

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.

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| Subject Code | GEC2C30 |
| Subject Title | Topics in Chinese and Comparative Philosophy |
| Credit Value | 3 |
| Level | 2 |
| Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion | Nil |
| Objectives | This subject examines a number of topics in comparative philosophy that are of crucial importance in different cultures. The aim is to enhance the sensitivity of the students about the differences in different cultures. Very often the differences are not contained in different answers to the same questions, but in different approaches and different concepts being used. In attempting to carefully tease out the similarities and differences of different ideas in different cultures, the students will know not only different cultures better, but also how to think carefully and critically. |
| Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i> | Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to: (a) RECOGNIZE different layers of meaning in a philosophy text and the relevance of the cultural context in understanding the text; (b) COMPARE and CONTRAST ideas that have apparent similarity or contradiction in discourses in different cultures or different epochs; (c) ARTICULATE one's analysis of a philosophical problem in a clear, organized, and reasoned way; (d) APPLY critical, logical, and analytical thinking in understanding and examining competing claims and thoughts in philosophical discourses; (e) READ with greater comprehension (<i>ER</i>); (f) WRITE a research paper effectively (<i>EW</i>). |
| Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus <i>(Note 2)</i> | This subject will look at some very big and fundamental ideas from the perspective of comparative philosophy, including ideas such as harmony, just war, peace, reason and emotion, man and nature, rights and entitlement. All the topics are closely related to the research work of the subject proposer. Sample topics include: a. Filial piety and Civility: What is filial piety? How is it related to general moral qualities like benevolence or civility? Can filial piety serve as a foundation for virtue? Does filial piety lead to partiality and corruption? Is there a tension or conflict between filial piety and other important human values? |

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| | <p>b. Emotion and Reason: Is there any conflict between emotion and reason? Is it better to guide one's life by emotion or reason? How do the Chinese concepts of <i>qing</i> and <i>li</i> compare to the Western concepts of emotion and reason?</p> <p>c. Duty and Entitlement: What duties do we have? Where do they come from? Is the concept of rights alien to Chinese culture or the Confucian tradition? How does the Chinese concept of <i>fen</i> or <i>benfen</i> compare with the Western concepts of duties and rights?</p> <p>d. Man and Nature: What is the relation between man and nature? What is nature? What is the meaning of the claim "man and heaven being one"? What are the logical and practical implications of such a claim? How far should man respect nature and how far should they make use of their intelligence?</p> <p>e. Conflict and Harmony: What is the Chinese concept of harmony? Is struggle or protest against harmony? Is there any conflict between harmony and justice or freedom? Is harmony just a tool of an authoritarian government?</p> <p>f. War and Peace: Are there just wars? What makes a war just? Is peace just the absence of war? Why is peace desirable? What are the visions of peace in different cultures?</p> |
| <p>Teaching/Learning Methodology</p> <p>(Note 3)</p> | <p>In the lecture, the teacher will introduce selected philosophical issues, with special reference to important texts in the Eastern and Western intellectual traditions. The texts will be examined closely and critically. Different views about the texts will be debated and tested. For the presentation and discussion in the seminars, the students have to choose a manageable and debatable topic, and they have to explain their own analysis clearly, sharply, and scholarly.</p> <p><u>Writing Requirement:</u> As a "Writing Intensive" subject, students will be required to produce a substantial paper, which will undergo several drafts, the first for the tutorial presentation, the second for the comment of the ELC teacher, and the final for the subject teacher within two weeks after the tutorial presentation. Two grades will be assigned, one by the ELC teacher based upon an assessment of the student's participation in the drafting process (worth 10% of the total subject grade) and one by the subject teacher based on content (worth 30% of the total subject grade). The final version will be accompanied with a copy of the earlier drafts to assess "progress".</p> <p><u>Reading Requirement:</u> Reading is required for successfully completing the writing project. The essay topics are tied to reading assignments, such that the students have to complete the reading in order to write the essay. In addition, questions in the examination will require students to have sufficient mastery of the content of the required reading which they have to do on their own (namely, the required reading given in the Reading List below) as well as the subject-specific knowledge and thinking skills they have learnt in the class.</p> |

Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes

(Note 4)

| Specific assessment methods/tasks | % weighting | Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate) | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | a | b | c | d | e | f |
| 1. Presentation | 10% | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. Individual Essay | 40% | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3. Examination | 50% | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Total | 100 % | | | | | | |

Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:

Presentation (10%): students in a small group of 3 or 4 are responsible for a 50-minute session of presentation and Q&A. The presentation requires students to have good understanding of the reading materials, able to identify the main points and controversial issues, articulate their ideas clearly and orderly, illustrate their points with relevant examples, and communicate effectively with the audience. It is related to all the intended learning outcomes. The expectations of the students' performance at this stage are not particularly high, and their performance will serve as a basis for further observation of their development and improvement at a later stage of their learning.

