Lingnan University
Department of Philosophy

Course Title	:	Ethics: East and West 東方及西方倫理學導論
Course Code	:	PHI1003
Recommended Study Year	:	1st year
No. of Credits/Term	:	3
Mode of Tuition	:	Sectional approach
Class Contact Hours	:	3
Category in Major Programme	:	Required
Discipline	:	-
Prerequisite(s)	:	Nil
Co-requisite(s)	:	Nil
Exclusion(s)	:	Philosophy majors and students who have already taken or are taking CLB9032 Understanding Morality or CCC8003 Understanding Morality
Exemption Requirement(s)	:	Nil

Brief Course Description

This course offers a thematic and historical introduction to ethical/moral theories and their relationships with several other important aspects of our lives. It examines views proposed by a variety of Eastern and Western thinkers alike (e.g., Kongzi, Aristotle, Mengzi, Xunzi, Kant, and Mill).

The course addresses several of the fundamental questions discussed by *normative* ethicists – for example, "When is an action morally right or wrong?" It also tackles questions on the foundation of ethics (e.g., "Is something good because a divine being wants it to be so?"), the alleged radical differences in values among different societies (e.g., "Is morality 'relative' to a specific culture or tradition?"), and human nature (e.g., "Do people tend to do what they perceive to be good?"). The course does not presuppose any previous knowledge of philosophical moral theories and is intended to be the first step for the study of ethics.

Aims

The course aims to:
- Introduce students to approaches to ethics devised by several Eastern and Western thinkers.
- Engage students in comparing different philosophical discourses about ethical life.
- Provide students with theoretical tools to develop their own views on selected ethical and moral issues.
- Enhance students' abilities of expression and critical thinking.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course, students will be able to:
(LO1) Describe the main ethical/moral theories discussed in class.
(LO2) Critically compare different ethical theories in both Eastern and Western traditions.
(LO3) Use ethical theories to analyse and evaluate ethical issues.
(LO4) Articulate their own ethical views reflectively and cogently.

Indicative Content
- Moral relativism (Nussbaum, D. Wong)
- Consequentialism (Mill, Mozi)
- Deontology (Kant)
- Virtue ethics (Aristotle, Kongzi)
- Theories of well-being
- Self-cultivation (Mengzi, Xunzi)

- Moral realism and moral skepticism (M. Smith, Nietzsche)
- Ethics and politics (Han Fei, Mill, Aristotle)
- Ethics and religion (Plato, Buddhism)

Teaching Method
Lectures, presentations, and discussions.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes
1. Class Participation: corresponding to LO1, LO2, LO3, and LO4
   Students will be assessed on their active participation in class. For example, they will have to demonstrate adequate knowledge of the required weekly readings when called upon by the lecturer.
2. Mid-term Exam: corresponding to LO1, LO2
   Students are required to take an in-class exam on the 7th or 8th week of the course. The instructor will provide three or four short essay-questions from which the students will choose two to reply (1 page for each question).
3. Final Exam: corresponding to LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4
   Students are required to take a sit-in exam at the end of course, in which they will have to write long essays on the content of the course. Students will have to elaborate their views on the theories discussed in class.
4. Research Essay: corresponding to LO2, LO3, LO4
   Students are required to write a research essay at the end of course. The essay should demonstrate the students' ability to explain the nature of several ethical theories as well as the ability to argue in favour or against them.

Assessment
Class Participation (10%)
Mid-term Exam (20%)
Final Exam (40%)
Research Essay (30%)

Readings
Preparatory readings

Students without any previous acquaintance with philosophical thinking may benefit from reading these texts before the beginning of the course:

Simon Blackburn, *Think* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
Simon Blackburn, *Ethics. A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
Thomas Nagel, *What does it all mean? A short introduction to philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)

Course readings

Required readings:
- James and Stuart Rachels, *Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011)
- Russ Shafer-Landau (ed.), *Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)
- Extract from classics, which include:
  - Kongzi, *Analects.*
  - *Mozi*
  - *Zhuangzi*
  - *Mengzi*

- *Xunzi*
- *Hanfeizi*
- Plato, *Euthyphro, Gorgias.*
- Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics.*
- Montaigne*, Essays (On custom, On cannibals).*
- I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals.*
- J.S. Mill, *Utilitarianism.*
- F. Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals.*

Recommended readings:

R. Crisp, 'Well-being', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2017).

J. Driver, *Consequentialism* (London: Routledge, 2012).

C. Hansen, 'Zhuangzi', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2014).

P. J. Ivanhoe, 'Zhuangzi on Skepticism, Skill, and the Ineffable Dao', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 61, 4 (1993), pp. 639-54.

P. J. Ivanhoe, 'Happiness in Early Chinese Thought'. In I. Boniwell and S. David, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

M. Nussbaum, 'Judging other cultures'. In her *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 118–29.

E. Schwitzgebel, 'Human nature and moral education in Mencius, Xunzi, Hobbes, and Rousseau', *History of Philosophy Quarterly,* 24, 2 (2007), pp. 147–68.

B. Van Norden, *Virtue Ethics and Consequentialism in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

D. Wong, *Moral Relativity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

_____, 'Chinese Ethics', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2017).

J. Yu, 'Virtue: Confucius and Aristotle', *Philosophy East and West*, 48, 2 (1998), pp. 323–47.

Important Notes

(1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.

(2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.

(3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.

(4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on https://pla.ln.edu.hk/