# Scheme of work

Introduction

This scheme of work offers a route through the A-level Religious Studies, Buddhism (7062) specification.

It covers the specification in a logical order and suggests possible teaching and learning activities for each section of the specification.

The specification references are shown at the start of each section, whilst the learning outcomes indicate what most students should be able to achieve after the work is completed.

Timings have been suggested but are approximate. Teachers should select activities appropriate to their students and the curriculum time available.

The order is by no means prescriptive and there are many alternative ways in which the content could be organised.

The resources indicate those resources commonly available to schools, and other references that may be helpful. Resources are only given in brief and risk assessments should be carried out.

Assumed coverage

This scheme of work is based on 90 guided learning hours. (Based on 360 guided learning hours for the whole A-level course.)

It allows eight weeks for the Year 1 AS content and a further eight weeks for the Year 2 content, leaving approximately four weeks for Dialogues.

**Contents**

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Topic

Sources of wisdom and authority.

**Suggested timing**

Week 1-2.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Understand the significance of the Buddha’s life to Buddhism underpins most/all discussions on the relevance of the Buddha as a role model and his authority as ‘the enlightened one’ for Buddhists.
* Check prior learning: class activity designing a symmetrical Buddha image and labelling up the different parts of the image; this can function as an ice breaker.
* Split class into groups to do independent research on different parts of the Buddha’s life – Buddha’s birth stories, his early life, the four signs and his ascetic life, and the Buddha’s enlightenment. Feedback back to the whole class.
* Dialogues: Buddha’s enlightenment experience as an example of religious experience. How far can this be seen as a reliable source of ‘proof’?
* Divide a page into four, using headings such as ‘Disguised Dukkha’, ‘Obvious Dukkha worldwide’, ‘Human crimes’ and ‘Natural disasters’, and then fill in the quartered chart. Students could also include examples of when the Buddha encountered dukkha in his early life and after he left the palace, eg:
  + his encounter with Devadatta, his cousin and the swan
  + the ploughing match
  + the Four Sights
  + Kisa Gotami and the mustard seed story
  + meeting Angulimala.
* Students could also look at contrasting views of the differing beliefs about the Buddha’s teaching between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
* Paired or small group work considering the question about whether or not Buddhism is pessimistic in its outlook on life. Eg by discussing the seven well known states of dukkha as well as how dukkha links to the other two marks of existence, anatta and anicca.
* Explanation of ‘skilful means’ or ‘skill – in – means’ and its impact as a teaching for Mahayana Buddhists.
* Learn the parable of the Burning House and its meaning through discussion in class. They can then do a modern version of their own as a way of remembering the moral/meaning of the parable.
* Independent research:
  + Different Buddhist scriptures.
  + Oral tradition versus written tradition.
  + Consideration of whether an oral or written tradition is more authentic/reliable for Buddhist followers.
  + Research on how the Pali Canon is used in Buddhist worship and daily life (links to unit on Worship).
* **Differentiation and extension:** preparation of questions for a debate centred on whether or not it matters if scriptures were first transmitted orally or written down in terms of their authenticity.
* Dialogues: Do beliefs and teachings that come from scripture have authority? How does this relate to religious experience?

**Resources**

* Visit the website: [buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net/)
* Visit the website: [Guide to Buddhism A-Z.](http://www.buddhisma2z.com/)
* Read: [Age of the Sage – Parable of the burning house](http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/buddhism/parable_burning_house.html).
* Read: [The Pali Canon – The origin of Pali Canon](http://www.palicanon.org/).

Topic

Ultimate reality.

**Suggested timing**

Week 3-4.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Discuss contrasting thoughts about the Buddha between Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism:
  + Theravada sticks firmly to the notion of a historical Buddha that lived some 80 years and died and left the Dharma for his followers.
  + The Mahayana tradition in contrast sees the Buddha on different levels and the Trikaya doctrine (Dharmakaya; Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya) which encompasses these thoughts was developed over a period of time.
* Construct a chart that shows the threefold relationship of the Trikaya and students can add any additional material to a box or cloud design as they research more about each part of the Trikaya.
* Consider the meaning and importance of the concept of Anicca; Anicca can operate on many levels such as the animate and the inanimate as well as the level of our minds.
* Students to think of as many words for ‘impermanence’ as they can and have a class-based activity contributing to a round robin of ideas.
* Students give examples of how anicca can be seen to operate in:
  + The animate world; with anything living.
  + The inanimate world; anything non-living.
  + Our minds: ideals, notions, views that may change over time.
* Explore how anicca can relate to dukkha and anatta; the other two that make up the three signs of being or three marks of our existence, ie how anicca can cause dukkha. Students can give some examples.
* Discuss: from the standpoint of enlightenment, the doctrine of emptiness or sunyata is the reality of all worldly existences, ie it is the skilful means that disentangle Buddhists from defilement and unsatisfactoriness. The realisation of sunyata leads Buddhists to no attachment and clinging.
* Students to look up the Prajna Sutra where it says "That which is profound, has sunyata and non-attachment as its significance. No form nor deeds, no rising nor falling, are its implications. They could also look at the Avadasanikaya Sastra (composed by Nagarjuna, translated to Chinese by Kumarajiva CE 408) it says: "The greatest wisdom is the so-called sunyata." Both texts are useful to make notes from.
* **Differentiation and extension:** Which of the three marks of existence is the most important for Buddhists to focus on and why?
* Students research some of the key images associated with nirvana and consider why the Buddha often spoke about nirvana in negative terms. They can also invent their own analogies with nirvana.
* Use relevant pages from a student text such as Cush and collect as many adjectives used to describe nirvana as possible.
* **Differentiation and extension:** Should nirvana ever be described in picture language? Give reasons for your answer.

