

Subject Description Form

Subject Code	APSS611																	
Subject Title	Epistemology of Social Work Knowledge																	
Credit Value	3																	
Level	6																	
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil																	
Assessment Methods	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">100% Continuous Assessment</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Individual Assessment</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Group Assessment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Book review</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Class Participation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Seminar presentation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Term paper</td> <td style="text-align: center;">45%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The grade is calculated according to the percentage assigned; ▪ The completion and submission of all component assignments are required for passing the subject; and ▪ Student must pass all components (standard of passing) if he/she is to pass the subject. 			100% Continuous Assessment	Individual Assessment	Group Assessment	1. Book review	20%	0%	2. Class Participation	10%	0%	3. Seminar presentation	25%	0%	4. Term paper	45%	0%
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Objectives	<p>The primary objective of this course is the study of knowledge in social work. It is organized around understanding and analyzing the conditions, sources, structure, justification and limitation of the knowledge systems of social work.</p> <p>Social work is the profession committed to the pursuit of social justice and to the enhancement of people's quality of life. In keeping with these professional commitments, this course is also designed to assist students in articulating and developing their own "personal epistemology", and to integrate their knowledge in a moral framework for the service of their clients. The objectives of this course can be divided in two levels, <i>know it</i> (1 to 3) and <i>know thou</i> (4 to 6), as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe and analyze the epistemological standards of different paradigms of social work knowledge. 2. Understand and analyze the basic epistemological criteria for evaluating social work goals and outcomes. 3. Evaluate and respond to the current debates on the knowledge of social work. 																	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Understand and evaluate the relationship between social worker and social work theories, and the interaction between social worker (as the “knower”) and clients in the construction of knowledge in social work interventions. 5. Identify and critically reflect on our own epistemological stances in social work knowledge. 6. Explore the direction of indigenization of social work knowledge in our culture.
<p>Intended Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To acquire a contextualized understanding of social work practice in the political, economic, and social contexts of Hong Kong and China Mainland. b. To develop the humanistic value commitment of professional workers in order to have the quality and ability to deal with the competing values and ethical dimensions in decision making, and also have the capacity to address the tension, uncertainty, and conflicts arising from the decision-making process. c. To integrate the broad foundation of knowledge with the professional knowledge and skills for social work practice in resolving problems with clients in specific service settings. d. To have the attitude and methods to continue to learn, change, and grow as a person and as a professional.
<p>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</p>	<p>(A) <u>Epistemology</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brief introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Knowledge as Justified True Belief: necessary and sufficient conditions (b) Knowledge and Justification: sources, structure, and limitation (c) Social Epistemology: the focus on social dimension of knowledge-production (d) “Knowledge” in Chinese culture (B) <u>The development of social work knowledge</u> 2. Paradigms of social work knowledge <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Conditions (social and intellectual) for the formation of social work knowledge systems (b) Critical analysis: sources, structure, justification and limitation (c) The relationship between the “knower” and knowledge in social work (d) Practice Wisdom and Local Knowledge in social work 3. The Psychodynamic Approach, the Cognitive Behavioural and Behavioural Approaches

