareness.

Required texts:

- Root text: Classifications of Mind, (*Lorik*), by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Mind & Its World 1 Sourcebook, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 510 Mind and Its World II: Modes of Engagement & Mental Events – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course completes the Classification of Mind (*Lorik*) root text, from the tradition of Pramāna or Buddhist epistemology that students began in Mind and Its World I. This course has two main sections. The first provides the practitioner with the tools for delineating conceptual and non-conceptual types of mind in meditation. This teaching is codified as the modes of engagement of mind. The second section investigates mind in terms of the mental factors/events that describe specific functional aspects of mind, as well as determine its virtuous or afflicted states, in order to cultivate the former and relinquish the latter.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 502

Required texts:

- Root text: Classifications of Mind, (*Lorik*), by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Root text: Collected Topics (*Dūdra*), by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Mind & Its World 2 Sourcebook, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 520 Mind and Its World III: Vaibhāśika Philosophical Tradition – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an extensive exposition of the ground of Vaibhāśika philosophical tradition, based on the expanded version of The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds root text. This school is valued for their presentation of a contemplative world-view of radical impermanence, without needing to postulate either a personal identity or any principle of divine creation.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 502

Required texts:

- Root text: The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds (*Truptha*), by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Acharya Kelsang Wangdi, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Root text: Collected Topics (*Düdra*), by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Mind & Its World 3 Sourcebook, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 530 Mind and Its World IV: Sautrāntika Philosophical Tradition – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an extensive exposition of the Sautrāntika philosophical tradition, based on the expanded version of The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds root text. This school is renowned for classifying all knowable objects into specifically and generally characterized phenomena, based on our experience. The path and result presentation here is generally shared with the Vaibhāṣika tradition.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 502

Required texts:

- Root text: The Gateway that Reveals the Philosophical Traditions to Fresh Minds (*Truptha*), by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Acharya Kelsang Wangdi, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Mind & Its World 4 Sourcebook, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 540 Classifications of Reasons– 2 credits

Course Description:

This course presents an overview of the theory of Buddhist logic which underlines the practice of Buddhist debate. We will study definitions and various classifications of correct and seeming reasons and formulate example reasonings for each their types. The course concludes with the exposition of genuine reality that transcends negations and proofs.

Prerequisites: BUD 501, BUD 502

Required texts:

- Root Text: The Presentation of the Classifications of Reasons (Tarik), by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on The Presentation of the Classifications of Reasons, by Acharya Sherab Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

Foundation Curriculum—Debate

BUD 502 Clear Thinking – 1 credit

Course Description:

This course has two-fold purpose: It presents a detailed treatment of knowable objects in the form of definitions, examples, equivalents and classifications drawn from Collected Topics, the introductory textbook of Buddhist phenomenology or Abhidharma; secondly this material is used to teach methods for thinking clearly about the teachings using the debate typology of the four types of relationships there can be between any two phenomena. We will train in elementary debate skills in a relaxed environment, such as asking for definitions, equivalents and classifications.

Required texts:

- Root text: Collected Topics (*Düdra*), by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Clear Thinking Workbook, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 553 Debate I – 1 credit

Course Description:

This course offers a methodical training in elementary debate skills on the basis of the Clear Thinking class. We will formulate reasonings with correct and seeming reasons and utilize those in a debate by learning how to challenge the first mode of a reasoning. Regarding the content, we will debate classification of objects in terms of entity from Collected Topics that was taught in Clear Thinking course.

Prerequisites: BUD 502

No required texts

BUD 554 Debate II – 1 credit

Course Description:

This course continues a methodical training in elementary debate skills on the basis of Debate I. We will learn how to challenge the second mode of a reasoning, as well as the debate strategies of the challenger and the defender and how to bring a debate to completion. Thus we will cover all the basic skills needed for engaging in a formal debate. Regarding the content, we will continue debating the classification of objects in terms of entity and add classification of mind into primary minds and mental events.

