

## Course Outline (General Education)

|   |                          |                 |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Course Code/Section: UGED2261                     | Year: 2021-22            | Term 1          |
| Course Title: Philosophy and Human Life           |                          |                 |
| Time/Venue: Fr, 9:30-11:15 /                      | Course website:          |                 |
| Course Teacher: Kee, Hayden                       | Email: _____@cuhk.edu.hk | Phone: 39437148 |
| Office Location: Room 430, Fung King Hey Building | Office Hours: TBA        |                 |

### Course overview:

This course investigates problems in different realms of human life from a philosophical point of view. It also demonstrates how philosophical thinking can make a distinctive contribution to our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world. Topics to be discussed include: human nature, happiness, freedom, culture, sex and gender, technology, animals, the earth, mortality, and the meaning of life.

### Learning outcomes:

1. Discuss ethical issues concerning human life.
2. Critically analyze different ideas of happiness in modern society.
3. Reflect on the meaning of life in philosophical way.
4. Evaluate and reflect on one's identity.

### Learning Activities:

#### Course expectations:

- Actively read and reflect on the required course readings
- Attend all lectures and tutorials and actively participate
- Demonstrate that course learning outcomes have been achieved by discussion contributions and written assignments

#### *Activities and workload:*

##### In-class (mandatory):

- Lecture/In-Class Discussion: 2 hours each week.

##### Out-of-class (average workload per week):

- Reading: 2–3 hours on the basic and suggested readings each week.
- Writing Assignments: Approx. 1 hours each week on preparing and writing essay assignments throughout the term.
- Final Exam: Approx. 1 hour each week for preparation. You should make sure that you reserve more time towards the end of the semester.

### Weekly Course Schedule and reading assignment:

| Week/Date | Topic               | Required readings/other requirements  |
|-----------|---------------------|---|
| 1 / 09.10 | Introduction        |   |
| 2 / 09.17 | The Rational Animal | Selections from Aristotle, <i>Physics</i> and <i>De Anima</i>                                     |
| 3 / 09.24 | The Good Life       | Selections from Aristotle, <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ; and Sam Harris, <i>The Moral Landscape</i> |

|            |                                |   |
|------------|--------------------------------|---|
|            |                                |   |
| 4 / 10.01  | NO CLASS                       | PUBLIC HOLIDAY  |
| 5 / 10.08  | Freedom and Human Nature       | Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism"<br><b>DUE: Reflection Paper #1</b>                 |
| 6 / 10.15  | Human Nature and Human Culture | Rachels, "Cultural Relativism"  |
| 7 / 10.22  | Sex and Gender                 | Warnke, "Sex and Gender"  |
| 8 / 10.29  | Technology                     | Jonas, "Towards a Philosophy of Technology"<br><b>DUE: Take-Home Exam #1</b>              |
| 9 / 11.05  | Animals                        | Singer, "Equality for Animals?"; Steinbock, "Speciesism and the Idea of Equality"         |
| 10 / 11.12 | The Earth                      | Selections from James, <i>Environmental Philosophy</i><br><b>DUE: Reflection Paper #2</b> |
| 11 / 11.19 | Death                          | Rosenbaum, "How to Be Dead and Not Care: A Defense of Epicurus"                           |
| 12 / 11.26 | The Meaning(s) of Life         | Taylor, "The Meaning of Life"; Wolf, "Meaning in Life"; Vitrano, "Meaningful Lives"       |
| 13 / 12.03 | Conclusion                     | <b>DUE: Take-Home Exam #2</b>   |
| 12.08-23   | Final Exam Period              |   |

Required readings and other recommended readings/ learning resources:

All required readings and most supplementary resources will be made available on Blackboard.

The following recommended readings have been placed on course reserves at the University Library:

Barnes, Jonathan. *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Benatar, David. *Life, Death & Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings on the Big Questions*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.

Biffle, Christopher, and Plato. *A Guided Tour of Five Works by Plato: With Complete Translations of Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo (death Scene), and "Allegory of the Cave"*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing, 2001.

Cahn, Steven M. *Exploring Ethics: An Introductory Anthology*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Harris, Sam. *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*. New York: Free Press, 2010.

James, Simon P. *Environmental Philosophy: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.

Kaufmann, Walter Arnold. *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. New York: Meridian Books, 1956.

Warnke, Georgia. *Debating Sex and Gender*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

### Assessment scheme:

| Assessment component | Description                               | Weight (%) |
|----------------------|---|------------|
| Participation        | Attendance, participation, in-class tasks | 10%        |
| Reflection Papers    | Summary and evaluation of reading         | 20%        |
| Take-Home Exams      | Short-answer format                       | 35%        |
| Final Exam           | Format TBA                                | 35%        |

### 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 are required to submit a [signed declaration](#) (attachment 1) 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.

### Feedback for evaluation

- a. Course and teaching evaluation survey will be conducted in the second last week of the course. Students are reminded of their responsibility and right to give feedback to facilitate enhancement of the course.
- b. Students are welcome to give feedbacks to the course teacher at any time in person or through emails.

### Grade Descriptors:

[http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade\\_descriptors.pdf](http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf) in your course outline

Attachment 1

### Declaration for written assignment

I am/we are submitting the assignment for:

- an individual project or  
 a group project on behalf of all members of the group. It is hereby confirmed that the submission is authorized by all members of the group, and all members of the group are required to sign this declaration.

I/We declare that the assignment here submitted is original except for source material explicitly acknowledged, the piece of work, or a part of the piece of work has not been submitted for more than one purpose (i.e. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration, and that the submitted soft copy with details listed in the <Submission Details> is identical to the hard copy(ies), if any, which has(have) been / is(are) going to be submitted. I/We also acknowledge that I am/we are aware of University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations, as contained in the University website <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. In the case of a group project, we are aware that each student is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions should there be any plagiarized contents in the group project, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents.

It is also understood that assignments without a properly signed declaration by the student concerned and in the case of a group project, by all members of the group concerned, will not be graded by the teacher(s).

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Signature(s)

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Date

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Name(s)

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Student ID(s)

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Course code

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Course title