

Course Code: PHIL 2060

Course Title: Philosophy and Human Conditions (哲學與人生處境)

2020-21 Term 2

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

BLACKBOARD LEARN will be used for this course.

Course Description:

This course is designed for first year major students to develop an ability to analyze and reflect on contemporary human conditions from a philosophical perspective. It follows the format of a small-class “problem-oriented” seminar, and emphasizes both student-oriented learning and the close interactions among the teacher, the tutor and students. It aims to enhance students’ interest in philosophical studies and to help them develop a sense of what philosophical reflection is about. The topics for discussions are taken from representative works on various philosophical issues by philosophers belonging to different philosophical traditions.

Learning outcomes:

After taking this course, students should be able to:

- understand contemporary human conditions from a philosophical point of view.
- develop own critical views on the meanings and values of life.
- appreciate the main concerns and the nature of the issues taught.
- research further the issues taught.
- learn how to reason and argue cogently in group discussions and debates.

Learning activities:

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

1. Seminars (including presentation and discussion): 3 hours a week (mandatory).
2. Short reflective essay writing.
4. Term paper writing.

Students are required to attend all the weekly seminars. Students are expected to read assigned essays before each seminar, and give presentation in at least one of the seminars.

Students are also expected to devote sufficient time to the writing of a short reflective essay on the paper presented and discussed in one of the seminars **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 reflective essay and term paper.

Assessment:

Classroom presentation and discussion performance	(20%)
Short reflective essay	(20%)
Term Paper*	(60%)

Short reflective essay:

Word limit of the short reflective essay: 1000-2000

Deadline for the short reflection essay: TBD

Term paper:

Word limit of the term paper: 3000-5000

Deadline for term paper: TBD

Attention:

In your *term paper and short reflective essay*, if there are any ideas, opinions and/or materials which are taken from others and other materials, 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'.)

Students are required to submit their short essays and 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>

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/> .

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.

Grade Descriptors:

1. Grade Descriptors for Essays

[Excellent] A (85-92) or [Very Good] A- (80-84)

Argument

- You provide a detailed and specific thesis statement that clearly describes the main claim(s) you will be arguing for and indicates how what you plan to say adds something to the discussion, rather than mostly repeating the material we have read.
- You defend your claims in a well-developed way by giving and explaining your reasons for your position.
- You identify likely objections, present them charitably and respond to them effectively.
- You carefully explain the theoretical and/or practical implications of your argument.

Theory Analysis

- You provide an accurate account of the relevant parts of the theory.
- You illuminate the relationship between the theory's conclusion(s) and its arguments.
- You quote relevant key passages with proper citations.
- You define key terms, and explain their role and how they relate to each other.
- You discuss what the thinker would probably have said about an issue by drawing on what he/she did say about other related matters.

Writing Style

- You choose your words carefully. The language is precise rather than vague, natural rather than awkward, straightforward rather than ostentatious.
- Each piece of the essay is presented in a way that makes it clear to the reader how it is relevant to your thesis.
- Where appropriate, you use real or hypothetical examples to help illustrate abstract points.

[Good] B+ (76-79), B (72-75) or B- (68-71)

Argument

- Thesis statement is clear, but general and unambitious.
- The reasons given to support claims are occasionally weak or too brief. Some claims in need of defence are merely asserted.
- Some key objections are not considered, or the response is weak or too brief.
- Theoretical and/or practical implications are not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise.

Theory Analysis

- There are minor inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some small points are overlooked.
- The theory's arguments for its conclusion(s) are described, but the relationship between them is not explained, or the explanation is vague and imprecise.
- Use of quotations is sometimes missing or erratic or without proper citations.
- Some key concepts are not defined, or are defined carelessly.

Writing Style

- The language is generally clear, but occasionally lacks precision or naturalness or desirable simplicity.
- The relevance of small parts of the essay is not made clear.
- Illustrative examples are used rarely or not at all.

[Fair] C+ (64-67), C (60-63) or C- (56-59)

Argument

- Thesis statement is absent or insignificant or confused.
- The reasons given to support claims are usually weak or too brief. Many claims in need of defence are merely asserted.
- Objections are not considered, or they are only a straw-man version, or the response is ineffective.
- Implications are not identified, or they are asserted without explanation.
- The argument is likely to contain contradictions.

Theory Analysis

- There are significant inaccuracies in the account of the theory. Some major points are overlooked.
- The theory's conclusion(s) are described without reference to its arguments.
- Use of quotations is missing or erratic or without proper citations.
- Key concepts are not defined, or are defined incorrectly.

Writing Style

- The language is often unclear, due to being vague or awkward or ostentatious.
- The relevance of significant parts of the essay is not made clear.
- Illustrative examples are used incorrectly or not at all.

[Pass] D+ (53-55) D (50-52)

Argument

- You demonstrate an awareness of what an argument is, and try to make one.

Theory Analysis

- You grasp at least the main features of some of the theory's most important points.

Writing Style

- The language is intelligible more often than not.

[Fail] F (0-49)

Argument

- You show little awareness of what an argument is, fails to make an argument, and shows almost no effort to make one.

Theory Analysis

- You fail to grasp *any* of the major features of the theory. You have a fundamentally flawed and distorted understanding of the major points of the theory. On the whole, you demonstrate almost no effort in representing the theory accurately.

Writing Style

- The language is more unintelligible than not and the meaning of the language is very hard to discern. The essay is thoroughly unorganized.

2. Grade Descriptors for Tutorial Performance*

Attendance: Note that marks cannot be given for mere attendance, but marks may be deducted for absences.

[Excellent] A (85-92) or [Very Good] A- (80-84)

- You concisely explain the relevant material in a way that clarifies how the various pieces are meant to fit together.
- You raise and clearly explain your own insightful questions of interpretation about the material.

- You raise and clearly explain your own challenging yet fair objections to the material.
- You construct charitable replies on the author's behalf to your points, and provide your own rejoinders.
- You carefully discuss the significance of your points and their theoretical or practical implications.
- In discussion, you demonstrate a willingness to share newly formed ideas, and you effectively begin to develop ideas on the spot through constructive yet critical interaction with others.

[Good] B+ (76-79), B (72-75) or B- (68-71)

- Explanation of material contains minor errors, or is correct but adds little or nothing.
- Questions/objections are relevant, but obvious.
- Author's reply is absent or oversimplified.
- Implications are not discussed or are only briefly explained.
- Good effort at discussion, but hesitant to take risks and has difficulty developing ideas on the spot.

[Fair] C+ (64-67), C (60-63) or C- (56-59)

- Explanation of material contains significant errors or oversights.
- Questions/objections are often confused or unclear.
- Author's reply is absent or mistaken.
- Implications are not discussed or are confused or unclear.
- Little or no effort at discussion.

[Pass] D+ (53-55) D (50-52)

- You attend and show a reasonable interest in the discussion and a willingness to participate minimally if called upon.

[Fail] F (0-49)

- You rarely attend or do not attend at all. You show little or no interest in the discussion and a general lack of willingness to participate if called upon.

*. This is applicable to the case of classroom presentation and discussion.