Prerequisite: BUD 553

No required texts

BUD 555 Debate III – 1 credit

Course Description:

This course trains in enhancing debate skills on the basis of the skills acquired in Debate I and Debate II. This includes bringing absurd consequences as a technique into debate and mastering the shorter form of formulating reasoning and modes challenge. Regarding the content, we will continue debating classification of objects in terms of entity and will add the methods that lead to cognition of objects, classification of things in terms of function, as well as classification of objects the way they are taken as objects.

Prerequisite: BUD 554

No required texts

Intermediate Curriculum

BUD 600 Methods of Analytical Meditation – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course elucidates the theory and practice of analytical meditation, an approach to meditation where the view is determined through the analyses of the perceptual, conceptual and emotional minds. In our quest, we will rely on the approach of Ju Mipham Rinpoche (1846–1912) as well as on oral instructions from the practice lineages of Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Prerequisite: BUD 500

Required text:

- The Wheel of Analytical Meditation of Detailed Examination: The Complete Training in the Analysis of Mind by Ju Mipham Rinpoche, translated by Khenpo Gawang and Gerry Wiener
- Beacon of Certainty: Topic 3. Does meditation involve grasping at an object? and topic 4. Should we do analytical meditation or settling meditation? translated by Chris Stagg

Intermediate Curriculum—Core

BUD 601 Cittamātra Philosophical Tradition: Appearances Are Mere Mind – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a systematic presentation of Cittamātra, or Mind Only meditative view of Mahāyāna Buddhism. We will engage in the philosophical reformulation of experiences arising

from meditation practice—declaring reasonings establishing objects as not separate from mind, as well as the three natures theory and the eight-fold collection of consciousness.

Prerequisites: BUD 530

Required texts:

- Root text: *The Mind Only Tenet System (Semtsam)*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- *Mind Only Tenet System Sourcebook*, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

Recommended text:

- *Commentary on the Chittamatra Philosophical Tradition*, by Acharya Sherab Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 610 Madhyamaka Philosophical Tradition: Not Even a Middle – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an overview of the final view of the Buddhist philosophy—the Madhyamaka, or the Middle Way tradition of Mahāyāna, which propounds the view of *sūnyatā*, the emptiness of all phenomena, the transcendence of all views, freedom from elaborations. We will study the presentation of the two truths, their union, and the five great Madhyamaka reasonings.

Prerequisite: BUD 601

Required text:

- *The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyü Tradition*, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications

Recommended text:

- *Commentary on the Presentation of Madhyamaka in the Treasury of Knowledge* by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- *There is No Secret Ingredient: A Contemporary Introduction to Studying and Using Madhyamaka*, by Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 620 Paths and Bhūmis: The Path to Enlightenment – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a presentation of the five paths on the voyage to awakening, the ten bodhisattvas' bhūmis, or levels or realization, and the result: the enlightenment, buddha's kāyas and wisdoms as well as enlightened activity. We will study what is required to embark and progress on the path and what the goal of such spiritual journey is.

Prerequisite: BUD 610

Required texts:

- Root text: *The Presentation of Bhumis, Paths & Results in the Treasury of Knowledge (Salam)*, by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye, Nitartha Institute Publications
- *Commentary on The Presentation of Paths Bhumis, & Results in the Causal Vehicle of Characteristics from the Treasury of Knowledge* by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 630 Buddha Nature: Luminous Heart of the Tathāgata – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an overview of the Tathāgatagarbha, or Buddha Nature tradition, the view of the luminous essence of awakening, the heart of goodness shared by all beings. Our exploration will rely on the key section of Uttaratantra of Maitreya (ca. 4th century) which establishes Buddha nature through three reasonings, its ten facets, nine analogies and five reasons why it is necessary to teach it.

Prerequisite: BUD 620

Required texts:

- *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra with Commentary*, by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye, translated by Rosemarie Fuchs, 2000, Snow Lion Publications

- Commentary on the Fourth Vajra Point in the Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

Intermediate Curriculum—Debate

BUD 653 Vaibhāṣika Debate – 1 credit

Course Description:

This intermediate debate course trains in formally debating tenets of the Vaibhāṣika philosophical tradition. Debate topic of this class consists of the refutation of the creator god as well as refutation of personal identity using the seven-fold analysis of the chariot.

