

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
2020/21 2nd semester
PHIL1413 Philosophy of Life 人生哲學
Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson

Time: Monday 10:30-13:15

Teaching Mode: Online-Zoom

Course overview:

This course aims to help students understand important theories and ideas in philosophies of life, and learn how to use these ideas and theories in thinking and analyzing contemporary social, ethical and political problems in our everyday life. Topics to be discussed include: Food, Sexuality, Emotion, Rationality, Liberty, Equality, Morality, Well-Being, Suffering, Meaning of Life, and Death.

Learning outcomes:

- Be familiar with the main ideas and theories in philosophy of life.
- Understand the contemporary practical issues in our life.
- Demonstrate the/an ability to analyze life issues and defend their own views.
- Acquire skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about the debate on real-life issues.

Learning activities and workload:

- 1. Lecture:** 3 hours each week.
- 2. Reading:** 2-3 hours per week. Student are required to read the reading material assigned.

Assessment:

Task nature	Description	Mode	Weight
Presentation	In class presentation & discussion	Online	30%
Exam	Centralized exam	Face to Face	40%
Paper	Term end paper	Take Home	30%

Backup plan for assessment in case face-to-face assessment is not possible due to pandemic:

Task nature	Description	Mode	Weight
Exam	Take Home Exam	Take Home	40%

Grade Descriptors:

http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Details of course website:

Lecture notes and information on assignments will be posted on the Blackboard Learn website.

Course schedule:

Week	Date	Discussion	Lecture
1	Jan 11	Introduction	Food
2	Jan 18	Roger J. H. King, "Eating Well: Thinking Ethically About Food"	Sexuality
3	Jan 25	Elizabeth Brake, "Is "Loving More" Better? The Values of Polyamory"	Emotion
4	Feb 1	Jenefer Robinson, "Emotion: Biological Fact or Social Construction?"	Rationality
5	Feb 8	John Broome, "Is Rationality Normative?"	Liberty
6	Feb 15	<u>Lunar New Year Holiday</u>	
7	Feb 22	Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"	Equality
8	Mar 1	Derek Parfit, "Equality and Priority"	Morality
9	Mar 8	Kai Nielsen, "Why Should I Be Moral? Revisited"	Well-Being
10	Mar 15	Shelly Kagan, "Well-Being as Enjoying the Good"	Suffering
11	Mar 22	Havi Carel and Ian James Kidd. "Suffering as Transformative Experience"	Meaning of Life
12	Mar 29	<u>Reading Week</u>	
13	Apr 5	<u>Public holiday</u>	
14	Apr 12	Thomas Nagel, "The Absurd"	Death
15	Apr 19	Thomas Nagel, "Death"	Q&A

Recommended learning resources:

<p>Bernard Williams. <i>Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline</i>. Princeton University Press, 2006.</p> <p>Christopher Belshaw. <i>10 Good Questions About Life And Death</i>. Wiley-Blackwell, 2005.</p> <p>David Bain, Michael Brady and Jennifer Corns (Eds.). <i>Philosophy of Suffering-Metaphysics, Value, And Normativity</i>. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.</p> <p>David Benatar (Ed.), <i>Life, Death, and Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings</i>, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.</p> <p>David Kaplan. <i>The Philosophy of Food</i>. University of California Press, 2012.</p> <p>Derek Parfit. <i>Reasons and Persons</i>. Oxford University Press, 1984.</p> <p>Fritz Allhoff and Dave Monroe (Eds.). <i>Food & Philosophy-Eat, Think, and Be Merry</i>. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.</p> <p>Guy Fletcher. <i>The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Well-Being</i>. Routledge, 2015.</p>

Isaiah Berlin. *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Jenefer Robinson. *Deeper than Reason-Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music, and Art*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2005.

Julian Young. *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life*. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.

Raja Halwani, Alan Soble, Sarah Hoffman and Jacob M. Held (Eds.). *The Philosophy of Sex-Contemporary Readings*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2017.

Robert C. Solomon (Ed.). *Thinking about Feeling-Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2004.

Russ Shafer-Landau. *The Fundamentals of Ethics*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Thomas Nagel. *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Will Kymlicka. *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Introduction* (2nd ed). Oxford University Press, 2002.

Feedback for evaluation:

1. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the course via email or meetings with lecturer.
2. Students evaluate the course through a survey and written comments at the end of the term as well as via regular feedback between teacher and students. This information is highly valued and is used to revise teaching methods, tasks, and content.

Contact:

Lecturer	
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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.