

## The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

### Subject Description Form

<b>Subject Code</b>	CBS1CN30
<b>Subject Title</b>	Ethical Thinking: Theory and Practice
<b>Credit Value</b>	3
<b>Level</b>	1
<b>Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion</b>	Exclusion: GEC1C24 and CBS1C30
<b>Objectives</b>	The purpose of this subject is to introduce to the students different facets of human ethical concern, the diversity of ethical perspectives, and the commonly recognized relevant grounds for making moral judgments. The aim is not to indoctrinate them with the right answers to ethical questions. Being ethically mature and responsible are indicated not by liberal or conservative stances, but by the quality of ethical thinking – whether a person is able to reflect seriously on his/her own ethical views, with a healthy balance between sense and sensitivity, and awareness that there are competing ethical perspectives to be given due understanding and consideration. The enhancement of the quality of ethical thinking is the educational goal promoted by this subject.
<b>Intended Learning Outcomes</b> <i>(Note 1)</i>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) apply common ethical concepts and various possible grounds for making ethical claims;</li> <li>(b) articulate one’s ethical views clearly and with reasons, especially in the term paper (EW);</li> <li>(c) identify important ethical issues in one’s social life and in the contemporary world, and understand the complexity of such ethical issues and diversity of ethical perspectives, partly from reading the prescribed texts on their own (ER);</li> <li>(d) respond with both sympathetic understanding and critical thinking to opinions that are different from one’s own, which they will come across both in the lecture and in reading the prescribed texts (ER);</li> <li>(e) discuss these ethical issues and different ethical perspectives with an acute awareness of their complexity and diversity;</li> <li>(f) be self-reflective of one’s own ethical views and assumptions and communicate with good sense and reason.</li> </ul> <p><i>Please explain how the stated learning outcomes relate to the following three essential features of GUR subjects: Literacy, Higher order thinking, and Life-long learning</i></p> <p><u>Literacy:</u> In studying each topic, and in particular in preparing to present on a topic, the students have to read the textbook as well as additional critical essays which</p>

	<p>contain sustained arguments and contrasting perspectives. The students also have to express themselves clearly, systematically, and with good reasons, in their tutorial presentations and in their individual term papers.</p> <p>As a “Reading intensive” subject, students will be taught how to perform first a “quick read” to get the general flow of the material, and then how to do a meticulous second (or even third) reading to comprehend and analyze the details of the different perspectives and their supporting arguments.</p> <p>As a “Writing Intensive” subject, the required minimum length of the term paper is 1,500 – 2,500 words.</p> <p>All the exercises in reading, writing, public speaking, and rational discussion are conducive to enhancing the literacy level of the students.</p> <p><u>Higher order thinking:</u> A number of higher order thinking skills are taught in this subject. The art of making clear, informed, reasoned, and balanced judgments is emphasized and assessed throughout. The discussion of practical issues requires the students to put the thinking skills they have learnt into practice.</p> <p><u>Life-long learning:</u> Although only a limited number of ethical issues are discussed in this subject, the same methodology can be applied to other ethical issues that the students may encounter later in life. Learning this subject gives the students the confidence and the skills in thinking about ethical matters, which they can continue to employ after finishing this subject.</p>
<p><b>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</b></p> <p><i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<p><u>Part I: Ethical concepts and approaches</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Introduction to ethical thinking</li> <li>b. Utility: consequence, pleasure, satisfaction, and welfare</li> <li>c. Rights: dignity and autonomy</li> <li>d. Duties: relationships and conflicts of duties</li> <li>e. Principles: The Golden Rule, moral law, justice</li> <li>f. Values: virtues and cultural values</li> </ol> <p><u>Part II: Topical issues</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Abortion</li> <li>b. Euthanasia and assisted suicide</li> <li>c. Sexual morality</li> <li>d. Reproductive technology</li> <li>e. Sexual harassment</li> <li>f. Environment and ecology</li> </ol>
<p><b>Teaching/Learning Methodology</b></p> <p><i>(Note 3)</i></p>	<p>In the lecture, the teacher will introduce the basic approaches, concepts, and methods of ethical thinking. The lecturer will introduce factors that need to be considered when making moral judgments. The introduction will be supplemented with illustrations of ethical approaches towards ethical issues. The students will further investigate problems lightly tackled in the lectures.</p>

	<p><b>Writing Requirement:</b> As a “Writing Intensive” subject, students will be required to produce a substantial term paper of at least 1,500 – 2,500 words, which will undergo several drafts, the first to be submitted by mid-semester, supervised by the ELC. 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 40% of the total subject grade).</p> <p><b>Reading Requirement:</b> A number of short quizzes and/or classwork on the prescribed textbook and other required readings will be set to assess students’ understanding of them, especially those parts not covered in the lectures. The questions will require students to have sufficient mastery of the content of the required reading which they have to do on their own, as well as the subject-specific knowledge and the generic thinking skills that are taught in the class. In addition, consultation of supplementary books and articles is required for successfully completing the writing project.</p>																																						
<p><b>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes</b></p> <p>(Note 4)</p>	<p>Individual term paper (50%): students are required to develop a thesis statement into an individual term paper of at least 1,500 – 2,500 words with a research question and sustained arguments. In order to pass this subject, students must pass the writing component, i.e., attain a minimum grade “D” in the writing component.</p> <p>Quizzes &amp; classwork (50%): Quizzes &amp; classwork will be designed to assess students’ understanding of the course materials.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>A</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th>f</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Individual Term Paper</td> <td>50%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quizzes &amp; classwork</td> <td>50%</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="6"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						A	b	c	d	e	f	Individual Term Paper	50%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Quizzes & classwork	50%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Total	100 %						
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<b>Reading List and References</b>	<p><b>Required Reading:</b> (for a “ER” subject)</p> <p>Julian Baggini, <i>The Big Questions: Ethics</i>, London: Quercus, 2012, pp. 1-207.</p> <p><b>Reference List:</b></p> <p>R. M. Hare, <i>Moral Thinking: Its Level, Method and Point</i>, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.</p> <p>John Harris, <i>The Value of Life: An Introduction to Medical Ethics</i>, London: Routledge, 1985.</p> <p>Barbara MacKinnon &amp; Andrew Fiala, <i>Ethics: Theory &amp; Contemporary Issues</i>, Cengage Learning, 2015.</p> <p>Colin McGinn, <i>Moral Literacy</i>, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992.</p> <p>Mike W. Martin, <i>Everyday Morality: An Introduction to Applied Ethics</i>, Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1995.</p> <p>David S. Oderberg, <i>Applied Ethics</i>, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.</p> <p>D. D. Raphael, <i>Moral Philosophy</i> (Second, Enlarged Edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.</p> <p>Russ Shafer-Landau, <i>The Fundamentals of Ethics</i>, Oxford University Press, 2015.</p> <p>Russ Shafer-Landau, <i>The Ethical Life</i>, Oxford University Press, 2015.</p> <p>Peter Singer, <i>Practical Ethics</i> (Second Edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.</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.

<b>Subject Offering Department</b>	CBS
<b>Cluster Area</b>	<p>Please check the box(es) below to indicate the cluster area(s) the subject contributes in a major way:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Human Nature, Relations and Development [CAR(A)]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Science, Technology and Environment [CAR(D)]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese History and Culture [CAR(M)]</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultures, Organisations, Societies and Globalisation [CAR(N)]</p>
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	English
<b>Requirements intended to fulfil</b>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> China-Study Requirement (CSR)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English Reading (ER) and English Writing (EW)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chinese Reading (CR) and Chinese Writing (CW)</p>