Prerequisite: BUD 555

No required texts

BUD 654 Sautrāntika Debate – 1 credit

Course Description:

This intermediate debate course trains in formally debating tenets of the Sautrāntika philosophical tradition. Debate topics of this class center around the proof of subtle impermanence - the reason of non-dependency that proves that entities do not rely on another cause for their momentary cessation other than their own dependently arisen appearance.

Prerequisite: BUD 555

No required texts

BUD 655 Cittamātra Debate – 1 credit

Course Description:

This intermediate debate course trains in formally debating the tenets of Cittamātra, the Mind Only Mahāyāna philosophical school. From the point of view of true aspectarians we will ascertain non-separation through the reason of definitive simultaneous observation, reason refuting arising of something similar, the reason of no connection and the reason refuting partless particle. From the point of view of the false aspectarians, we will formulate reasonings refuting existence of aspects.

Prerequisite: BUD 555

No required texts

BUD 656 Madhyamaka Debate – 1 credit

Course Description:

This intermediate course is the introduction to Madhyamaka debate. We will reinstate the historical debates of the Middle Way masters with other philosophical schools, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, using the five great reasonings that analyze the cause, the result, both cause and result, the essence, as well as the mere appearance. We will utilize different types of reasons of non-observation in debate and work with the four uncommon reasonings of the Madhyamikas as presented in the Treasury of Knowledge: inference within the common consensus of others, consequences that expose contradictions, analogous applicability of the opponent's reason and non-application of the means of proof due to its sameness with the probandum.

Prerequisite: BUD 655

No required texts

Advanced Curriculum

Advanced Curriculum—First Turning

BUD 681 Abhidharmakośa I: Treasury of Abhidharma – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of Abhidharmakośa by Vasubandhu (ca. 4th century) - the seminal work of Buddhist Abhidharma tradition—based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will explore the first four chapters, covering topics of phenomenology (skandhas, āyatanas, dhātus and faculties); the truth of suffering: the outer vessel (the world) and its inner content (sentient beings); and karma, from which the world and its beings arise.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required texts:

- Overview of the Abhidharmakosha, by Acharya Kelsang Wangdi, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Jewels from the Treasury: Vasubandhu's Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma and Its Commentary Youthful Play by the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, translated by David Karma Choephel, 2012, KTD Publications

BUD 682 Abhidharmakośa II: Treasury of Abhidharma – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Abhidharmakośa by Vasubandhu (ca. 4th century) - a seminal work of Buddhist Abhidharma tradition—based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will explore the last four chapters, covering topics of mental afflictions, the path of relinquishing afflictions, wisdoms gained on the path, and absorptions, from which the wisdoms arise.

Prerequisite: BUD 681

Required texts:

- Jewels from the Treasury: Vasubandhu's Verses on the Treasury of Abhidharma and Its Commentary Youthful Play by the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, translated by David Karma Choephel, 2012, KTD Publications

BUD 690 Pramānavārttika I: Commentary on Valid Cognition – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of Pramānavārttika by Dharmakīrti (ca. 7th century)—the influential work of Buddhist Pramāna tradition—based on commentaries by the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyamtso (1454–1506) and Sakya Pandita (1182–1251). We will explore the first two chapters: establishing the Buddha as a source of valid cognition, and exposition of direct perception.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required Texts:

- Essential Selections from The Ocean of Texts on Reasoning, by the Seventh Karmapa, Chodrak Gyamtso, translated by Tyler Dewar, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on The Ocean of Texts on Reasoning, Chapters One & Two, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Establishing Validity: The First Chapter of Karmapa Chodrak Gyatso's Ocean of Literature on Logic & the Corresponding Chapter from Dharmakirti's Commentary on Validity, by Dharmakirti and Seventh Karmapa Chodrak Gyatso, translated by David Karma Choephel, 2016, KTD Publications

BUD 691 Pramānavārttika II: Commentary on Valid Cognition – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Pramānavārttika by Dharmakīrti (ca. 7th century)—the influential work of Buddhist Pramāna tradition—based on commentaries by the Seventh Karmapa, Chödrak Gyamtso (1454–1506) and Sakya Pandita (1182–1251). We will continue the exploration of the second chapter on direct perception and conclude with chapters three and four which present inference for oneself and inference of others.