**Resources**

* Visit the website: [buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net/)
* Read: [Britannica – Sunyata](https://www.britannica.com/topic/sunyata).
* Visit the website: [The History, Philosophy and Practice of Buddhism – read about re-birth and Nirvana](http://www.buddha101.com/p_nirvana.htm).
* Read: Denise Cush, *Buddhism.*
* Read: [Sacred Texts – 80th dilemma of King Milinda](http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/sbe36/sbe3606.htm#page_186).

Topic

Self, death and afterlife.

**Suggested timing**

Week 5-6.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Cover Nirvana:
  + The endless cycle of life and death is a flux that can only be stopped by enlightenment, according to Buddhists.
  + Enlightenment leads to Nirvana which means the end of all craving, the achievement of perfect non-attachment and of happiness.
  + Nirvana is not a place or a heaven; it is a state of mind that is available to all living beings in this life. It is a way of living and being in the world that is free of suffering and rich in wisdom, happiness and compassion.
* Cover Bodhisattva:
  + The term Bodhisattva refers to someone on the path to Awakening.
  + The Mahayana has conceived them as having renounced the ultimate state out of pure compassion towards all beings and can therefore refer to anyone en route.
  + In Theravada Buddhism, it usually refers either to Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future, or to the historical Buddha Gautama prior to his enlightenment – either during the life in which he became enlightened or in one of the innumerable lives before that in which he was developing the requisite virtues for enlightenment, such as generosity.
* Cover Arhat:
  + When a Buddhist in the Theravada tradition realises that all worldly suffering is caused by craving and that it is possible to bring suffering to an end by following the Noble Eight Fold Path.
  + when that perfected state of insight is reached, ie Nibanna, that person is a ‘worthy person’, an Arhat.
  + The life of the Arhat is the ideal of the followers of this school, ‘a life where all (future) birth is at an end, where the holy life is fully achieved, where all that has to be done has been done, and there is no more returning to the worldly life’.
* Students create a chart with Arhat heading the left-hand side and Bodhisattva heading the right-hand side and note down, from research and lessons, the main differences between these two goals of the main two Buddhist traditions.
* The Buddhist teaching on anatta or no self or soul should be distinguished from the theory of reincarnation which implies the transmigration of a soul and its invariable material rebirth. Buddhism denies the existence of an unchanging or eternal soul created by a God or emanating from a Divine Essence (Paramatma).
* Discuss the Five Skandhas, the Buddhist analysis of personal experience or the Buddhist analysis of the personality. They are the impermanent, ever-changing elements of being that describe the impermanent entity that we label the ’self’.
* Students make notes on the meaning of anatta and then read through the Chariot analogy from the Questions of Kind Milinda (King Menander). Devise a modern version of the story and feedback to the class.
* Discuss samsara, the circle of suffering that, according to Buddhism is the destiny of all living beings until they achieve enlightenment and break the pattern of rebirth to experience the truth of existence.
* Students label up their own copy of the Tibetan Wheel of Life. Arrow point to specific places on the wheel that are highlighted in Buddhist teachings; from the centre circle with the three animals representing greed, hatred and delusion to the next circle depicting karma and then the six realms of rebirth followed by dependent origination or the 12 Nidanas. Explanation of the 12 Nidanas and why each symbol in the segment represents what it does on the wheel.
* Discuss the Dalai Lama. The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the 14th one. Like those before him, he is held to be the reincarnation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara. The concept of reincarnation is fundamental to the continued lineage of the Dalai Lama. This is maintained by the discovery of a young child born soon after the death of a previous Dalai Lama. It is believed that the life-spirit of the deceased transfers to the newly found child, who takes on the pre-ordained mantle of the Dalai Lama.
* Dialogues: are any of the claims made about the afterlife, rebirth and the authority of the Dalai Lama as a reincarnation reliable? How could they be verified? Link to Religious Language and views on the soul.

