

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

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

Subject Code	CBS1C14M
Subject Title	Sense making of signs across cultures
Credit Value	3
Level	1
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	Nil
Objectives	This subject aims to present to students how our humanity develops in tandem with the birth of the symbolic mind and the associated culture, particularly the invention of speech and writing system as a set of signs, and how the symbolic culture eventually leads to the emergence of modern civilization that we are experiencing nowadays.
Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i>	Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. articulate the uniqueness of humanity, that is having abilities to confer meaning to parts of our body and of the universe, in relation to humans as a sign marker b. understand the interface between nature, culture and civilization c. aware of the within-culture and between-culture variation in the interpretation of cultural signs
Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus <i>(Note 2)</i>	<p>Part A: Sense Making of Signs (Week 1-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emergence of symbolic culture in humanity in pre-modern era • The interface and development of signs from nature to culture in from pre-modern to modern world • The symbolic mind: basic workings and meaning creation of signs in human mind in the 20th century: an introduction to Saussure's dyadic model and Peirce's triadic model <p>Part B: Cultural and Linguistic Sign (Week 4-8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the typology of cultural signs and the use of cultural signs in modern world • The travelling of sign across space and time: the intra- and inter-cultural variation of sign in Asia and European cultures • Understanding linguistic sign from the semiotic perspectives- using the development of Hanzi as an example

	<p>Part C: Verbal and Non-verbal signage in human development (Week 9-13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulating the kinesics/ body motion communication in human activity (e.g. kinesics or motion-related communicative norms in routine and strategic interpersonal, social, professional and public contexts) • Learning the human use of proxemics or spatial orientations and its effects in a cross-cultural perspective • The role and function of chronemics or time management as symbolic systems in different cultures 																																	
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology (Note 3)</p>	<p>Subject matter is delivered in lecturer and consolidated in seminars. Conceptual grounding with illustrations and cases will be given in lectures. Extended discussion on lecture topics will be delivered in the student-centered seminars where students will be assigned to form small groups to have in-depth discussion with teachers on related readings to gain a concrete understanding of the intricate issues on symbolic communication that are of great relevance to human development and the shaping of today's world.</p> <p>Further consolidation on students' grip of the subject matter is done via a quiz in Part A, essay writing and oral presentations concerning Parts B and C.</p>																																	
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes (Note 4)</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="534 1153 1481 1832"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="3">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Quiz (Part A)</td> <td>20</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Essay writing (Part B)</td> <td>30</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Oral presentation (Part C)</td> <td>40</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Participation and Performance during seminar (All parts)</td> <td>10</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>Quiz: Students will be required to attend a MC quiz concerning the concepts and ideas delivered in Part A. Focuses will be placed on human symbolic activity, development of signs and the sense making process of signification which are also the ILOs a, b and c.</p>	Specific assessment methods/tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)			a	b	c	1. Quiz (Part A)	20	✓	✓	✓	2. Essay writing (Part B)	30	✓	✓	✓	3. Oral presentation (Part C)	40	✓	✓	✓	4. Participation and Performance during seminar (All parts)	10	✓	✓	✓	Total	100 %			
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	<p>Essay writing: Students will have to work on individual basis to prepare a short essay of 600-800 English words to present their own views on either 1) the typology and use of sign(s), 2) the travel of sign(s) or 3) the use or development of linguistic sign(s). Students will be required to read related materials in the preparation of essay writing.</p> <p>Oral Presentation: This is a group project in which students will work in a group of 3-5 members to conduct a presentation on the use of verbal and/or non-verbal signage in social or corporate context.</p> <p>Seminar performance: Students will be involved in reading related materials for seminar discussion to explore their learning of lecture topics that covers all ILOs. Active participation during seminar is highly encouraged.</p> <p>As for the marking schemes of the aforementioned assignments, students will be clearly told that credits will be given to attributes such as accuracy in subject-matter handling, clarity in delivery, and appropriate use of illustrations that is drawn on a broad range of experiences.</p>	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ Lectures	26 Hrs.
	▪ Seminars	13 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	▪ Self study	39 Hrs.
	▪ Coursework preparation	39 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	117 Hrs.
Reading List and References	<p>For Part A: Sense Making of Signs (Week 1-3) Adler, Ronald B & George Rodman. <u>Understanding human communication</u>. 10th Edn., New York : Oxford University Press, 2009 Håkansson, Gisela. <u>Communication in humans and other animals</u>. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013 Impelluso, Lucia. <u>Natura e i suoi simboli</u>. [English Title] <u>Nature and its symbols</u>; translated by Stephen Sartarelli. Los Angeles, Calif. : J.P. Getty Museum, c2004. Tresidder, Jack. (Ed.) <u>The complete dictionary of symbols</u>. San Francisco, Calif. : Chronicle Books, 2005</p> <p>For Part B: Cultural and Linguistic Sign (Week 4-8) Bloom, Jonathan. <u>Minaret, symbol of Islam</u>. Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, c1989 Bruce-Mitford, Miranda. <u>The illustrated book of signs & symbols</u>. Westmount, Quebec : Reader's Digest Association (Canada) Ltd., 1996 DeFrancis, John. <u>The Chinese Language: Facts and Fantasy</u>. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984</p>	

	<p>Dennis-Bryan, Kim. <u>Signs & Symbols: an illustrated guide to their origins and meanings</u>. USA: DK Publishing, 2008</p> <p>Hyland, Angus & Steven Bateman. <u>Symbol</u>. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2011</p> <p>Ladner, Gerhart B. (Gerhart Burian) <u>God, cosmos, and humankind : the world of early Christian symbolism</u>; translated by Thomas Dunlap. Berkeley : University of California Press, c1995</p> <p>Sassoon, Rosemary & A. Gaur. <u>Signs, symbols and icons</u>. Exeter, UK: Intellect Books, 1997 (Electronic version available)</p> <p>Soltes, O.Z. (2005). <u>Our Sacred Signs: how Jewish, Christian, and Muslim art draw from the same source</u>. Cambridge: Westview Press</p> <p>Wilkinson, Richard H. <u>Symbol & magic in Egyptian art</u>. London : Thames and Hudson, c1994</p> <p>Hodge, Robert & Kress, Gunther. <u>Social Semiotics</u>. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.</p> <p>For Part C: Verbal and Non-verbal signage in human development (Week 9-13)</p> <p>Conference on Corporate Communication, CCI, Wroxton, UK, June 4-7, 2010.</p> <p>Kendon, Adam. <u>Conducting Interaction Patterns of Behavior in Focused Encounters</u>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990</p> <p>Mugglestone, Lynda. <u>Talking Proper: the Rise of Accent as Social Symbol</u>. Clarendon Press, 1995</p> <p>Ng, P. & So, D. (2010). 'Non-verbal communication norms in corporate contexts: A Hong Kong Perspective', presented at International Conference on Corporate Communication, CCI, Wroxton, UK, June 4-7, 2010.</p>
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