

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**  
**2024/25 2<sup>nd</sup> semester**  
**PHIL1413 Philosophies of Life**  
**Course Outline**

**Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson**  
**Time: Thursday 13:30-16:15**  
**Venue: LSK 515**

**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, Rationality, Liberty, Equality, Morality, Well-Being, Meaning of Life, and Death.

**Learning outcomes:**

1. Be familiar with the main ideas and theories in philosophy of life.
2. Understand the contemporary practical issues in our life.
3. Demonstrate the/an ability to analyze life issues and defend their own views.
4. 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:**

<b>Task nature</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Discussion	In class presentation & discussion	30%
Exam	In class essay questions	40%
Paper	Term End Essay	30%

**Grade Descriptors:**

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

**Late submission policy:**

Assignments submitted after the due date will incur a 10% grade reduction per day. Extensions will only be granted in cases of unexpected or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control.

**Details of course website:**

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

**Course schedule:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Lecture</b>
1	Jan 10	Introduction	Food
2	Jan 17	Roger J. H. King, "Eating Well: Thinking Ethically About Food"	Sexuality
3	Jan 24	Elizabeth Brake, "Is "Loving More" Better? The Values of Polyamory"	Rationality
4	Jan 31	<b><u>Lunar New Year Holiday</u></b>	
5	Feb 7	Stephen Ellis, "The Varieties of Instrumental Rationality"	Liberty
6	Feb 14	Isaiah Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"	Equality
7	Feb 21	Derek Parfit, "Equality and Priority"	Morality
8	Feb 28	Kai Nielsen, "Why Should I Be Moral? Revisited"	Well-Being
9	Mar 7	<b><u>Reading Week</u></b>	
10	Mar 14	Shelly Kagan, "Me and my life"	Meaning of Life
11	Mar 21	Thomas Nagel, "The Absurd"	Death
12	Mar 28	Thomas Nagel, "Death"	Q&A
13	Apr 4	<b><u>Public holiday</u></b>	
14	Apr 11	<b><u>In Class Exam</u></b>	

**Recommended learning resources:****General References:**

Bernard Williams. *Moral Luck: Philosophical Papers 1973-1980*. Cambridge University Press, 1981.

David Bain, Michael Brady and Jennifer Corns (Eds.). *Philosophy of Suffering-Metaphysics, Value, And Normativity*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2020.

David Benatar (Ed.). *Life, Death, and Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

David Kaplan (Ed.). *The Philosophy of Food*. University of California Press, 2012.

Derek Parfit. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford University Press, 1984.

Guy Fletcher. *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Well-Being*. Routledge, 2015.

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

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.

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

郭柏年，《流光之中：時間向度的人生哲學短篇》，香港：牛津大學出版社，2024年。

### **Reading list:**

Topic-specific lists of references, required and suggested readings will be given in lecture notes and bibliographical notes (separate) for each topic.

### **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:**

<b>Lecturer</b>	
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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.