

PHIL4153
Philosophy of Culture 文化哲學

Course Outline

Time : M 1:30pm-4:15pm

Location : ERB 703

Course overview

This course provides an introduction to philosophy of culture. Topics include: the distinction between culture and nature; the differences between cultural and natural sciences in terms of goal and method. Emphasis will be put on the diversity of methodological approaches. Comparative study of different cultural fields and their philosophical bearings will also be treated. In particular, this course will emphasize the philosophy of mythology as a focal point of the philosophy of culture.

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

Learning outcomes

1. Understand the historical and cultural conditions of the emergence of various theories in philosophy of culture.
2. Grasp the contribution of philosophical reflections of culture to the understanding of the human condition.
3. Develop critical view on theories in philosophy of culture themselves.
4. Grasp the potential of philosophy of culture in reflections on intercultural understanding.
5. Enhanced ability to research independently on the philosophy of culture.
6. The ability to explicate and critically engage the philosophy of culture and philosophy of mythology in the thought of Vico, Schelling, Cassirer, and Girard.

Topics

Culture and Mythology

The Philosophy of Mythology

The Relationship between Mythology, Science, Religion, and Philosophy

Mythology, Violence, and History

Typology of Mythology

The Autonomy of Culture

Culture and Nature

Learning activities

Attend lectures and participate in class discussions. Each lecture is approximately 2 hours.

Tutorials: Attend and participate in tutorials (held every week following the lecture.) Each tutorial is approximately 45 minutes.

Assessment scheme

<i>Task nature</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Argument Critique I	See Remarks.	25%
Argument Critique II	See Remarks.	25%
Term Paper	See Remarks.	50%

Grade Scale:

A: 87-100

A-: 80-86

B+: 77-79

B: 71-77

B-: 68-70

C+: 65-67%

C: 59-64%

C-: 56-58%

D+: 53-55%

D: 50-52%

F: < 5

Grade Criterion for Argument Critique:**A:**

The student knows the authors positions, and proves this knowledge by knowing the argument(s) supporting the theses in the text. Student evidences self-initiated thinking and understanding of the arguments through his/her ability to present her own counter-arguments and possible replies to counter-arguments. The student exhibits thorough understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

B:

The student knows the authors positions, and generally understands the arguments supporting them. Student has difficulty developing her own criticisms and rebuttals to criticism. The student exhibits relatively complete understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

C:

The student shows the ability to properly relay information about the text and the positions contained therein, but has difficulty re-constructing the arguments, presenting counter-arguments, and criticism. Student has a difficulty understanding arguments. The student shows an incomplete understanding of the relations of the themes presented in the various texts.

D:

The student cannot explicate the positions or the arguments for such positions in the text. The student exhibits seriously incomplete understanding.

F:

The student exhibits all the failures mentioned under 'D'. The student earns an F by failing to complete the assignment.

*Remarks:***Class Participation:**

Attendance is mandatory and absence will damage your grades. Two unexcused absences are permitted. For each unexcused absence beyond two, one-half a letter grade will be deducted from your final grade. In case of emergencies, either notify me of your absence ahead of time, or plan to bring some formal documentation of your absence. Without documentation, I will not accept absences as excused.

Argument Critiques:

The Argument Critiques consist of three parts. In respect to the papers, I shall provide you with passages from the texts which we are reading, and I will ask you to choose one passage to work on. You will formulate the argument contained in that passage, and formulate a critique of that passage. The last stage consists in formulating a reply to the criticism that you raise. I encourage you to utilize the texts that we are reading in formulating the criticisms; you are encouraged to employ the philosophers against each other. Argument Critiques should be 3-4 double spaced pages in length.

Term Paper:

The term paper will require students to uncover a philosopher problem in one of the texts that we have read together and clearly explicate that problem. Following the explication of the problem, students should work through various solutions to the problem and clearly formulate their own thesis concerning that problem. I highly recommend that students use one of their Argument Critiques as a possible groundwork for their Term Paper. The term paper requires students to consult and cite at least one work of secondary literature in addition to the required readings. The term paper should not be more than 5-7 double spaced pages.

Late Work/Make-Ups:

Late assignments will be penalized one-half a letter grade for each day the paper is tardy. If you would like a grade changed, you must provide me with a detailed written argument for why you think it should be changed, otherwise I will not consider it.

Required Texts

Vico, *New Science*

F.W.J. Schelling, *Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology*

Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thought*

Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*

Recommended learning resources

Rene Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*

Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 1 and Vol. 3*

Edward Skidelsky, *Ernst Cassirer: The Last Philosopher of Culture*

Moss, *Ernst Cassirer and the Autonomy of Language*

Verene, *Kant, Hegel, and Cassirer: The Origins of the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*

Verene, *Vico's New Science: A Philosophical Commentary*

Louis Dupré, "The Role of Mythology in Schelling's Late Philosophy"

Course schedule

Week	Topics	Assignments
1	Introduction	
2	Vico, <i>New Science</i>	
3	Vico, <i>New Science</i>	
4	Vico, <i>New Science</i>	
5	F.W.J. Schelling, <i>Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology</i>	Argument Critique I
6	F.W.J. Schelling, <i>Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology</i>	
7	F.W.J. Schelling, <i>Historical-Critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology</i>	
8	Ernst Cassirer, <i>Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thought</i>	
9	Ernst Cassirer, <i>Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thought</i>	Argument Critique II
10	Ernst Cassirer, <i>Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, Vol. 2: Mythical Thought</i>	
11	Rene Girard, <i>Violence and the Sacred</i>	
12	Rene Girard, <i>Violence and the Sacred</i>	
13	Rene Girard, <i>Violence and the Sacred</i>	
14	Rene Girard, <i>Violence and the Sacred</i>	Term Paper

Details of course website

We will use Blackboard for this course. Lecture notes and information on assignments and examinations will be posted on the website.

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

Teacher	
Name:	Moss, Gregory
Office location:	Room 426, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	3943 9875
Email:	gs moss@cuhk.edu.hk

TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

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.