ARTS6002 Advanced Studies in the Humanities
Peace of Mind and Classical Philosophical Approaches to Controlling Emotions

Course Outline

Time：Wed 14:30-17:15	**Location: TBC**

Course overview

Long before the formation of the modern discipline of psychology, philosophers across different times and cultures developed methods for managing emotions and achieving peace of mind. These philosophers rely on a key insight–whether or not something upsets us depends as much on our perspective as it does on the event itself. This course will begin by considering contemporary approaches to the management of emotions from an interdisciplinary perspective (psychology/philosophy/religion), but the focus of the course will be on classical philosophical approaches to reducing negative emotions. We will focus on three questions: What is the relationship between perspective and emotion? What kinds of perspectives are most conducive to peace of mind? In what ways do approaches across cultures align or diverge? The course will center on materials taken from Hellenistic philosophy (particularly the Stoics and Skeptics) and early Chinese philosophy (particularly the *Zhuangzi*). Aside from developing a better theoretical understanding of how emotions work and gaining some basic knowledge of ancient philosophical traditions, one goal of the course is to provide students with strategies for thinking about their own emotions.

Learning outcomes (as shown on CUSIS)

1. Acquire critical familiarity with the issues discussed.

2. Analyze and critically interpret some significant primary texts in the Humanities chosen by the course instructor.

Course Topics

This course will divide into four parts. The first two class meetings will survey a variety of approaches to understanding emotions and how emotions can be changed, drawing on both contemporary and ancient sources. The second part of the course will examine three early philosophical systems focused on moderating negative emotions: Epictetus (a Stoic), Sextus Empiricus (a Pyrrhonian Sceptic), and the *Zhuangzi* (a collection of Daoist writings). In the third part of the course, we will turn to specific topics and approaches to managing emotions. For each topic, we will read and compare excerpts from a variety of philosophers and traditions. In the fourth part of the course, students will present their own research projects related to the topic of the course.

Learning activities

The course is designed to function as both a research seminar and a discussion forum. It will include prepared inputs from the instructor as well as student presentations based on the provided reading materials. The structure and content can be adjusted as needed.

Assessment scheme as prescribed on CUSIS (revise if necessary)

Task nature	***Description***	***Weight***

Essays	Complete a research paper related to the course content	50%
Essay test or exam		
Presentation	Carefully read the assigned materials and actively participate in class discussions	50%

Remarks on Assessment Scheme (if any)

Grade Descriptor

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

Recommended learning resources

[to be provided]

Course schedule

Week	***Topics***	***Required reading***	***Tutorials***	***Remarks***
1	General discussion of strategies for controlling emotion, including psychological, philosophical and religious approach	none		
2	How do emotions work?	"Emotions" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (focus sections 3-8); brief selections from classical sources (e.g., Zhuangzi, Huainanzi, Epictetus, Sextus Empiricus, Buddhaghosa)		
3	Stoic approaches to emotion	Selections from Epictetus, *Discourses*		
4	Belief, emotion, and method in Pyrrhonian Scepticism	Selections from Sextus Empiricus, *Outline of Scepticism*		
5	The modes of skeptical arguments	Selections from Sextus Empiricus, *Outline of Scepticism*		
6	Relativism and standards in the *Zhuangzi*	*Zhuangzi* ch. 17		
7	Perspective and skepticism in the *Zhuangzi*	Zhuangzi ch. 1-2		
8	Fatalism and determinism	selections from classical and early modern sources (e.g., Epictetus, Zhuangzi, Mengzi,		

		Leibniz, Spinoza)		
9	Nothing really matters	selections from classical sources (e.g., Zhuangzi, Epictetus, Huainanzi)		
10	There are no things	selections from classical sources (e.g., Zhuangzi, Dialogue with King Milinda)		
11	Perspectives on death	selections from classical sources (e.g., Zhuangzi, Epictetus, Epicurus)		
12	Living with peace of mind—would that be good?	selections from classical sources (e.g., Zhuangzi, Epictetus, Sextus Empiricus)		
13	Final project presentations	none		
14	Final project presentations	none		

Details of course website

[to be provided]

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

Teacher	
Name:	Franklin Perkins
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

TA	
Name:	
Office location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

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.