Lingnan University  
Department of Philosophy – MA in Practical Philosophy Programme

Course Title: Studies of Life and Death  
Course Code: PHI511  
Recommended Study Year: -  
No. of Credits/Term: 3  
Mode of Tuition: Lecture and Tutorial  
Class Contact Hours: 2 hours lecture per week  
1 hour tutorial per week  
Category in the Programme: Value Philosophy  
Prerequisite(s): -  
Co-requisite(s): -  
Exclusion(s): -  
Exemption Requirement(s): -

Brief Course Description
Life is a learning process of facing death. In this perspective, death constitutes a significant, if not the whole meaning of life. This idea is shared by different schools of thought both East and West. In this course, students will study the meaning of death from a philosophical as well as from a religious standpoint. Though it is not likely that we can understand death intellectually, it is hoped that we can learn how much weight we should give to it in our lives, in what sense it can contribute to the meaning of life, and how we should face it and deal with it.

Aims
This course aims at introducing different thoughts on death from which students can develop their own view. Students will learn what are the needs of the dying and how to communicate with them. They will be stimulated to reflect on the meaning of life as well as death.

Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course, students are expected to have a reflection on the question “What does death mean to him/her?” They should have an understanding of the common psychological response of a dying person. Finally, they should be aware of the relevancy of death to life.

Indicative Content
1. Thanatology, Study of Life and Death, Death Education  
2. The Ways of Expressing Death and the Approaches to Understanding Death  
   a. Ancient Myths: ancient Egypt; Epic of Gilgamesh  
   b. Psychological Approach: five psychological stages of dying patients by Kubler-Ross  
   c. Anthropological Approach
3. Philosophy of Death  
   a. Plato  
   b. Christianity  
   c. Confucianism  
   d. Taoism  
   e. Buddhism  
4. Contemporary Social Issues about Death  
   a. Hospice movement  
   b. Euthanasia  
   c. Suicide
5. The Meaning of Life and Death

Teaching Method
The course will be taught in the lecture and tutorial format. The lecture will offer a general picture of the problem of death as well as various approaches and perspectives to deal with this problem. In the tutorials, students are expected to acquire an experience of what death is like through the study
Measurement of Learning Outcomes
Assessment will be based on the performance in tutorials, report on activities, exercise, term paper and a take-home examination.

1. Students will discuss on assigned topic in the tutorials. They are expected to be able to reflect deeply on the issues related to life and death. They are encouraged to draw on sources from their own experiences in supporting their views.
2. Students will write a term paper. They are expected to be able to integrate what they have learned in class in order to apprehend concrete situations.
3. Students will write a report on the visit. They are expected to express their feeling as well as reflections upon what they have observed during the visit.
4. Examination will assess students’ depth of reflection on issues of life and death.

A survey by questionnaire with simple questions will be conducted both at the beginning and in the end of the course. It will show the changes (if any) of students’ attitude towards life and death and their perception of the relationship between these two.

Assessment
Continuous Assessment 60%; Examination 40%

Required Readings

傅偉勳:《死亡的尊嚴與生命的尊嚴》, 台北．正中．1993。
E. 雲格爾 著，林克譯，《死論》，香港．三聯．1996。

林綺雲編，《生死學》，台北：洪葉文化，2000。

Supplementary Readings
段德智,《死亡哲學》, 台北：洪葉文化，1994。
Bowker, John,《死亡的意義》，商戈令譯，台北：正中，1994。
克理希那穆提 著，唐世德譯，《生與死》，台北：方智，1995。
托爾斯泰等 著，徐進夫譯，《死的況味》，台北：志文出版社。
雷蒙穆迪 著，孫慶餘譯，《揭開死亡之謎》，台北，求精，1977。
余德慧，《生死無盡》，台北：張老師文化，1998。
鄭遷淦 (編),《生死學概論》，台北：五南，2000。
丹尼爾．卡拉漢 著，張至璋譯，《生命中的懸夢》，台北：正中，1999。

相關電影：
野草莓(Wild Strawberries, 1957) ［瑞典］英瑪．褒曼(Ingmar Bergman) 導演。
第七封印(The Seventh Seal, 1956) ［瑞典］英瑪．褒曼(Ingmar Bergman) 導演。
留芳頌(Ikiru, 1952) ［日本］黑澤明(Akira Kurosawa) 導演。
死囚168小時(Dead Man Walking, 1995) ［美國］添．羅賓斯(Tim Robbins) 導演。
楓山節考(Ballad of Narayama,1982) ［日本］今村昌平(Shohei Imamura) 導演。
鐵案懸案(The Life of David Gale, 2002) ［美國］阿倫．柏加(Alan Parker) 導演。
21克(21 grams, 2003) ［墨西哥］艾力謝約．依拿力圖(Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu) 導演。
老豆堅遇美利堅(The Barbarian Invasion, 2003) ［加拿大］丹尼斯．艾肯(Denys Arcand) 導演。
教我如何去殺他(A Short Film about Killing, 1988) ［波蘭］奇斯洛夫斯基 (K. Kieslowski) 導演。
櫻桃的滋味(The Taste of Cherry, 1997) ［伊朗］基阿魯斯達米 (Abbas Kiarostami) 導演。
八月照相館(Christmas in August, 1998) ［韓國］許秦豪(Hur Jin-ho) 導演。
生命因愛動聽(Life is a miracle, 2001) ［香港］關信輝 導演。