Prerequisite: BUD 690

Required Texts:

- Essential Selections from The Ocean of Texts on Reasoning, by the Seventh Karmapa, Chodrak Gyamtso, translated by Tyler Dewar, Nitartha Institute Publications

Advanced Curriculum—Second Turning

BUD 700 Madhyamakāvatāra I: Entrance to the Middle Way – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will begin with the presentation of the Madhyamaka of the model texts followed by a close examination of the first five Madhyamakāvatāra's chapters correlated with the first five bodhisattva bhūmis. Several difficult points will be covered such as the three reasons which prove that arhats realize selflessness of person.

Prerequisite: BUD 691

Required texts:

- The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham, translated by Padmakara Translation Committee, 2001, Shambhala Publications
- Commentary on Feast for the Fortunate, Grounds One-Five & Part I of Ground Six, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. Volume 1, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Advanced Madhyamaka I, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 701 Madhyamakāvatāra II: Entrance to the Middle Way – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will study the first part of the sixth chapter on the pāramitā of prajñā which primarily deals with the reasoning refuting arising from the four extremes. The difficult points covered include the prāsangika-svātantrika distinction as well as the presentation of the two truths.

Prerequisite: BUD 700

Required texts:

- The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham, translated by Padmakara Translation Committee, 2001, Shambhala Publications
- Commentary on Feast for the Fortunate, Ground Six, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche & Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Advanced Madhyamaka II & III The Sixth Chapter, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. Volume 2, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 702 Madhyamakāvatāra III: Entrance to the Middle Way – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will complete the bulk of the sixth chapter on the pāramitā of prajñā. The topics covered include a detailed refutation of the proponents of consciousness, and an extensive presentation of personal selflessness.

Prerequisite: BUD 701

Required texts:

- The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakirti's Madhyamakāvatāra by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakāvatāra with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham, translated by Padmakara Translation Committee, 2001, Shambhala Publications
- Commentary on Feast for the Fortunate, Ground Six, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche & Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Advanced Madhyamaka II & III The Sixth Chapter, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. Volume 3, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 703 Madhyamakāvatāra IV: Entrance to the Middle Way – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is the completion of the in-depth study of Chandrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will conclude the sixth chapter followed by the presentation of remaining bodhisattva grounds of realization and the resultant bhūmi of Buddhahood. The topics covered include sixteen emptinesses and the discussion about the nature of budhahood: Does the Buddha's wisdom exist and what do Buddhas see?

Prerequisite: BUD 702

Required texts:

- The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate, A Commentary on Chandrakirti's Madhyamakāvatāra by Wangchuk Dorje. Translated by Tyler Dewar, 2008 Snow Lion Publications
- Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakāvatāra with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham, translated by Padmakara Translation Committee, 2001, Shambhala Publications
- Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche. Volume 4, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 710 Abhisamayālamkāra I: Ornament of Clear Realization – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of Abhisamayālamkāra by Maitreya (ca. 4th century) - the decisive elucidation of the hidden meaning of prajñāpāramitā related to the path of the Mahāyāna - based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will study the first of the eight abhisamayas, or clear realizations: Chapter one - "The Knowledge of All Aspects," which is the direct realization that all aspects are primordial peace.

Prerequisite: BUD 691

Required texts:

- Gone Beyond, Volume One: The Prajnaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2011, Snow Lion Publications
- Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Introduction, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topic One, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 711 Abhisamayālamkāra II: Ornament of Clear Realization – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a continuation of the in-depth study of Abhisamayālamkāra by Maitreya (ca. 4th century), based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will study the second and the third abhisamaya: Chapter two - "The Knowledge of the Path," which is direct realizations that the three paths are primordial peace, and Chapter three - "The All-knowledge," the direct realization that all bases are primordial peace without abiding in existence or peace.

Prerequisite: BUD 710

Required texts:

- Gone Beyond, Volume One: The Prajnaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2011, Snow Lion Publications
- Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topics Two and Three, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 712 Abhisamayālamkāra III: Ornament of Clear Realization – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is the completion of the in-depth study of the Abhisamayālamkāra by Maitreya (ca. 4th century), based on the commentary by the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554). We will study remaining five abhisamayas: Chapter four through eight - "The Training in All Aspects," "The Culminating Training," "The Serial Training," "The Instantaneous Training," and "The Dharmakāya."