**Resources**

* Read: [Sacred Texts Nagasena’s chariot analogy text](http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/sbe35/sbe3504.htm).
* Read: [Learn Religions – King Milinda's Question and the Chariot Simile](https://www.thoughtco.com/king-milindas-questions-450052).
* Read: [Samye Ling – The ways of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva](http://www.samyeling.org/buddhism-and-meditation/teaching-archive-2/dharmacharya-ken-holmes/the-ways-of-the-arhat-and-the-bodhisattva/).
* Read: [Buddha Net – Guanyin](https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/guanyin.htm).
* Read: [BBC – Dalai Lama](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/people/dalailama_1.shtml).
* Read: [Buddhist studies – Experiencing Buddhism](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s07.htm).
* Read: [BBC – Wheel of life](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/galleries/bhavachakra/).

Topic

Good conduct and key moral principles.

**Suggested timing**

Week 6-7.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Understand the five moral precepts:
  1. To undertake the training to avoid taking the life of beings. This precept applies to all living beings not just humans. All beings have a right to their lives and that right should be respected.
  2. To undertake the training to avoid taking things not given. This precept goes further than mere stealing. One should avoid taking anything unless one can be sure that it is intended for you.
  3. To undertake the training to avoid sensual misconduct. This precept is often mistranslated or misinterpreted as relating only to sexual misconduct, but it covers any overindulgence in any sensual pleasure such as gluttony as well as misconduct of a sexual nature.
  4. To undertake the training to refrain from false speech. As well as avoiding lying and deceiving, this precept covers slander as well as speech which is not beneficial to the welfare of others.
  5. To undertake the training to abstain from substances which cause intoxication and heedlessness. This precept is in a special category as it does not infer any intrinsic evil in, say, alcohol itself but indulgence in such a substance could be the cause of breaking the other four precepts.
* Divide the class into pairs and each pair take on a presentation of each of the five moral precepts reporting back to the class for a general discussion.
* Give students a variety of scenarios and ask ‘what should a Buddhist do if they are following the teachings of the five moral precepts?’
* A Buddhist who is following the bodhisattva path must cultivate the six perfections of giving or generosity, morality or good conduct, patience, vigour, meditation and wisdom.
* Ahimsa is a Pali term for the non-harming or not hurting: gentleness to all forms of life.
* Students create a leaflet/chart/booklet on Buddhist responses to each ethical issue from the specification, making sure they reference the five precepts, six perfections and ahimsa throughout.
* **Extension exercise**: make links between key beliefs about the self, three marks of existence, samsara and the ethical issues on the specification.
* Dialogues: How do Buddhist systems of ethics compare to the theories studied in Component 1?

**Resources**

* Read: [Wisdom Library – Akusala](http://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/akusala).
* Visit the website: [Buddhist Centre – Buddhism for Schools, age 17-18 year](https://thebuddhistcentre.com/stories/schools/students/ages-17-18/)s.
* Read: [Wise attention – Buddhism and abortion](http://www.wiseattention.org/blog/2013/02/21/buddhism-and-abortion).
* Read: [Learn Religions – Buddhist perspectives on the abortion debate](https://www.thoughtco.com/buddhist-perspectives-on-abortion-449712).
* Read: [Buddha Sasana – Buddhist attitude to animal life](http://www.budsas.org/ebud/whatbudbeliev/170.htm).
* Read: [Inquiring minds - War and peace – a Buddhist perspective](http://www.inquiringmind.com/Articles/WarAndPeace.html).
* Read: [BBC – Buddhism](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism).
* For extension reading on ahimsa visit the website: [zenpeacemakers.org](http://zenpeacemakers.org/)

Topic

Expressions of religious identity.