	<p>4. The “Social Work Fundamentalist”, the Radical and Postmodern Approaches</p> <p>(C) <u>Contemporary issues of social work knowledge</u></p> <p>5. Evaluation of social work knowledge</p> <p>(a) The conception of Self and the conception of Person in the environment</p> <p>(b) The methodology and the intervention</p> <p>(c) The therapeutic assessment</p> <p>6. Meta-analysis of social work knowledge</p> <p>(a) The social and intellectual contexts of social work knowledge and beliefs</p> <p>(b) The debate on positivism in social work</p> <p>(c) The nature of social work knowledge: a revisit</p> <p>7. Moral knowledge in social work</p> <p>(a) What is right and wrong in social work?</p> <p>(b) How can we <i>know</i> any of that?</p> <p>(c) Do we need “objective reality” for this moral knowledge?</p> <p>8. Forum: Interdisciplinary discussion on the cultural specificity and indigenization of social work knowledge (Guests: teachers from other disciplines).</p>																												
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology</p>	<p>The works and ideas of important philosophers in epistemology will be made accessible and personally relevant to students new to the discipline. The teachers will offer succinct exposition of the major themes of the selected issues in epistemology. The teacher will also lead class discussions of the selected issues, utilizing and expanding on the insights of the philosophers from the diverse perspectives of epistemology.</p> <p>Students will be expected to read extensively, to discuss and debate with the classmates and teachers. They need to read the important works, apply the insights to the issues and share ideas in discussions. Students are also expected to prepare for, attend and participate in all seminars.</p>																												
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="4">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Book review</td> <td>20%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Class Participation</td> <td>10%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Seminar Presentation</td> <td>25%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed				a	b	c	d	1. Book review	20%	✓	✓	✓	✓	2. Class Participation	10%	✓	✓	✓	✓	3. Seminar Presentation	25%	✓	✓	✓	✓
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	Total	100%				
	<p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>Book review Please review a social work book published after 2001. Write a report of not less than 2000 words and discuss the epistemological framework of the author(s). Please follow the format of book review of a specific journal to which you will send this review.</p> <p>Class Participation Students will need to critically appraise the assigned readings and present to other class members for discussion. Students also need to participate actively in seminar discussion.</p> <p>Seminar presentation Students will choose a topic from the syllabus and present in the seminar group. Students will be judged on the quality of the literature review, organization and originality of arguments, and the ability to analyze.</p> <p>Term paper Based on the presentation, an essay (not less than 4,000 words) has to be submitted within four weeks. Students need to well articulate their views of the topic and present a well-organized analysis after critical examination of epistemology and its relationship to knowledge building in social work.</p>					
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:					
	▪ Lecture		24 Hrs.			
	▪ Seminar		15 Hrs.			
	Other student study effort:					
	▪ Self-study (3 hrs x 13 weeks)		39 Hrs.			
	▪ Preparation for Seminar Presentation		10 Hrs.			
	▪ Preparation for Term Paper		25 Hrs.			
	Total student study effort		113Hrs.			
Medium of Instruction	English					
Medium of Assessment	English					

Reading List and References

Essential

- Chambon, A.; Irving, A.; and Epstein, L. (1999). *Reading Foucault for social work*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ellis, Albert (1994). *Reason and emotion*. NY: Carol Publishing Group.
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- Freud, Sigmund (1927). *The problem of lay-analysis*. NY: Brentano's Publisher.
- Ho, Yuk-Ying & Yuen, Sun-pong (eds.) (2010). *Reconstitution of social work: Towards a moral conception of social work practice*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company.
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- Prochaska, James O. & John C. Norcross (2007). *Systems of psychotherapy: A transtheoretical analysis*, 6th edition. Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole Pub.
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(plato.stanford.edu/entries/epistemology/#MRE)
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- Tsang, N.M. (2007). Orality and literacy: Their relevance to social work, *Journal of Social Work*, 7(1), 51-70.
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- 牟宗三 (1997). 《中西哲學之會通十四講》. 上海: 上海古籍出版社.
- 阮新邦 (2005). 《邁向嶄新的社會知識觀》. 北京市: 北京大學出版社.
- 賀玉英, 阮新邦 編 (2004). 《詮釋取向的社會工作實踐》. 新加坡: 八方文化創作室.
- 余英時 (2007). 《知識人與中國文化的價值》. 臺北: 時報文化.

Supplementary

- Adams, R.; Dominelli, L. and Payne, M. (2002). *Social work: Themes, issues and critical Debates*, 2nd ed.. New York: MacMillan Press.
- Lemma, Alessandra and Patrick, Matthew (eds.) (2010). *Off the couch: Contemporary psychoanalytic approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Erwin, Edward (1996). *A final accounting: Philosophical and empirical issues in Freudian psychology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Foucault, Michel (2002). *The Archaeology of knowledge*; translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge.
- Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?* Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair C. (2007). *After virtue: A study in moral theory*, 3rd ed. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Moser, Paul K. (ed.) (2002). *The Oxford handbook of epistemology*. New York: OUP.
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Wampold, Bruce E. (2001). *The great psychotherapy debate: Models, methods, and findings*. Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Witkin, Stanley L. (1989). Towards a scientific social work, *Journal of Social Service Research*, 12(3/4), 83-98.

Witkin, L. Stanley (ed.) (2012). *Social Construction and Social Work Practice: Interpretation and Innovations*. NY: Columbia University Press

Zucker, Kenneth J. & Bradley, Susan J. (1995). *Gender identity disorder and psychosexual problems in children and adolescents*. London: Guilford Press.

牟宗三 (1983). 《中國哲學十九講》. 臺北市: 臺灣學生書局.

(Please refer to the website for updated references)