Prerequisite: BUD 711

Required texts:

- Gone Beyond, Volume Two: The Prajnaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Kagyü Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2012, Snow Lion Publications
- Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topic Four, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on the Ornament of Clear Realization, Topics Five-Eight by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 713 Abhisamayālamkāra IV: Ornament of Clear Realization – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is based on the Abhisamayālamkāra by Maitreya (ca. 4th century) and its commentaries in the Tibetan Nyingma Tradition. Primarily we will study the commentary by Dza Patrul Rinpoche (1808-1887), a prominent master of Rime, the 19th century non-sectarian movement in Tibet.

Prerequisite: BUD 712

Required texts:

- Groundless Paths: The Prajñaparamita Sutras, The Ornament of Clear Realization, and Its Commentaries in the Tibetan Nyingma Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2012, Snow Lion Publications

Advanced Curriculum—Third Turning

BUD 760 Madhyāntavibhāga: Distinction between the Middle and Extremes – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of Madhyāntavibhāga by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—a key work of Yogācāra Buddhist philosophy—based on the commentaries by Vasubandhu and Ju Mipham (1846–1912), which delineates the distinctions and relationship (vibhāga) between the middle view (madhya) and extremes (anta). We will systematically proceed through its five chapters: the Characteristics, the Obscurations, True Reality, the Path of Practice and the Unsurpassable Vehicle.

Prerequisite: BUD 713

Required text:

- Middle Beyond Extremes: Maitreya's Madhyantavibhaga with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2006, Snow Lion Publications

BUD 770 Dharmadharmatāvibhāga: Distinction between Phenomena and the Nature of Phenomena – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of the Dharmadharmatāvibhāga by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—a short Yogācāra work of the pith instructions class—based on commentaries by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339) and Ju Mipham (1846–1912). We will study the distinction and correlation (vibhāga) between phenomena (dharma) and the nature of phenomena (dharmatā) and discover the key instructions on how to proceed in accessing this nature.

Prerequisite: BUD 760

Required texts:

- Mining for Wisdom within Delusion: Maitreya's Distinction between Phenomena and the Nature of Phenomena and Its Indian and Tibetan Commentaries, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2013, Snow Lion Publications
- Unfolding the Light of Wisdom: A Commentary on the Verses of the Dharmadharmatāvibhāga, by Lama Mipham, translated by Karl Brunnhölzl and Jordan Leahy, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Commentary on The Distinction between Phenomena & the Nature of Phenomena, by Karl Brunnhölzl, Nitartha Institute Publications
- Distinguishing Phenomena from Their Intrinsic Nature: Maitreya's Dharmadharmatavibhanga with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2013, Snow Lion Publications
- Maitreya's Distinguishing Phenomena and Pure Being: Commentary by Mipham, translated by Jim Scott, 2004, Snow Lion Publications

BUD 780 Uttaratantra & Sūtras of the Third Turning: The Highest Continuum – 4 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of the Uttaratantra by Maitreya (ca. 4th century)—the influential work of the Tathāgatagarbha tradition—based on the commentary by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye (1813-1899) and Gö Lotsawa Shönnu Pal (1392–1481). We will first look at the selection of sūtras of the third turning, followed by the exposition of the Uttaratantra's seven vajra points: the three jewels, buddha nature, enlightenment, its qualities and enlightened activity.

Prerequisite: BUD 770

Required texts:

- When the Clouds Part: The Uttaratantra and Its Meditative Tradition as a Bridge between Sutra and Tantra, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2015, Snow Lion Publications
- Commentary on the Fourth Vajra Point in the Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen, Nitartha Institute Publications

- Commentary on Vajra Points One-Three & Five-Eight in the Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Nitartha Institute Publications

Recommended text:

- A Direct Path to the Buddha Within: Go Lotsawa's Mahamudra Interpretation of the Ratnagotravibhaga, by Klaus-Dieter Mathes, Wisdom Publications, 2008