Essay (40%): students are required to further develop the ideas in their presentation into an individual essay of at least 2500 words with a research question and sustained arguments. The students are expected to consult the lecturer in writing the essay. The student's performance in the essay should reflect that all the intended learning outcomes should have been achieved at a satisfactory level. **In order to pass this subject, students must pass the writing component, i.e., attain a minimum grade "D" in the writing component.**

Examination (50%): The students have to answer two essay-type questions, each carrying 25% of the total mark. In writing the essays, the students have to apply the skills they have learnt in tackling new or unseen questions. All the intended learning outcomes are evaluated in the examination, but by this time the skills and abilities the student has acquired should be generic in nature, and not just confined to a chosen topic that the student has worked on specifically.

Student Study Effort Expected

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| Class contact: | |
| ▪ Lectures | 26 Hrs. |
| ▪ Seminars | 13 Hrs. |
| Other student study effort: | |
| ▪ Study team meetings | 14 Hrs. |
| ▪ Reading, writing and self-study | 56 Hrs. |
| ▪ ELC/CBS writing support activities | 6 Hrs. |
| Total student study effort | 115 Hrs. |

Reading List and References**Required reading:**

Steven Shankman and Stephan W. Durrant (eds.), *Early China/Ancient Greece: Thinking Through Comparisons*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002. (298 pp.)

D. C. Lau (tr.), *The Analects*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2000. (Selections)

D. C. Lau (tr.), *Mencius*, Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984. (Selections)

Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963.

Other references:

Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Asian Values and Human Rights: A Confucian Communitarian Perspective*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Nobility and Civility: Asian Ideals of Leadership and the Common Good*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Joanne R. Bauer and Daniel A. Bell, (eds.), *The East Asian Challenge for Human Rights*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Lynda S. Bell, Andrew J. Nathan and Ilan Peleg (eds.), *Negotiating Culture and Human Rights*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Ian Buruma, *Taming the Gods: Religion and Democracy on the Three Continents*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment: The Encounter Between Asian and Western Thought*, London: Routledge, 1997.

Chenyang Li (ed.), *The Sage and the Second Sex: Confucianism, Ethics, and Gender*, Chicago: Open Court, 2000.

Anna L. Peterson, *Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Steven Shankman and Stephan W. Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, London: Cassell, 2000.

Kam-por Yu, "Filial Piety as a Path to Civility: The Confucian Project", in Deborah S. Mower and Wade L. Robison (eds.), *Civility in Politics and Education*, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 119-131.

Kam-por Yu and Julia Tao, "Confucianism", in Ruth Chadwick *et al.* (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*, London: Academic Press, 4 Vol. set, Second Edition, Chapter 193, forthcoming in 2012.

Kam-por Yu, "He Ping: A Confucian Perspective", in Wolfgang Dietrich *et al.* (eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Peace Studies: A Cultural Perspective*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 244-259.

Kam-por Yu, Julia Tao and P. J. Ivanhoe (eds.), *Taking Confucian Ethics Seriously*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010.

Kam-por Yu, "Confucian Views on War as seen in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*", in *Dao: A Journal in Comparative Philosophy*, Springer Netherlands, Volume 9, Number 1, March 2010, pp. 97-111.

Kam-por Yu, "The Confucian Conception of Harmony", in Julia Tao, Anthony Cheung, Martin Painter and Chenyang Li (eds.), *Governance for Harmony in*

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| | <p><i>Asia and Beyond</i>, London: Routledge, 2010, pp. 15-36.</p> <p>Kam-por Yu, “The Handling of Multiple Values in Confucian Ethics”, in Kam-por Yu, P. J. Ivanhoe and Julia Tao (eds.), <i>Taking Confucian Ethics Seriously</i>, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010, pp. 27-51.</p> <p>Kam-por Yu, “Human Rights and Cultures”, in Ludger Kühnhardt and Mamoru Takayama (eds.), <i>Menschenrechte, Kulturen und Gewalt</i>, Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2005, pp. 65-76.</p> <p>Kam-por Yu, “Respecting Nature and Using Human Intelligence: Elements of a Confucian Bioethics”, in Margaret Sleeboom (ed.), <i>Genomics in Asia: A Clash of Bioethical Interests?</i>, London: Kegan Paul, 2004, pp. 159-177.</p> <p>Kam-por Yu, “Self-ownership and Its Implications for Bioethics”, in Julia Tao Lai Po-wah (ed.), <i>Cross-Cultural Perspectives on the (Im)Possibility of Global Bioethics</i>, Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, pp. 197-208.</p> |
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Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon completion of the subject. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time over-crowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method purports to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.

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| Subject Offering Department | GEC |
| Cluster Area | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Nature, Relations and Development <input type="checkbox"/> Community, Organization and Globalisation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History, Cultures and World Views <input type="checkbox"/> Science, Technology and Environment |
| Medium of Instruction | English |
| Requirements intended to fulfil | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> China-Study Requirement (CSR) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English Reading (ER) and English Writing (EW) <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese Reading (CR) and Chinese Writing (CW) |