

8 best + free Buddhism courses and classes

Please note: these courses and classes have been listed alphabetically and were compiled in July 2021

1. [Buddhism Courses](#) (The Buddhist Society)

The Buddhist Society is a London-based charity that provides several free online classes along with paid courses, including in-house learnings. These lessons can be taken up by anyone who wants to learn about Buddhism and change their lives through its practical implementation. You can either take up individual courses or get the membership subscription for extra benefits and start learning the teachings. The Buddhist Society, established in 1924, offers a Correspondence Course. It also offers a number of places at its annual Residential Summer School in the British countryside for teachings and meditation practice with esteemed International Buddhist teachers, for applicants with financial hardship. Check through the class list and see which one fits into your learning requirements.

Key USPs

- Join the class on introduction to Buddhism for free.
- Learn about the history and practices of early Indian Buddhism.
- Become a member of the Buddhist Society to get access to various online events and additional learning resources.
- Get insights into meditation practices and practical ways of Buddhist rituals that can bring drastic positive changes in your life.
- Learn Sanskrit online
- Use the library of over 5,000 Buddhist volumes
- Free lunchtime meditation sessions

Duration: Variable

2. [Buddhism Distance Learning](#) (Sravasti Abbey Friends Education)

Sravasti Abbey Friends Education (SAFE) offers a free program on Buddha's teachings and Dharma practices to anyone who wants to know Buddhism in a deeper sense. The sessions are conducted online through videos, audios, and written formats, along with discussions and assignments. Learners have to meditate daily for 20 minutes while they are taking this course. Students have to abstain from certain practices that are against the Dharma teachings while enrolled in this program to get the true essence of Buddhism. Ideal for beginners, anyone can register and get the benefits of learning from home and follow these rituals for a better life.

Key USPs

- Study Buddhism through online classes and practice daily meditation to feel peace and relief from anxiety.
- Be a part of the Dharma community and work with fellow learners to give back to the society.
- Become spiritual by connecting to your inner self for overall well-being.

- Listen to world spiritual leaders and get deeper insights into Buddhism.

Duration: 12 Weeks

3. [Buddhism for Beginners](#) (Tricycle Online Courses)

People intrigued by Buddhism can take this online course for beginners by Buddhism professor John Dunne, who has over 35 years of experience in the preachings and practices of Buddha. He will guide you step-by-step through the life of Buddha, the spread of Buddhism through various regions of the ancient world, the Zen principles, and the emergence of Buddhism in the West. There are special discount offers if you plan to take the course in groups or sangha of five or more. Once you enroll, you have lifetime access to this course anytime, anywhere. Don't forget to check our take on [Best Mind Mapping Courses](#).

Key USPs

- Learn Buddhism through stepwise guidance in the form of videos and downloadable resources.
- Know about Buddhism by listening to various spiritual Gurus around the world who interact with the course instructor.
- Be a part of the discussion forum and interact with fellow learners to get answers to your queries.
- Practice Buddhism in daily life through its values and meditation methods

Duration: Variable

4. [Buddhism and Modern Psychology by Princeton University](#) (Coursera)

Those intrigued by the human mind are the ideal audience for this Princeton University course. This program is offered for free to anyone with an open mind to understand the parallels between Buddhism doctrine and Evolutionary science. With the principles of Buddhism and Darwin's theory of evolution, learners will be shown the path towards enlightenment through a scientific approach. The tutorials will also cover meditation and its effects on the brain along with discussions on subjects of Self and Nirvana that are the core concepts of Buddhism.

Key USPs

- Understand Buddhism from a religious perspective and learn its relation to psychological concepts.
- Identify feelings and thoughts and how the brain takes decisions the way it does.
- Learn about meditation and its impact on the human brain.
- Explore a new mental module by clearing delusions about the self.
- Understand what enlightenment is from the two angles – Buddhist and Darwinian.

Duration: 16 Hours

5. [Buddhist Online Courses](#) (Shambhala Publications)

There are many publications and spiritual teachers who help individuals worldwide get closer to the Buddhist way of living. Shambhala publications is one such platform that was providing knowledge of the traditional rituals in Buddhism for 50 years. Prajna Studios has converted these preachings into online video lessons to help more people grasp the meaning in life. You can browse through the course library on Shambhala and find interesting videos on various rituals and principles by Buddha. You will also get additional learning resources from this platform to dig deeper into Buddhism.

Key USPs

- Learn about introspection through self-exploration to analyze and break your negative thought chains.
- Explore various practices for meditation and its impact on relaxing the mind.
- Get deeper insights into Buddhist undertakings and way of life through additional reading resources.
- Practice Buddhism to become more aware in your everyday life.

Duration: Variable

6. [Buddhism Through Its Scriptures](#) by Harvard University (edX)

Religious scriptures are a crucial and indispensable part of any religion. Like any other religion followed in the world, Buddhism can be understood and practiced through its religious teachings elaborated in the scriptures. This Harvard University course on Buddhism can be your guiding light to understand the concepts preached by Buddha from a spiritual and academic viewpoint. You will be introduced to various readings, art forms, and practices in Buddhism to get a better understanding of this widely accepted and practiced way of life.

Key USPs

- Learn the foundational principles of Buddhism through its religious scriptures.
- Interpret the scriptures to understand the Buddhist doctrine as per its historical variations.
- Explore Buddha's teachings to understand them deeply and apply to your life.
- Understand the importance of different devotional practices through Buddhist scriptures.

Duration: 4 Weeks

7. [China's First Empires and the Rise of Buddhism by Harvard University](#) (edX)

Harvard University has curated a detailed five-course program on the History of China on edX. Rise of Buddhism in China is a free course in this online course series that can help learners get insight into the influence of religion in shaping its medieval dynasties. You can also check the full course if you are interested in studying the Chinese culture in depth or get a certification in this particular course by paying an additional fee. The tutorials cover the Qin and Han dynasties and how they led to a centralized governing system in China. You will also understand the significance of self-realization in this culture and how Buddhism changed this country.

Key USPs

- Learn about the historical empires that centralized Chinese bureaucracy and governing systems.
- Understand the influence and spread of Buddhism in ancient Chinese societies.
- Know about the political changes that established the culture in subsequent rules and the practice of Buddhist principles in them.
- Understand the role of religion in unifying early Chinese empires.life.

Duration: 15 weeks

8. [Indian and Tibetan River of Buddhism by Columbia University](#) (edX)

Buddhism spread through Asia and impacted the ways people carried on with their lives during the early periods of our history. The principles and preachings of Buddha were translated and propagated through various regions, and it influenced the way the cultures changed in East and Central Asia. This Columbia University course on edX concentrates on the Indian and Tibetan emergence of Buddhism and its reception in various parts of the world throughout the different periods till the 21st century. The course combines science, moral values, and principles to show you the path laid out by Buddha.

Key USPs

- Get detailed knowledge of the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and Three Super Education in Buddhism.
- Know about the variations in Buddhist rituals as per different cultures it touched.
- Understand the framework of modern Tibetan Buddhism and its corresponding Western practices.
- Listen to the fourteenth Dalai Lama's views on how Buddhism shapes personal development and qualities.
- Learn the evolution of Buddhism through its journey in various parts of the world from ancient to medieval to the modern era.

Duration: 12 Weeks