Extended Advanced Curriculum

BUD 704 Catuhśataka: Four Hundred Verses – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a study of Catuhśataka by Āryadeva (ca. 2nd century)—a direct student of Nāgārjuna. This influential Madhyamaka treatise is renowned for balancing the presentation of the seeming and ultimate realities, emphasizing both the view and meditation. We will approach this treatise through the lenses of its Tibetan commentators.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required texts:

- Rendawa Shonnu Lodro's commentary on Aryadeva's "Four hundred verses", translated by Ven. Dr. Tashi Tsering and Mr. Jürgen Stöter Tillmann, 2004, Manjushri Press, Cambridge, MA
- Aryadeva's Four Hundred Stanzas on the Middle Way: With Commentary by Gyel-tsap, by Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam, 2008, Snow Lion Publications

BUD 705 Madhyamakālamkāra: Ornament to the Middle Way – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a study of the unique view of Indian master Śāntarakṣita (8th century) who harmonized the Madhyamaka view of Nāgārjuna with the Yogācāra and Pramāna traditions. The exposition of Madhyamakālamkāra will be based on an extensive commentary by Ju Mipham (1846–1912), frequently taught in Nyingma colleges.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required texts:

- Speech of Delight: Mipham's Commentary on Santarakṣita's Ornament of the Middle Way, by Ju Mipham, translated by Thomas Doctor, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- The Adornment of the Middle Way: Shantarakṣita's Madhyamakalankara with Commentary by Jamgön Mipham, translated by Padmakara Translation Group, 2005, Shambhala Publications
- Commentary on the Adornment of the Middle Way, by Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, 2009, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 706 Bodhicāryāvatāra: Entrance to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a study of the Madhyamaka view of Indian master Śāntideva (8th century) in the 9th chapter of his famous Bodhicāryāvatāra together with a commentary by Pawo Tsugla Trengwa (1504-1566), one of the two most important students of the Eight Karmapa, Mikyö Dorje. Pawo Rinpoche's presentation is an essential source for the Kagyü view of the Middle Way philosophical tradition.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required texts:

- The Center of the Sunlit Sky: Madhyamaka in the Kagyu Tradition, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2004, Snow Lion Publications
- The Wisdom Chapter: Jamgön Mipham's Commentary on the Ninth Chapter of The Way of the Bodhisattva, by Jamgon Mipham, translated by The Padmakara Translation Group, 2017, Shambhala Publications

- A Commentary on The Ninth Chapter of the Bodhicaryavatara on Supreme Knowledge, based on the commentary by Pawo Rinpoche Tsugla Trengwa, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, 2 volumes, 2000—2001, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 707 Madhyamaka Śāstra: The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth study of renowned Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, the root treatise of the Madhyamaka philosophical system, composed by Ārya Nāgārjuna in 2nd century, together with Ornament of Reason, a commentary by Machawa Jangchub Tsöndrū (died 1185), an early Tibetan commentator on Candrakīrti's view. Machawa's account of the Middle Way exercised lasting influence on the development of Madhyamaka philosophy in all four schools of Buddhism in Tibet. Ornament of Reason has been frequently taught in Nyingma colleges.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required text:

- Ornament Of Reason: The Great Commentary To Nagarjuna's Root Of The Middle Way, by Mabja Jangchub Tsondru, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, Snow Lion Publications, 2011

BUD 714 Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra: Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is an in-depth exploration of the Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra, the last of the five works of Maitreya to be taught at Nitartha Institute. The text presents materials on the view and path of Bodhisattvas from a yogacāra point of view. It thus gives a synopsis of all the mahāyāna sūtras that are not contained among the prajñāpāramitā sūtras or the sūtras on buddha nature.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required text:

- Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sutras: Maitreya's Mahayanasutralamkara with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee, 2014, Snow Lion Publications

BUD 781 Dharmadhātustava: In Praise of Dharmadhātu – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a study of Dharmadhātustava, attributed to Nāgārjuna, the early śāstra commenting on the tathāgatagarbha sūtras, as elucidated by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339) in his commentary.