**Suggested timing**

Week 7-8.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Cover the Sangha:
  + Refers primarily to the community of saints and enlightened one's (Ariya Sangha), the third of the three Jewels and the three Refuges, and the order of monks (bhikkhu Sangha) and nuns (bhikkhuni Sangha).
  + However increasingly the word is now being used for the Buddhist community in general, spiritually developed or not, ordained or not.
  + Significance of this third refuge, jewel or treasure in Buddhism.
* Students to research:
  + The five possessions of a monk or nun.
  + The five levels of hierarchy in a Theravadan monastery.
  + The additional five precepts monks and nuns are expected to keep.
  + The three vows.
  + The three promises on entry to the Sangha.
* Students could visit a Buddhist monastery such as Amaravati (The Deathless) near Hemel Hempstead, Throssel Hole Abbey (near Hexham), Samye Ling Tibetan Monastery (Dumfriesshire) to get a sense of how Buddhist monks and nuns live in today’s British society.
* Chant the morning or evening chant in Pali script with an explanation as a whole class activity.
* Focus on Thailand as an example of Theravadan Buddhist practice.
* Consider the ‘threefold relationship’ between the King, the people and the Sangha in Thailand. Some background reading on Thailand may be useful. The focus here is on the Sangha and particularly the role it plays in Thai society which is some 96% Theravada Buddhist.
* Research on the Wat Phra Dhammakaya movement and feedback to the class.
* Define Karma: Merit-making in popular forms of the Buddhist tradition is focused on the belief that actions have spiritual consequences on natural forces and events:
  + Worship includes acts directed towards securing worldly prosperity and averting calamities through disease and unseen forces of evil, eg pirit chanting, bodhi-puja, etc.
  + Merit (Pali: punna: Sinh: pin) earned by the performance of a wholesome act is regarded as a sure way of obtaining a better life in the future. The performance of these is also a means of expiation in the sense that the meritorious deeds have the effect of countering and hindering the operation of unwholesome karma previously acquired and inherited. Thus, the range of merit is very wide.
  + For the ordinary householder, Nibbana is a goal to be achieved through a gradual process of evolution extending over many lives, and therefore until he achieves that sublime state at some future date he continues to perform these acts in order to lead a happy life. All merit-generating rituals are performed mainly with this end in view.
  + The operations of karma/kamma/merit are therefore ‘supernatural’ in the sense that it is a force beyond the physical natural world as understood by science. Transfer of ‘merit’ also relevant.
* Cover devotion:
  + In the Mahayana tradition, devotion can be quite elaborate; with a chamber/hall for Sakyamuni Buddha and two disciples, one hall for the three Buddhas (including Amitabha and Medicine Buddha) and one hall for the three key bodhisattvas; besides the protectors, etc.
  + Whereas in the Theravada tradition, it is normally a more simplistic layout with the image of Sakyamuni Buddha the focus of worship.
  + The focus here is on how Buddhists use a Buddha image or rupa; the importance of worship as well as merit making in the Buddhist tradition.
* Cover meditation:
  + A conscious effort to change how the mind works.
  + The Pali word for meditation is 'bhavana' which means 'to make grow' or 'to develop'.
  + The Buddha taught many different types of meditation, each designed to overcome a particular problem or to develop a particular psychological state.
  + The two most common and useful types of meditation are Mindfulness of Breathing (anapanasati) and Loving Kindness Meditation (metta bhavana). The focus here is on the nature and purpose of meditation and to avoid generalisations, students need to consider both aspects as well as different types of mediation such as samatha, vipassana, zazen and metta.
* Students research the meanings behind right effort: right mindfulness and right concentration on the eightfold path and its significance for Buddhists.
* As a follow up to the chanting students could do a stilling exercise in class when they are ‘talked through’ a mediation exercise and then report back to the class on their feelings as this was taking place.
* Whole class essay task on ‘Meditation is a waste of time’ or ‘Meditation is just an escape from the real world’ or ‘The benefits of meditation far outweigh the disadvantages’. How far do you agree?

**Resources**

* Visit the website: [Dhammakaya Foundation](http://en.dhammakaya.net/).
* Read: [Daily Mail – Buddhist article](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3553179/Devotees-Thai-temple-alms-tens-thousands-Buddhist-monks.html).
* Read: [BBC – Buddhism](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism).
* Read: [BBC – mindfulness](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35688048).
* Read: [BBC – Meditation](http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zqrx34j).
* Watch the video: [YouTube – The Noble Eightfold Path](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPk-pxhyYeg) (2.25 minutes).
* Read: [Access Tonight – Buddhist Ceremonies and Rituals of Sri Lanka](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/kariyawasam/wheel402.html).

Topic

Buddhism, gender and sexuality.

