

**Course Code: PHIL 1110**

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Course Title: Introduction to Philosophy (哲學概論)

2017-18 Term 1

Instructor: Cheung, Kam Ching Leo (張錦青) (email: leokccheung@cuhk.edu.hk)

Tutor: TBA

Time / Venue (Lecture): Wednesday 10:30-13:15 / WMY 507

*BLACKBOARD LEARN will be used for this course.*

**Course Description:**

This course aims to offer a general, and yet comprehensive, introduction to philosophical thinking, issues and problems. Topics to be discussed include: Philosophies of the Pre-Socratics, Plato and Descartes, and selected issues in metaphysics (motion, free will), epistemology (Gettier Problem, Skepticism), ethics (the nature of ethical statement, utilitarianism), and philosophy of mind (the mind-body problem, Turing test and the Chinese room argument). Students are expected to engage in critical, analytical and argumentative evaluation of the philosophical positions, theories and arguments encountered in this course. Hopefully, students will gain a basic familiarity with some of the major philosophical fields, figures and issues, enhance their own critical and reflective attitudes and appreciate the value and spirit of philosophy.

**Learning outcomes:**

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- understand the basic concepts and methodologies of philosophical thinking.
- demonstrate familiarity with the major issues and prominent theses and positions in philosophy.
- appreciate the main concerns and the nature of the major issues in philosophy, as well as the spirit of philosophy.
- acquire skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about issues and problems in philosophy.
- enhance the ability of logical reasoning and argumentation in philosophical thinking.

### **Learning activities:**

Learning activities of this course include lectures, tutorials, reading essays, and writing a short essay and a term paper:

1. Lecture: 2 hours a week (mandatory).
2. Tutorial class: one two-hour session every two weeks (mandatory).
3. A short essay.
4. A term paper.
5. Preparation for the final examination.

In this course, students are required to attend all the lectures and tutorials. Students are expected to read assigned essays before the lectures and study tutorial materials, consisting of assigned essays or book chapters, before the tutorial classes.

Students are also expected to devote sufficient time to prepare for the final examination and the writing of a short essay and a term paper throughout the whole course. Surveying and reading the relevant literature and analyzing the materials are essential to the production of satisfactory short essay and term paper.

Students should be able to develop and enhance their analytical and argumentative skills through discussion in tutorials and classroom and writing the short essay and the term paper.

### **Assessment (provisional):**

Tutorial performance	(15%)
Short essay	(15%)
Term Paper*	(35%)
Examination	(35%)

**Short essay:** You need to write a short essay for this course. It would carry a maximum 20% of the mark of the course.

Word limit of the short essay: 1000

Deadline for the short essay: TBA

### **Term paper:**

Word limit of the term paper: 1500-2500

Deadline for term paper: TBA

### **Attention:**

In your *term paper and short essay*, if there are any ideas, opinions and/or materials which are taken from others, no matter whether you quote them word by word or not, you MUST provide the sources. Otherwise, you would be considered as having committed Plagiarism. (Please also refer to <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for “Honesty in Academic Work.”)

This only applies to the term paper: Students are required to submit their term papers to the **VeriGuide** system before handing them in. Please visit the following website for the VeriGuide system: <http://veriguide1.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/portal/page/index.jsp>

### **Outline Content** (Provisional):

#### Introduction

1. What is philosophy?

#### Some western philosophers

2. The Pre-Socratics
3. Plato
4. Descartes

#### Epistemology

5. The Gettier problem
6. Skepticism

#### Metaphysics

7. “Motion”
8. Free will and determinism
- 9.\* Causation

#### Philosophy of Mind

10. The mind-body problem
11. Turing test and the Chinese room argument

#### Ethics

12. Meta-ethics: the nature of ethical statement
13. Normative ethics: Utilitarianism

\*. This chapter may not be taught.

### **References** (selected):

Aristotle. (1941). *Physics*. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye. trans. In McKeon (1941: 213-394).

Bernecker, S. (2006). *Reading Epistemology—selected texts with interactive commentary*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Boden, M. A. ed. (1990). *The Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence*. Oxford: OUP.
- Copleston, F. (1950). *A History of Philosophy—Volumes Two and Four*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Maryland: Newman.
- Cottingham, J. (1986). *Descartes*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Descartes R. (1968). *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*. F. E. Sutcliffe. trans. Middlesex: Penguin.
- Feldman, R. (2003). *Epistemology*. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Fricker, M. and Guttenplan, S. (2009). *Reading Ethics—selected texts with interactive commentary*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Guthrie, W. K. C. (2000). *The Greek Philosophers—from Thales to Aristotle*. London: Routledge.
- Hospers, J. (1997). *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. London: Routledge.
- McKeon, R. ed. (1941). *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. NY: Random House.
- Nagel, T. (1987). *What Does It All Mean?* Oxford: OUP.
- Plato. (1963). *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns. eds. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Shaffer, J. A. (1968). *Philosophy of Mind*. NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Russell, B. (2004). *History of Western Philosophy*. London: Routledge.

### **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/academic\\_honesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academic_honesty/) .

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.