PHIL3833
Topics in Ethics 倫理學專題

Course Outline

Time：M 1:30pm-4:15pm	**Location：ELB 202**
Tutorial time to be arranged	

Course overview (as shown on CUSIS)

"Who am I?" is one of the fundamental questions traditionally associated with Philosophy. It raises the issue known as personal identity, one that has been discussed since the early days of the discipline. This course will provide an overview of the main approaches to personal identity in contemporary Philosophy, mostly drawn from the Western analytical literature, while also paying attention to the Buddhist and Confucian traditions. We will see that what might look like a single unitary question actually covers several different ones: for example, am I fundamentally a physical, or spiritual entity? Or alternatively, what are the central characteristics that make me the particular person I am? We will then consider whether this theoretical framework can help illuminate debates around ethical issues including abortion, human enhancement, and the quest to extend life beyond the grave.

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

Learning outcomes

1. Gain familiarity with the key concepts and prominent positions on the topic of personal identity in contemporary Philosophy.

2. Understand how, and to what extent, these positions have a bearing on various issues in applied ethics.

3. Critically discuss and evaluate the main arguments and positions on the issues discussed in the course.

4. Demonstrate the ability to clearly articulate one's own arguments and views on these issues, both in oral discussion and in writing.

Topics

1. The different senses of personal identity and their relevance to ethics
2. The soul theory
3. The psychological continuity view
4. Physical continuity: the biological criterion
5. Physical continuity: the brain criterion
6. Buddhism and other skeptical approaches
7. Narrative identity
8. Confucianism and other relational approaches
9. Beginnings of life: abortion and embryo research
10. End of life: advance directives
11. Life after death
12. Human enhancement

Learning activities

One lecture (2 hours) per week

One tutorial (2 hours) every other week

One book chapter or article to read each week

Assignments : one paper and one final exam

Assessment scheme

Task nature	*Description*	*Weight*
Participation in tutorials	One oral presentation, and active participation in discussion in other tutorials	30%
Paper	Write a paper (min. 2000 words long, in English) on any topic discussed between weeks 2 and 8	35%
Final exam	In class	35%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

For papers submitted late, a penalty of 5% of the final grade will be applied for each day that has elapsed since the deadline for submission.

Recommended learning resources

Required readings:

- Ames, Roger T. "The Chinese Conception of Selfhood". In: Deutsch, Eliot, and Bontekoe, Ron (eds.). *A Companion to World Philosophies*. Blackwell Publishing, 1997, pp. 148-54.

- DeGrazia, David. "Identity, Killing, and the Boundaries of our Existence". *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 31:4 (2003), pp. 413-42.

- DeGrazia, David. *Human Identity and Bioethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. (Selected chapters)

- Giles, James. "The No-Self Theory: Hume, Buddhism, and Personal Identity". *Philosophy East and West* 43:2 (1993), pp. 175-200.

- McMahan, Jeff. *The Ethics of Killing: Problems at the Margins of Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. (Selected chapters)

- Parfit, Derek. "Personal Identity". *The Philosophical Review* 80 :1 (1971), pp. 3-27.

- Sauchelli, Andrea. *Personal Identity and Applied Ethics: a Historical and Philosophical Introduction*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2018. (Selected chapters, although the whole book is of relevance to this course)

- Shoemaker, David. "The Insignificance of Personal Identity for Bioethics". *Bioethics* 24:9 (2010), pp. 481-9.

- Wong, David. "Relational and Autonomous Selves". *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 31:4 (2004), pp. 419-32.

Recommended readings:

- Barazzetti, Gaia and Reichlin, Massimo. "Life Extension and Personal Identity". In: Savulescu, Julian, Ter Meulen, Ruud, and Kahane, Guy (eds.). *Enhancing Human Capacities*. Chichester, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2011, pp. 398-409.

- Furberg, Elisabeth. "Advance Directives and Personal Identity: What Is the Problem?". *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 37:1 (2012), pp. 60-73.

- Kind, Amy. *Persons and Personal Identity*. Oxford: Polity Press, 2015.

- Mackenzie, Catriona and Walker, Mary. "Neurotechnologies, Personal Identity, and the Ethics of Authenticity". In: Clausen, Jens, and Levy, Neil (eds.). *Handbook of Neuroethics*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2015, pp. 373-92.

- Martin, Raymond and Barresi, John (eds.). *Personal Identity*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003.

- Nagel, Thomas. *The View from Nowhere*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

- Olson, Eric. *The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

- Parfit, Derek. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

- Rorty, Amelie O. and Wong, David. "Aspects of Identity and Agency". In: Flanagan, Owen and Rorty, Amelie O. (eds.). *Identity, Character and Morality*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press, 1990, pp. 19-36.

- Schechtman, Marya. *The Constitution of Selves*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.

- Schechtman, Marya. "The Narrative Self". In: Gallagher, Shaun (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

- Shoemaker, David. *Personal Identity and Ethics: a Brief Introduction*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2009.

- Shoemaker, David. "Personal Identity and Ethics". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2016 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/identity-ethics/ [accessed 02/08/2019].

- Swinburne, Richard. "Personal Identity: the Dualist Theory". In: Shoemaker, Sydney & Swinburne, Richard (eds.). *Personal Identity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.

Course schedule

Week	Topics	Required reading	Tutorials	Remarks
1	Introduction: personal identity and ethics	Sauchelli, Introduction		
2	The soul theory	Sauchelli, Chap. 1		
3	The psychological continuity view	Parfit, 1971		
4	**Third day of Lunar New Year**			**No class**
5	The biological criterion	DeGrazia, (2005), chap. 2, pp. 46-65	Parfit, DeGrazia (2005)	
6	The brain criterion	McMahan, Chap. 1, sec. 5		
7	Buddhism and other skeptical approaches	Giles, 1993	McMahan, Giles	
8	Narrative identity	DeGrazia (2005), Chap. 3		**Topics given for paper**
9	Relational approaches (incl. Confucianism)	Ames, 1997; Wong, 2004	DeGrazia (2005), Ames & Wong	
10	Abortion and embryo research	DeGrazia (2003), pp. 413-35; Shoemaker (2010), pp. 481-6		**Paper due**
11	Advance directives	DeGrazia (2005), Chap. 5	DeGrazia (2003

12	Life after death	Sauchelli, Chap. 7		
			& 2005), Shoemaker (2010)	
13	**Reading week**			**No class**
14	Human enhancement	DeGrazia (2005), Chap. 6	Sauchielli & DeGrazia (2005)	
15	**Easter Monday**			**No class**
16	**Exam**			

Details of course website

The materials for this course, including readings, lecture slides (PowerPoint), and assignments, will all be posted on Blackboard as the term unfolds.

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

Teacher	
Name:	Erler, Alexandre
Office location:	Room 416, Fung King Hey Building
Telephone:	3943 7139
Email:	erleralexandre@cuhk.edu.hk

TA	
Name:	Zhu Shuhao
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	1155135961@link.cuhk.edu.hk

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.