**Suggested timing**

Week 9-10.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* Introduce some background on Thailand and explain the status and role of mae chi/maechi in Thai Buddhism.
* Discuss Thai Bhikkunni movement and women’s empowerment; consider the desirability of ordination for women in Thailand and its possible effects of the status of women in society generally.
* The final section is on religious movements in contemporary Thailand.
* Review the key themes. Students could collate the information into a chart or mind map, and then add links as to how these social factors may influence Buddhist thinking.
* Cover the impact of tourism:
  + Increases in both prostitution and HIV/Aids and encouraged sex-trafficking of young girls.
  + Exposed both urban and rural communities to examples of western lifestyle and attitudes.
  + The movement to ordain women in Thailand as a ‘Western import’ or ‘western feminist imposition’.
* Cover the changing roles of women**:**
  + Religious specialists are (almost all) male.
  + Domestic violence against women, social discrimination and trafficking of girls all reported.
  + Women make up 44% of the work force and are entitled to equal pay, there are no legal restrictions on them owning and managing businesses.
  + More than half of university graduates are women.
  + There are some women MPs – numbers increasing.
  + There are employment opportunities as prostitutes in cities – often taken up by girls from poorer regions.
* Cover the legal status of women:
  + 1928 – supreme patriarch of Buddhism in Thailand forbids ordination of women. The government revoked this as a secular law sometime after 2003 seeing it as contrary to freedom of religion – however it is still part of the religious law governing the Thai Sangha.
  + 1997 – new constitution – Government grants women equality with men. Religious freedom is also now a legal right.
  + However, when the first Thai woman was ordained in Sri Lanka as a Bhikkuni (2003), her status was not officially recognised in Thailand, but the government did agree not to take action against her.
  + The revival of the Theravad order of nuns in the late 90s involved many obstacles.
  + The requirement for women to be ordained by both ordained monks (bhikkhus) and nuns (bhikkunis). The bhikkuni lineage had died out in Theravada Buddhism many centuries before – so no nuns able to perform ordination.
* How can prostitution/the prevalence of HIV and trafficking of women in Thailand be used as arguments in favour of the ordination of women?
* Students could examine each fact/situation below in groups and explain why this would be an obstacle to Theravada nuns.
* Cover the kammic/karmic deficiency of women:
  + The perception that birth as a female was evidence of bad kamma. This is linked to the idea that only a man can achieve enlightenment which some claim stems from the Buddha himself – others reject that idea.
  + In Thailand the established role of mae chi/maechi – the serving and supporting role of women in the Sangha; regarded as lay not ordained by the relevant government departments in Thailand so not financially supported.
  + Young boys in Thailand can receive sponsored education as temporary monks; they will be supported by lay donations which, when made to monks, are seen as merit-making. The support of females serving in the monastic sangha is not seen as merit-making, therefore very limited opportunities for religious education and development for girls.
* Cover the evidence in scripture for female ordination:
  + This suggests initial reluctance from Gautama but then the bhikkuni lineage was started – additional rules for females: 311 rather than 227 (Theravada). See Harvey pg 298–9.
  + Women are to some extent dependent on monks from the beginning. The support of monks for female ordination was essential.
  + The ordination of the first Theravada Bhikkuni required either acceptance that monks could ordain women (the example of Gautama is used to support this) or that nuns from the Mahayana tradition would be acceptable. A Chinese lineage, also found in South Korea and Vietnam, which partly descends from 5th Century Sri Lanka, was deemed acceptable by some.
  + 1996 – 11 Sri Lankan nuns were ordained in India, by Korean nuns and Theravada monks.
  + Sri Lanka 2003 – Dr Chatsurman Kabilsingh (Dhammananda) was ordained as a nun. An intellectual, married with adult children then divorced. She and her organisation have an international appeal, but she focuses on Thai Buddhism.
* Students use website resources to research the life of Dhammananda and produce a social media profile page for her. This could include ‘status updates’ as quotations from her etc.
* Questions to consider:
  + Why does Thai, Theravada, Buddhism not allow the ordination of women? What would you see as the greatest stumbling block and why?
  + What scripture-based arguments are there in favour of female ordination?
  + Why can it be said that the legal status of women in Thailand may encourage the acceptance of female ordination? What changes outside of religion in Thailand may also support this?
  + What does the work of Dhammananda and the Sakyadhita organisation reveal about the current debate about female ordination and the role of women in Theravada Buddhism?
  + Why are there different views about female ordination in Buddhism? (AO1:3)
  + Are women in Theravada Buddhism inferior to men? (AO2)
  + Explain the influence of Buddhist beliefs on the role of women in Theravada Buddhism. (AO1:2)
* Debate different Buddhist views about celibacy, marriage and homosexuality. This can range widely across different Buddhist traditions. Core to the debate is the emphasis on celibacy, ‘sensual misconduct’ and tolerance. Things that could be covered:
  + Theravada Vinaya discipline, celibacy is required as a form of non-attachment. Both heterosexual and homosexual acts are explicitly forbidden.
  + Marriage is the appropriate place for sexual activity and child rearing – but note tolerance of prostitution by the Sangha in Thailand; sex need not be confined to marriage.
  + Marriage is a secular not a religious institution. Divorce is not a religious matter.
  + The Wikipedia entry on Buddhism and sexual orientation has some useful material on the concepts of pandaka and Ubathovyanjanakas related to homosexuals and transgender issues.
  + Some would consider sexual orientation as irrelevant. The issue is the engagement in sexual acts, not the orientation of the individual.
  + The 14th Dalai Lama has expressed concerns over male homosexual acts (1997) but opposes any form of discrimination against homosexual people.
* The following could form group presentations, a class debate on whether Buddhist attitudes are positive overall, or essay style questions:
  + What are the key Buddhist ideas about celibacy, marriage, homosexuality and transgender issues? – you must include different Buddhist views on each.
  + Why are there different views in Buddhism about celibacy and marriage?
  + Why are there different views in Buddhism about homosexuality and transgender issues?
  + The influence of Buddhist teaching on Buddhist attitudes to celibacy/marriage/ homosexuality and transgender issues.
  + Assess how far Buddhism has a positive attitude to marriage/homosexuality/

transgender issues.