Prerequisite: BUD 630

Required texts:

- In Praise of Dharmadhātu, by Karl Brunnhölzl, 2007, Snow Lion Publications
- Commentary on In Praise of Dharmadhātu, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, 2010, Nitartha Institute Publications

BUD 796 Beacon of Certainty - 2 credits

Course Description:

The Beacon of Certainty (Tib. *nges shes sgron me*) is a commentary composed by the great Nyingma master and scholar Lama Mipham (1846-1912). It is structured around seven questions which address the foundations of the Nyingma tradition, from Madhyamika philosophy to the view of Dzogchen. This key text is studied in virtually all Nyingma shedras. We will study its commentary by Khenpo Kunpal, (c.1872-1943) a close disciple of Lama Mipham.

Recommended Text:

- Mipham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, by John W. Pettit, 1999, Wisdom Publications

BUD 797 Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies: A Lamp of Essential Points- 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is a systematic overview of Mipham's teachings on the Middle Way by the influential scholar of the twentieth century Bötrül (1898-1959) of the Nyingma tradition. Bötrül's root text, *Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies*, and his auto-commentary, *Ornament of Mañjughoa's Viewpoint*, provide a meaning commentary on Mipham's *Beacon of Certainty*.

Required text:

- *Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies: Illuminating Emptiness in a Twentieth-Century Tibetan Buddhist Classic*, by Bötrül and Douglas Samuel Duckworth, SUNY Press, 2012

II. Department of Creativity and the Arts

Department of Creativity and the Arts (SoCA) at Nitartha Institute, one of the five traditional sciences (*śilpa-karma-sthāna vidyā*) taught at Nālandā University, is traditionally categorized by body, speech, and mind, or the Physical, Vocal, and Mental Arts. The Physical Arts includes what is more currently referred to as the Visual Arts. It also includes meditation and its attendant ritual arts.

1. Physical Arts

SoCA 500 Lūjong – non-credit

Course Description:

Lūjong, or body training, is a series of fifteen physical exercises developed by the Tibetan Buddhist meditation master Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche to help students enhance their health and synchronize their body and mind. They serve to increase energy and pliancy. The wakefulness developed by the exercises can bring a quality of meditation to ordinary activities throughout the day.

Visual Arts

The Visual Arts curriculum currently offers two tracks; one focuses on symbolism and iconography or the reading of thangka paintings, this track is called Buddhist Visual Literacy and includes three courses. The other track focuses on the Karma Gadri tradition of iconometrics (*thikse*) and the beauty of thangka drawing (*thikchö*), this track is called Drawing the Awakened Heart and includes two courses.

Buddhist Visual Literacy

SoCA 510 Symbolizing the Awakened Heart: Buddhist Visual Literacy – 1 credit

Course Description: In this course we will develop a basis for exploring and understanding Buddhist symbolism and iconography through the use of classic Buddhist teachings on seeming and ultimate realities, as well as understanding the roles of conception and perception. We will enhance our learning with experiential exercises and will explore how meaning is made and communicated when producing and viewing representations. Part of the course will involve researching Buddhist symbols, the basis of Buddhist iconography, and applying visual literacy skills when reading a Buddhist thangka.

Prerequisites: None

Required texts: Course pack of readings

SoCA 520 Lineage Essence and Expression: The Golden Rosary – 1 credit

Course Description: This course uses an ancient iconographic set of thangkas to explore Tibetan Buddhist art and history, and the role of lineage and transmission in the Karma Kagyü. It relies on an understanding of Buddhist Visual Literacy and puts it into use. Class topics include: History and styles of thangka painting with a focus on the Karma Gadri (Encampment) style, applying Buddhist visual literacy to reading a thangka painting, symbolism, iconography, lineage, transmission and specifically the Kagyü Lineage

Prerequisites: SoCA 510 preferred

Required texts: Course Sourcebook

SoCA 530 The Bodhisattva Ideal Throughout Asian Art – 1 credit

Course Description: An overview and exploration of Bodhisattva in terms of the meaning and ideal followed by the who and the what. Using the Eight Great Bodhisattvas and particularly the three main ones, we will explore their representations across different Asian cultures and periods tracking the characteristics that are iconographic and those that are non-iconographic.

