

**PHIL4413**  
**Topics in Comparative Philosophy 比較哲學專題**  
**(Liberal Neutrality, State Perfectionism, and Confucianism)**

**Course Outline**

**Time : W 10-:30-1:15pm**

**Location : CYT 212**

**Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)**

Can government legitimately do things that affect individual lives in their self-regarding (in contrast to their other-regarding) aspects, either positively or negatively? In other words, is government supposed to make laws and/or social policies, among others, to prohibit or make it difficult for people to live lives that (the government thinks) are bad for them (such as driving without seat belt on, riding motorcycles without wearing helmet, smoking that merely affects the smoker, etc.) on the one hand and, on the other, to require or make it easier for people to live lives that (the government thinks) are good for them (such as maintaining regular physical exercises, learning to appreciate works of art, enjoying the beauty of the nature, etc.) In contemporary Western political philosophy, liberalism and state perfectionism hold opposite views on this issue: the former claims that the government should remain neutral with respect to individual lives as long as they don't affect others, while state perfectionism maintains that the government has the responsibility to encourage, if not require, people to live lives that are good for them and make it difficult, if not prohibit, people to live lives that are bad for them. In the first two third of this course, we will examine the central arguments of both liberalism and state perfectionism. In the last third of the course, we will try to see how Confucianism will bear on this issue, with an eye to see whether it can make any unique contributions to this contemporary debate.

Advisory to Majors: to be taken in year 2 or above.

**Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)**

1. Develop sensitivity to the common concerns of human existence especially from a comparative perspective between eastern and western of philosophy.
2. Equip students with life-long learning capacities especially through understanding of the connections between academic pursuits and life experience.
3. Relate the subject matters to human experience and/or modern life.

**Topics**

(See course outline below)

**Learning activities**

1. Students are supposed to attend weekly class sessions regularly; absence without excusable reasons is not tolerated;
2. Students are supposed to come to class prepared, with the assigned readings for the given class carefully read;
3. Students are supposed to actively participate classroom discussions by raising questions and making comments regarding either the assigned readings or the instructor's lectures or fellow students' comments;
4. Students are supposed to write three short papers, each with minimum of 4 pages, double spaced, Times New Romans font size 12, with regular margins; their due dates are indicated on the schedule below; two of the three papers are to be presented at the discussion sessions;
5. Students are supposed to write one term paper, with a minimum of 15 pages, double spaced, Times New Romans font size 12, with regular margins; it can be an extension of one of the three short papers; the paper is due two weeks after the last class.

## Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Class preparation/participation	Reading the assigned reading and actively participate class discussion	15
Three short papers		30
Two presentations		10
One term paper		45