* Dialogues: How far can Buddhist decision-making be said to be teleological, character-based or deontological?

**Resources**

* Read: Harvey P, *An introduction to Buddhism, teachings, history and practice, second edition*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pg 300–301, 385–394.
* Read: [Facts and Details – Women in Thailand](http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Thailand/sub5_8c/entry-3223.html).
* Read: [I Know Politics – The Thai bhikkunni movement and women’s empowerment](http://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/thai20women20movement_oxfam.pdf).
* Read: [Social Change and Religious Movements in Thailand](https://pub.uni-bielefeld.de/download/2304034/2304040).
* Read: [Nikkei Asia – Women in Ocher: Thailand's rebel nuns gain ground](http://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Life/Women-in-Ocher-Thailand-s-rebel-nuns-gain-ground?page=2).
* Read: [Every Culture – Countries and their Cultures – read about the changing roles of women](http://www.everyculture.com/Sa-Th/Thailand.html).
* [Read: Wikipedia – Read about the ordination of women in Buddhism.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordination_of_women_in_Buddhism)
* Read: [Wikipedia – Buddhism and sexuality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_and_sexuality).
* Read: [Wikipedia – Buddhism and sexual orientation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_and_sexual_orientation).

Topic

Buddhism and science.

**Suggested timing**

Week 11-12.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* This can be studied alongside the philosophy topic on miracles. Miracles are also a topic for dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity; the relationship between scientific and religious discourses is also a dialogue topic.
* Such ‘miracles’ indicate the working of a power not recognised by science.
* Discuss worship at particular shrines:
  + Apparently rewarded with pregnancy/success/wealth could be seen as ‘miracles’.
  + Empirical science has no room for such ‘spiritual’ forces. It provides alternative empirical explanations and/or reasons for denying that the reported events ever happened. This is the challenge of the emphasis on evidence and reason in science.
* Discuss responses to the challenge to belief in karma and miracles:
  + These can be linked to the broader discussion in Buddhism about the relationship between Buddhism and Science.
  + These amount to:
* Empirical sciences only investigate the apparent world and arrive at conventional truth; there are powers within that world which are evident to the mind but not the senses.
* Buddhism should drop all its supernatural trappings, including karma and miracles, and present itself as a ‘way’, not as a religious faith.
* Advanced reading: <researchgate.net>
* Discuss:
  + Buddhism as a ‘scientific’ religion: emphasis on reason and evidence: Kalama Sutta.
  + Conventional truth and ultimate truth: Thich Nhat Hanh.
  + Buddha’s attitude to ‘unanswerable questions’: the Parable of the Poisoned Arrow can be interpreted to mean that life is for living and that time spent on speculation about, for example, ultimate origins is pointless.
* There is flexibility in the ‘specific discoveries’ that have impacted Buddhism, but some awareness of quantum physics could be very useful in answers.
* Cover the key features of quantum physics relevant to Buddhism:
  + There is constant flux/change at the smallest level beneath the level of ordinary perception; the observer resolves the experience of this change into something that can be described and take form.
  + However, the form taken by what is observed depends on the observer; for example, light can be wave or particle.
  + Our perception of reality is therefore of constant flux that is given form by mind.
  + Links to Anicca, Anatta, Samkhara Dukkha and emptiness (legacy specification RSS04 has a section on Quantum and an Eastern worldview which may be useful).
* Genetic engineering is the only issue on which questions can explicitly be asked. This links back to Year 1 Ethics work on embryo research and designer babies. The dialogue between ethical studies and Buddhism on this issue is also required for Dialogues questions. A broader introduction may be helpful; abortion, euthanasia etc made possible by science but use of these treatments raises dilemmas. This is also preparation for Dialogues. This allows coverage of how Buddhists make moral decisions regarding life and death and builds on the study of ahimsa in AS/A-level material. There are active biotech/genetic engineering activities in Thailand – many linked to rice.
* Questions to consider:
  + How/why may science be seen to challenge Buddhism?
  + How/why may science be seen to support/be consistent with Buddhism?
  + What value has science for Buddhism? Consider: science as irrelevant; science as threat and science as support. See also Dialogues question on Additional Specimen paper 2A ‘Science is an enemy of Buddhism’.
  + How/why does science stimulate Buddhist ethical thinking? Use example(s).
* Explain the view of Thich Nhat Hanh and the 14th Dalai Lama about the relationship between Buddhism and Science.
* Identify different Buddhist responses to genetic engineering (AO1:1) Why are there different Buddhist views? (AO1:3)
* Consider the influence of Buddhist teaching on attitudes to genetic engineering (AO1:2). (This is the application of the same information in different contexts.)

