

# PHIL5150: Topics in Western Philosophy

(Subtitle: Foundations of Ethics)

Second Term, 2018-2019

**Time:** Tuesday, 2:30-5:15pm

**Location:** Room 403, Wong Foo Yuan Building

## Course overview

This seminar will explore significant and intriguing issues regarding the metaphysics and epistemology of morality. Specifically, the course focuses on two influential books in contemporary metaethics: Parfit's *On What Matters* and Scanlon's *Being Realistic about Reasons*.

## Assessment scheme

| <b>Task nature</b> | <b>Weight</b> |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Discussion         | 20%           |
| Presentation       | 30%           |
| Term Paper         | 50%           |

## Required readings

Selected chapters of the two following books:

- Parfit, Derek (2011) *On What Matters*, Volume 2, Oxford University Press. [P]
- Scanlon, Thomas (2014) *Being Realistic about Reasons*, Oxford University Press. [S]

## Course schedule

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Content</b> | <b>Readings</b>                                      |
|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1           | Introduction   |  |
| 2           | Discussion     | Ch. 24: "Analytical Naturalism and Subjectivism" [P] |
| 3           | Discussion     | Ch. 25: "Non-analytical Naturalism" [P]              |
| 4           | Discussion     | Ch. 28: "Non-cognitivism and Quasi-Realism" [P]      |
| 5           | Discussion     | Ch. 30: "Normative Truths" [P]                       |

|    |            |  |
|----|------------|--|
| 6  | Discussion | Ch. 31: "Metaphysics" [P]  |
| 7  | Discussion | Ch. 32: "Epistemology" [P]   |
| 8  | Discussion | Ch. 33: "Rationalism" [P]  |
| 9  | Discussion | Ch. 34: "Agreement" [P]  |
| 10 | Discussion | Lecture 1: "Introduction: Reasons Fundamentalism";<br>Lecture 3: "Motivation and the Appeal of Expressivism" [S] |
| 11 | Discussion | Lecture 2: "Metaphysical Objections" [S]   |
| 12 | Discussion | Lecture 4: "Epistemology and Determinateness" [S]  |
| 13 | Discussion | Lei Zhong, "The Hard Problem for Soft Moral Realism"   |

### Contact details for teacher(s)

| Teacher          |                                  |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Name:            | Zhong, Lei                       |
| Office location: | Room 424, Fung King Hey Building |
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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.