## Recommended learning resources

- Ackerman, Bruce. 1990. "Neutralities." In *Liberalism and the Good*. Ed. by Bruce R. Douglass, Gerald M. Mara, and Henry S. Richardson. New York and London: Routledge.
- Adolphs, Ralph, Hannah Damasio, Daniel Tranel, Gregory Cooper, and Antonio Damasio. 2000. "A Role for Somatosensory Cortices in the Visual Recognition of Emotion as Revealed by 3-d Lesion Mapping." *The Journal of Neuroscience* 20: 2683-2690.
- Analects*. 1980. In Yang, Bojun 楊伯峻, *An Annotated Translation of Analects 論語譯注*. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju.
- Angle, Stephen C. 2009. *Sagehood: The Contemporary Significance of NeoConfucian Philosophy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Barry, Brian. 1990. *Political Argument*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Chan, Joseph. 2000. "Legitimacy, Unanimity, and Perfectionism." *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 29: 5-42.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2014. *Confucian Perfectionism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Dworkin, Ronald 1985. *A Matter of Principle*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. *Foundations of Liberal Equality: Tanner Lectures of Human Values*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Finnis, John. 1987. "The Legal Enforcement of 'Duties to Oneself': Kant vs. Neo-Kantians." *Columbia Law Review* 87: 433-456.
- Hu, Shi. 1991. *Scholarly Works of HU Shi: A History of Chinese Philosophy* 胡適學術著作集: 中國哲學史. Two vols. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局.
- Huang, Yong. 2001. *Religious Goodness and Political Rightness: Beyond the Liberal-Communitarian Debate*. Harvard Theological Studies 49. Harrisburg: Trinity International.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "Political Rightness and Religious/metaphysical Goodness: On the Very Idea of Political Neutrality toward Religions 政治的公正與宗教和形而上學的完善: 當代政治自由主義中立性概念批判" *China Scholarship (Zhongguo Xueshu 中國學術)*, No. 3: 58-83.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2013b. *Confucius: A Guide for the Perplexed*. London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2014. *Why Be Moral: Learning from the Neo-Confucian Cheng Brothers*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015. "Confucianism and the Perfectionist Critique of the Liberal Neutrality: A Neglected Dimension." *Journal of Value Inquiry* 49.1-2: 181-204.
- Hurka, Thomas. 1993. *Perfectionism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Keysers, Christian, Jon H. Kaas, and Valeria Gazzola. 2010. "Somatosensation in Social Perception." *Neuroscience* 11: 417-428.
- Jiang, Qing. 2013. *Confucian Constitutional Order: How China's Ancient Past Can Shape Its Political Future*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kongzi Jiayu 孔子家語 (Conversations of Confucius's Family)*. 2009. Beijing: Beijing Yanshan Chubanshe.
- Kongzi Jiyu 孔子集語 (Collected Sayings of Confucius)*. 2002. Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang Renmin Chubanshe
- Larmore, Charles. 1987. *Patterns of Moral Complexity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996. *The Morals of Modernity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liji (the Book of Rites)*. 2004. YANG Tianyu 楊天宇, In *An Annotated Translation of the Book of Rites 禮記譯注*, Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe.
- Mencius*. In Yang, Bojun 楊伯峻, *An Annotated Translation of Mencius 孟子譯注*. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju.
- Mill, John Stuart. 2003. *On Liberty*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Nagel, Thomas. 1991. *Equality and Partiality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parfit, Derek. 1984. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rawls, John. 1993. *Political Liberalism*. New York. Columbia University Press.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 1999. *A Theory of Justice*. Revised edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Raz, Joseph. 1986. *The Morality of Freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rizzolatti, Giacomo, and Corrado Sinigalia, 2008. *Mirrors in the Brain: How Our Minds Share Actions and Emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Robinson, Douglas. Forthcoming. *The Deep Ecology of Rhetoric in Mencius and Aristotle*.
- Rorty, Richard. 1998. *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sher, George. 1997. *Beyond Neutrality: Perfectionism and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2003. "Freedom of Expression in the Non-Neutral State." In *Perfection and Neutrality: Essays in Liberal Theory*, ed. by Steven Wall and George Klosko. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Thaler, Richard H. and Cass R. Sunstein. 2008. *Nudge: Improving Decisions in Wealth, Health, and Happiness*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Wall, Steven. 1998. *Liberalism, Perfection, and Restraint*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Course schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Required reading</i>	<i>Tutorials</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1 (Sep. 9)	(1) Introduction of the Course (2) Introduction to the topic: Neutrality and the Good in (a) the liberal-communitarian debate and (2) the liberal-perfectionist debate	Huang 2001 (chapter 5); Huang 2003		
2 (Sep. 16)	The liberal neutrality 1: the classical argument	Mill 2003 (particularly chapters 1, 2, and 5)		
3 (Sep. 23)	The liberal neutrality 2: the contemporary argument	Dworkin 1990		
4 (Sep. 30)	Discussion 1: liberal neutrality			1 <sup>st</sup> paper due
5 (Oct. 7)	The perfectionist argument 1: The human nature argument	Hurka 1993 (Particularly parts I and III)		
6 (Oct. 14)	The perfectionist argument 2: Objective list of good perfectionism	Sher 1997 (particularly chapters 9 and 10)		
7 (Oct. 21)	Holiday			
8 (Oct. 28)	The perfectionist argument 3: Liberal Perfectionism	Wall (particularly chapter 1 and part II [particularly chapter 9])		
9 (Nov. 4)	Discussion session 2: Perfectionism			2 <sup>nd</sup> paper due
10 (Nov. 11)	Confucianism 1: Extreme Perfectionism	Jiang 2012: Parts 1 and 3		
11 (Nov. 18)	Class cancelled; to be made up on December 7th			
12 (Nov. 25)	Confucianism 2: Moderate Perfectionism	Chan 2000; Chan 2013 (Introduction, Part 2 and conclusion)		
13 (Dec. 2)	Confucianism 3: Unique contributions	Huang 2015; Huang 2014 (chapter 5); Huang 2013 (chapter 4)		

14 (Dec. 7)	Discussion Session 3: Confucianism			3 <sup>rd</sup> paper due
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**December 21: Term paper due**

**Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)**

<b>Teacher</b>	
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<b>TA</b>	
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**Academic honesty and plagiarism**

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. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.