

# The ABC's of Buddhism – Universal Teachings

*Instructor: Barbara Brennan and Dexter Mar*

Monday & Tuesday Evenings, 4 classes, 6-830pm, May 1,2, 8,9  
Buddhist Study Center Classroom

## Course Objective

Designed for those new to Buddhism, this course covers the fundamental aspects of Buddhism. Through the study of its foundational elements—teachings, rituals, and stories—this course introduces the various beliefs and practices of one of the world's major religions. Portions of the PBS documentary, “The Buddha”, will be used to enhance understanding.

## Course Learning Opportunities

By the end of the course we will have had the opportunity to:

- Comprehend the historical context for and development of the Buddhist tradition.
- Examine the basic beliefs and practices of Buddhism.
- Develop an understanding and appreciation for the unity and diversity of the various paths in Buddhism.

## Textbook

There is no required textbook for the course. Suggested readings to further understanding:

“The Complete Idiot's Guide to Buddhism”, Gary Gach

“Buddhism: A concise introduction”, Huston Smith

“The World's Religions”, Huston Smith

“What the Buddha Taught”, Walpola Rahula

## Class Etiquette

All questions and inquiries are welcome. There is no such thing as a “silly” question or irrelevant point of view so feel free to ask questions, comment on, or even challenge the material presented in class.

## Class Schedule

### #1 **Buddha**

Introduction: What's is Buddhism?

Before Buddhism: Brahmanic, Vedic, Upanishad traditions. Wheel of Life (Six Realms).

Who was the Buddha? Life and death of Siddhartha Gautama

The Buddha's Enlightenment – Turning of the Wheel of Dharma

### #2,3 **Dharma**

Three main concepts (“marks”), Four Noble Truths, Eight-fold Path, 84,000 paths (Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana), Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha)

### #4 **Sangha**

Taking Refuge in Buddhism: Various Buddhist practices and rituals. Vandana Ti-sarana. Meditation. Incense. Services. Altars. Rites of Passage.

*Class schedule is subject to change and may be adapted to suit the interest of the course participants.*