**Resources**

* Visit the website: [Buddhist miracles](http://www.einterface.net/gamini/buddhist.html).
* Read: [Buddhist studies – Dharma Data: Miracles](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/dharmadata/fdd63.htm).
* Read: [Learn Religions – read about the Buddhist view of miracles](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-buddhist-view-of-miracles-449528).
* Read: [Wikipedia – Buddhism and science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhism_and_science).
* Visit the website [Voices form Oxford – Buddhism and science.](http://www.voicesfromoxford.org/buddhism-and-science-video-list/)
* Read: [Research Gate – Buddhism, Science, and the Truth About Karma](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261376179_Buddhism_Science_and_the_Truth_About_Karma).
* Read: [Rational Buddhism – Buddhism, Quantum Physics and Mind](http://rational-buddhism.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/buddhism-quantum-physics-and-mind.html).
* Read: [Dalia Lama – Science at the Crossroad by Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalai Lama](https://www.dalailama.com/messages/buddhism/science-at-the-crossroads).
* Read: [Online - Professor Ron Epstein’s Online Educational Resources – useful information on genetic engineering and Buddhism](http://online.sfsu.edu/rone/GEessays/GEBuddhism.html).
* Read: [Buddhism Today - Genetic Engineering: A Major Threat to Vegetarians](http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/veg/003-Genetic%20Engineering.htm).

Topic

Buddhism and the challenge of secularisation.

**Suggested timing**

Week 13-14.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* The challenges of secularisation: only those mentioned can be required in an answer. The definition of secularisation used simply needs to match the ‘challenges’ identified: the transformation of society from religious to secular.
* Discuss:
  + Relegation of religion to the personal sphere: eg anti realist views of belief.
  + Rise of militant atheism: Richard Dawkins if using British context.
  + Religion as irrational. Linked to above. Core to the Dialogue debates (Dialogue with Philosophy). Can be taken to mean not based on reason/not consistent with reason/contradicts the evidence. Links to topic on science and religion.
* Cover Buddhist responses to materialistic secular values. Note that issues surrounding wealth are specified for study in the Dialogue with Ethics section.
* Question to consider: what are ‘materialistic secular values?’ Valuing people by how successful they are in material terms: wealth and possessions. Arguably valuing these can lead to ignoring how they are achieved (eg through deceit and exploitation).
* Responses to consider: the example of Gautama: renunciation; the precepts of engaged Buddhism (Thich Nhat Hanh); right livelihood.
* Different Buddhist responses to secularisation/living in a secular society:
* Amaravati and the preservation of the Forest Tradition.
* New forms of Buddhism; these can be seen as adaptations to the secular context:
  + Triratna – the [Wikipedia entry](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triratna_Buddhist_Community) on this movement is also useful. Past controversies/scandals are acknowledged on websites such as [manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk](https://manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk/)
  + Secular Buddhism.
* Engaged Buddhism.
* Discuss the nature of Buddhism: Batchelor and Brazier:
  + Batchelor: the future of religion transcript.
  + Brazier: interview.
* Questions to consider:
  + How is Buddhism being challenged by secularisation?
  + What are Buddhist attitudes to wealth and possessions? Why are they different? how does Buddhist teaching influence attitudes to wealth and possessions? Note same/similar content applied in different ways.
  + Give two different ways in which Buddhism has responded to the challenge of secularisation. Why are there different ways?
  + Why is Buddhism appealing to some as an alternative to other forms of religious expression?
  + What does Buddhism see as its distinctive contribution to society? What is meant by Engaged Buddhism?
  + What is Buddhism? Compare the ideas of Stephen Batchelor and David Brazier (note: this links forward to the next section on diversity in Buddhism and could also draw on that material).