Coursework includes slide presentations, lectures, discussion, and a final art project. This course relies on an understanding of Buddhist Visual Literacy and puts it into use. Class topics include: History of Bodhisattvas and their styles of representation in paintings and statues with a focus on Bodhisattvas throughout Asian culture, applying Buddhist visual literacy to reading their symbolism, iconography, and seeming iconography, and the Bodhisattva ideal.

Prerequisites: SoCA 510 preferred

Required texts: Course Sourcebook

Drawing The Awakened Heart

SoCA 540 Studio 1 – 1 credit

Course Description: Students learn the classic measurement system (*thikse*) of the Karma Gadri system and apply it to draw a Buddha head, a seated Buddha, and a Tara head. Materials will be provided in class. Students are also welcome to bring their own materials. A materials list will be provided to registrants. Class topics include: *thikse*, drawing materials, process of drawing male and female buddhas, development of good drawing skills.

Prerequisites: none

Required texts: none, in-class handouts

SoCA 550 Studio 2 – 1 credit

Course Description: Students focus on one particular Buddhist figure in an actual thangka composition, starting with the *thikse*, moving on to the drawing, and then the painting. It includes shading and coloring. Students form an apprentice type relationship with Karma Gadri Master R.D. Salga. Materials will be provided in class. Students are also welcome to bring their own materials. A materials list will be provided to registrants.

Prerequisites: SoCA 540 Beginning Drawing or the equivalent in experience

Required texts: none, in-class handouts

2. Vocal Arts

Nitartha Institute students also train in the art of singing *dohas*, or songs of realization of the accomplished masters of the practice lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Renowned for their poetic qualities and the ability to convey the pith instructions on view, meditation and conduct, singing *dohas* is regarded as an effective means for spiritual transformation.

III. Department of Languages

The Department of Languages (LAN) at Nitartha University is representing the Science of Language (*śabda vidyā*) among the five traditional sciences taught at Nālandā University.

LAN 500 Introduction to Tibetan – 2 credits

Course Description:

This course is oriented toward beginners who have little knowledge of Tibetan but would like to gain some familiarity with the language and how it is translated into English. We will cover the alphabet and pronunciation. We will then select a few of the songs of Milarepa, learn how to chant them, and at the same time investigate their meaning in both Tibetan and in English. By looking into the Tibetan behind the English, we expect to gain a richer understanding of the songs composed by one of Tibet's great masters.

No required Texts

LAN 510 Tibetan Reading Course – 2 credits

Course Description:

In this course we will read sections from various texts within the Nyingma tradition, such as Lama Mipham's *Lamp of Certainty* (*nges shes 'gron me*) and from the text/s used for Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche's main daily lectures to the Institute. Applicants should know the Tibetan alphabet, spelling rules and have a functional grasp of Tibetan grammar. The course will focus on acquiring and developing reading skills; interesting and important grammatical points will be explained in the context of specific passages. Students will be asked to translate a short passage from Tibetan to English to help the instructor determine their proficiency.

No required Texts

IV. Department of Healing

The Department of Healing (HEA) at Nitartha University is representing the Science of Healing (*cikitsā vidyā*) among the five traditional sciences taught at Nālandā University.

HEA 500 Science of Healing – 3 credits

Course Description:

This course is based on the ancient healing tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, a comprehensive cognitive training system stemming from a personal realization of the wisdom of intrinsic healthiness. We will study an overview of the basic science of healing as presented in the four Medical Tantras as well as complementary topics from the Nitartha Institute foundational curriculum such as valid and non-valid cognition and it relates to our health.

No required Texts

HEA 510 Mudra Space Awareness – 1 credit

Course description:

Mudra Space Awareness is a series of physical and vocal exercises derived from the Mahāmudrā and Dzogchen traditions of Tibetan Buddhism as presented in the West by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. They utilize the body as a means to clarify mental confusion and tame the mind so that the practitioner has access to a greater awareness of outer and inner space. The course is in a workshop format, students are offered experiential ground to investigate Buddhist approaches to concepts such as “space” or “ego” while discovering how they can correct physical and mental imbalances. Class exercises help students develop a sense of well-being and an appreciation of themselves and others in the context of alive, ever-changing space.

Required texts: none, in-class handouts.