Course Title: Special Topics in Chinese Ontology
Course Code: PHI531
Recommended Study Year: N/A
No. of Credits/Term: 3
Mode of Tuition: Lecture and tutorial
Class Contact Hours: 2 hours Lecture/week; 1 hour Tutorial/week
Category in Major Programme: Tradition and Practical Wisdom
Prerequisite(s): N/A
Co-requisite(s): N/A
Exclusion(s): N/A
Exemption Requirement(s): N/A

Brief Course Description
In Chinese philosophy the problem of the relation between ontological being and sensible being has remained central themes for centuries. This problem is significant not only in metaphysics, but also in ethics and epistemology. It is generally thought that these two worlds are not inter-permeable in the sense that there is a strict boundary forbidding sensible beings to ‘transcend’ to the world of substance. In Chinese philosophy it is claimed that certain ways of ‘transcendence’ is possible. This view is commonly held by Confucianism, Taoism and Chan’s Philosophy. In this course, students will study the idea of Heaven, the possible ways of approaching it and further discuss the status of man in the cosmos in different schools of thought.

Aims
To provide students with knowledge about the idea of Heaven and its significance in Chinese philosophy and also to explain the relationship between Heaven and Man. By the end of the course, students are expected to grasp the major distinctive characteristic of Chinese philosophy so as to have a deeper understanding of its branches, i.e. of ethics, metaphysics and epistemology.

Learning Outcomes
On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. demonstrate an appreciation of the idea of Heaven and its significance in Chinese philosophy
2. explain the relationship between Heaven and in Man in Chinese philosophy
3. explain the distinctiveness of Chinese philosophy

Indicative Content
1. Introduction
   a. The distinctive approach of the Heaven-Man problem in Chinese philosophy
   b. The change of the idea of Tien (Heaven) in early Chou
2. The possible unity of man and heaven
   a. The early Confucian tradition
      i. Confucius
         Tien and Tien Ming (Decree of Heaven)
         His Cosmos feeling and the view of the status of man
      ii. Mencius
         Human nature generated by Heaven
         The way from moral mind to Heaven
   b. The Taoist thought
1. Lao-tzu
   The split of Man and Heaven
   Return to Tao (the Way)
2. Chuang-tzu:
   From the relative to the absolute
   Genuine Man: reunified with Heaven
3. Heaven personified: Mo-tzu
   a. Heaven’s intent
   b. The objection of fatalism
4. Heaven naturalised: Hsun-tzu
5. From Heaven to Man and from Man to Heaven
   a. The Doctrine of the Mean
      Ch’eng (sincerity) and Ming (enlightenment)
      The unity of Man and 'Heaven and Earth' through moral practice
   b. The Commentary of Yi
      The principle of cosmology and the principle of morality
6. Correlative cosmos-building
   a. School of Yin-Yang
   b. The corresponding features of human world and Heaven in Tung Chung-shu's philosophy
7. From the Way of Heaven to the Way of Man: Neo-Confucianism
   a. The classification of 'three systems' and their views of The Way and man
   b. The possibility of 'immanent transcendence'

Teaching Method
Lectures and tutorials

Measurement of Learning Outcomes
1. Students will give oral presentations on assigned readings. They are expected to summarize, paraphrase and respond critically to the arguments in these texts.
2. Students will write a philosophical essay, the topics of which correspond to the contents of the lectures. They are expected to present their interpretations and criticisms effectively.
3. The examination will assess students’ basic knowledge of concepts and theories of Heaven and Man in Chinese philosophy.

Assessment
60% Continuous Assessment
40% Final Examination

Required Readings

Supplementary Readings
李杜，《中西哲學思想中的天道與上帝》，台北：聯經出版事業有限公司，1978。
霍韜晦 (編),《安身立命與東西文化》，香港：法住出版社，1996。
呂理政,《天、人、社會：試論中國傳統的宇宙認知模型》，台北：中央研究院民族研究所，1990。
劉瀚平等,《儒家心性與天道》，台北：基礎道德文教基金會，1991。
徐滿銘等著，《理》，北京：中國人民大學出版社，1991。
周伯達,《心物合一論 — 申論道與器之全體》，台北：台灣學生，1999。
周伯達，《甚麼是中國形上學：儒釋道三家形上學申論》(上、下冊)，台北：台灣學生，1999。
徐復觀，《中國人性論史：先秦篇》，第六版，台北：台灣商務印書館，1982。