**Resources**

* Read: [The Guardian – Can religion be replaced?](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/jun/19/religion-philosophy)
* Read: [Tradition – the challenge of secularisation](http://traditionarchive.org/news/article.cfm?id=105276).
* Watch the video: [Ted – Richard Dawkins: Militant atheism](https://www.ted.com/talks/richard_dawkins_on_militant_atheism).
* Read: [The Guardian – AC Grayling: 'How can you be a militant atheist? It's like sleeping furiously’](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/apr/03/grayling-good-book-atheism-philosophy).
* Read: [Buddhistdoor Global – Buddhist attitude to wealth](https://www.buddhistdoor.net/features/buddhist-attitude-to-wealth).
* Visit the website: [Amaravti Buddhist Monastery](http://www.amaravati.org/).
* Visit the website: [The Buddhist Centre](https://thebuddhistcentre.com/).
* Visit the website: [Manchester Buddhist Centre](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bs-s07.htm).
* Visit the website: [Secular Buddhism](http://secularbuddhism.org/tag/stephen-batchelor/).
* Visit the website: [Stephen Batchelor – Biography](https://stephenbatchelor.org/).
* Read: [Religion Facts – Engaged Buddhism](http://www.religionfacts.com/engaged-buddhism).
* Read: [Access to Insight – Buddhism and Social Action, an Exploration by Ken Jones](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/jones/wheel285.html).
* Visit the website: [Birmingham Buddhist Centre website](https://www.birminghambuddhistcentre.org.uk/).
* Read: [Secular Buddhist Association – Secular Buddhism: Imagining the Dharma in an uncertain world](https://secularbuddhism.org/?s=batchelor).
* Read: [Wise Attention Blog – The new Buddhism: an interview with David Brazier](http://www.wiseattention.org/blog/2012/08/17/the-new-buddhism-an-interview-with-david-brazier/).
* Read: [Engaged Buddhism – David Brazier's: the new Buddhism](https://engagedbuddhism.net/2015/03/29/david-braziers-the-new-buddhism/).
* Read: *Buddhism is a Religion: you can believe* it, Woodsmoke press, 2014, chapters 1 and 3.
* Read: [Lion’s Roar – Review: Stephen Batchelor’s *After Buddhism: rethinking the dharma for a secular age*](https://www.lionsroar.com/review-stephen-batchelors-after-buddhism/)*.*

Topic

Buddhism, migration and religious pluralism.

**Suggested timing**

Week 15-16.

**Suggested coverage and learning activities**

* There are clear links between this and the previous topic. There are two related dialogue topics; the truth claims of other religions (dialogue with philosophy) and issues of freedom of religious expression (dialogue with ethics).
* Cover basic facts of how Buddhism arrived and where it sits in British religious life:
  + The study of diversity in Britain can only require two contrasting forms of Buddhism and they will already have looked at Amaravati; the selection of at least one other form must allow discussion/evaluation of the claim that Buddhism is a collection of different traditions with little in common. (Secular Buddhism can also be contrasted with Theravada if preferred – could also use a tradition you may have touched elsewhere: Zen, Pure Land, Tibetan.)
  + The features for contrast depend on tradition chosen: Pure Land and Theravada provide ‘easy’ points of contrast. This could be looked at more broadly as Theravada/Mahayana, but you would need to limit the content, given the very limited testing that is possible for AO1.
* Cover freedom of religion:
  + As a human right in European Law and religious pluralism as a feature of modern secular states.
  + Equality of religions within a secular context. This will link forward to issues about freedom of religious expression in society.
* Buddhist attitudes to religious pluralism; attitudes within Buddhism to other forms of Buddhism/other faiths.
* Note pluralism can be taken as the view that there are different, equally valid, approaches to the same goal of which Buddhism is only one and the right of all different religions to exist side by side in a state of tolerance/acceptance.
* Cover Nichiren Buddhism: teaches that it is the only true Buddhist tradition.
* Discuss concept of conditioned/conventional truth: dangers of attachment to personal views, teaching about tolerance.
* Drawing on examples studied above, give examples of freedom of religious expression that may and may not prove controversial, including those that apparently incite violence; Muslim/Buddhist relations in both Sri Lanka and Myanmar may also be referenced (Sri Lanka link above). This could include a discussion about how far ahimsa can allow tolerance of anything that causes harm.
* Research diversity of Buddhist community locally/more broadly; look for reasons for its establishment; pick two ‘types’ of Buddhism for contrast/comparison.
* Is Buddhism a collection of traditions with little in common (AO2)? Note if you start with a clear ‘Yes’ or No’ answer you must also show what counter arguments there are to your view and why you have rejected them.
* Why are there different views within Buddhism both to other forms of Buddhism and to other faiths?
* Buddhist attitudes to other faiths: How may edict 12 of Ashoka influence these?
* Does Buddhism have a positive attitude to religious pluralism
* Can Buddhism tolerate intolerance?

**Resources**

* Read: Harvey P, *An introduction to Buddhism, teachings, history and practice, second edition*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, pg 100–102, 233.
* Read: [The Edicts of King Ashoka: Translation of edict 12](https://www.cs.colostate.edu/~malaiya/ashoka.html#FOURTEEN).
* Read: [Buddhist studies – Dharma Data: Tolerance](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/dharmadata/fdd50.htm).
* Read: [AZ Quotes – Dalai Lama quotes about tolerance](http://www.azquotes.com/author/8418-Dalai_Lama/tag/tolerance).
* Read: [Dalia Lama – Many Faiths, One Truth by Tenzin Gyatso, the Dalia Lama](https://www.dalailama.com/news/2010/many-faiths-one-truth).
* Read: [The Diplomat – The Rise of Buddhist Nationalism in Sri Lanka](http://thediplomat.com/2014/07/the-rise-of-buddhist-nationalism-in-sri-lanka/).
* Read: [Buddhist Channel – Buddhism and freedom of speech](http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=8,12162,0,0,1,0#.WW8Y6bpFycw).