

PHIL1110A Introduction to Philosophy 哲學概論

Term 1, 2015-16

Course Outline ver.1.0

Time: T9, W7,8

TEACHER: Wong Kai Yee 王啟義; Tutors: Luk Ching Kit 陸正傑

COURSE WEBSITE: *Blackboard* (CU ELEARN) <https://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk>

What is this course about?

This course is a general introduction to philosophical methods and problems. Its goal is to:

- ✧ Introduce you to the pleasures and importance of philosophical reflection on things that matter in life, such as knowledge, rationality, god, and values.
- ✧ Help you gain a basic familiarity with a wide range of topics in the subject.
- ✧ Help you acquire the skills of philosophical enquiry, specifically the ability to interpret, analyze, and formulate philosophical arguments.
- ✧ Demonstrate how philosophical thinking can make a distinctive contribution to your understanding of yourself, others, and the world.

What may you expect to achieve?

If you put reasonable efforts into this course, by the end of it you will be able to:

- ✧ Formulate and describe the nature and characteristics of philosophical thinking and philosophical problems.
- ✧ Identify and formulate basic issues in the main areas of philosophy, including metaphysics, theory of knowledge, and ethics.
- ✧ Critically discuss and further explore these issues.
- ✧ Demonstrate reasonable facility in reading, analyzing, and interpreting philosophical texts.
- ✧ Demonstrate reasonable facility in philosophical writing and discussion, and to strengthen these skills through self-learning.

Topics

I. Introduction

1. What is philosophy? Why study it?

II. Metaphysics

2. God and Reason: *Can you prove that God exists?*
3. Mind and Matter: *Can there be zombies?*
4. Self, Person, and Identity: *Who am I?*
5. Determinism and Freedom: How can we have free will?
6. The Ultimate Question: Why is there something rather nothing?

III. Knowledge, Truth and Rationality

7. Dream and Skepticism: *Does the external world really exist?*
8. Conceptual Analysis: *What is knowledge?*
9. Prisoner's Dilemma and Origin of Virtues: *When is it rational to cooperate?*

Interlude: Evolution and Altruism

IV. Values, Morality, and Meaning of Life

10. Morality and Values: *Are there objective values?*
11. Acting Morally and Utilitarianism: *Is what is moral that has the best consequences?*

12. Meaning of Life: *Is there such a thing?*

Learning activities

In this course, you are expected to: (1) read and make a reasonable effort think about the assigned readings; (2) develop the skills of philosophical enquiry through philosophical discussion and writing; (3) attend *all* lectures/tutorials and to participate in discussion and presentation.

In-class activities and workload:

1. **Lecture:** 2 – 3 hours each week (see course schedule below for details).
2. **Tutorial:**
 - a. Small group teach; size of each group: ~10 students.
 - b. One 2-hour session every two weeks (starting from Week 3).
 - c. Tutorials are discussion-intensive. Attendance is mandatory.
 - d. Guidelines on requirements and assessment method of tutorials will be provided in the tutorial-briefing session.
 - e. The signing-up of tutorial is done through teacher-student arrangement during lecture sessions in the first two weeks. If you fail to attend class during this period, you may not be able to sign up for tutorials, which is mandatory.

Out-of-class:

1. **Reading:** to understand better issues discussed in lectures and to prepare for tutorials.
2. **Essay preparation and writing:** an average of 2 hours each week on preparing and writing essay assignments throughout the term. You should try to design a schedule that allows you to apportion more time on writing and discussing your essay with your tutor/teacher two to three weeks before each essay is due.

Assessment scheme

<i>Task</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Tutorial	Discussion, presentation, writing synopses and reading notes	~30%
Short Essay 1 (~1,200 words)	See "Guidelines on Short Essay 1" (separate document)	~35%
Short Essay 2 (~1,200 words)	See "Guidelines on Short Essay 2" (separate document)	
Take-home examination	Essay type questions. Questions and instructions will be uploaded to Blackboard shortly after the last lecture.	~35%

Contact details for teacher and tutors

Wong Kai Yee: FKH 428, wongky@cuhk.edu.hk, Tel: 39437145

Luk Ching Kit: FKH 404a, ckaluk@gmail.com, Tel: 39437141

Reading list

Only basic/mandatory readings are listed. For details on other required readings, suggested further readings for each topic, please see lecture notes and separate lists of reading. Reading assignments for tutorial will be detailed in the Briefing Session for tutorials (third week)

Course Schedule*

Week	1 st Day of Week	T 9	W 7-8	Tutorial	Remarks
1	Sep 7		√		
2	Sep 14	√	√		
3	Sep 21		√	#1**	**Tutorial Briefing session with a reading assignment but no presentation
4	Sept 28	√	√		Holidays: Sep 28, Oct 1
5	Oct 5		√	#2	
6	Oct 12	√	√		Essay plan on 1 nd essay due on Oct 15.
7	Oct 19		Holiday	#3	
8	Oct 26	√	√		First essay due on Oct 26
9	Nov 2	P	√	#4	
10	Nov 9	√	√		Essay plan on 2 nd essay due on Nov 19.
11	Nov 16	P	√	#5	Individual meeting with tutor on Essay 1
12	Nov 23	√	√		
13	Nov 30	P	√	#6	Second Essay due on Dec 10

*Not including Take-home Examination, the details of which will be announced in due course.

√ : Lecture 'P': possible catch-up lecture (to be confirmed)

Plagiarisms and Academic Honesty!!

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. I shall assume that **before submitting your paper you will make yourself fully aware of such policy, regulations, guidelines, and procedures**, as stated in the following official CUHK website on academy honesty:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

Bibliography (See Separate File)

Feedback for evaluation

1. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the course via email or meetings with professor or tutors.
2. Midway through the term, students will also be asked to provide feedback via a brief questionnaire on the course.
3. As with all courses in Philosophy Department, students evaluate the course through a survey and written comments at the end of the term as well as via regular feedback between teacher, tutors, and students. This information is highly valued and is used to revise teaching methods, tasks, and content.

