

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 科目簡介**

### **COURSES FOR 4-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

**CLE9001 Cross-cultural Issues and Urban Life** (from 2019-20)/  
**Cross-cultural Interchange and Urban Life** (in 2018-19 or before)  
**(3 credits)** (deleted from 2022-23)

The course intends to facilitate comparative studies of societies and cultures, and to enhance general knowledge of urban life with a focus on activities and events in (selected) modern cities that may give rise to cross-cultural interchange. The cultural conditions and environments of urban centres and their integral ways of life of both developed and developing countries of different sizes are concerned. The course discusses culture in a larger context exploring human discovery of the contingent nature of beliefs and cultural practices in the age of globalization. It looks at the interaction of human beings with the urban and natural environments; the creation of attractive urban spaces of the world; and the unique circumstances, the specific historical backgrounds and the multiculturalism of the places. Students are required to understand their own cultures in relation to other cultures through critical enquiries into the marking of 'urban creativity' by gender, class, ethnicity, race, and religion.

**CLE9002 Ethical Issues Facing Young Professionals** (from 2017-18)/ **Professional Responsibility and Integrity** (in 2016-17 or before) **(3 credits)**

This course introduces students to the role of professionals in modern society, professional responsibilities, and ethical issues that arise in various professional contexts. It provides an overview of sociological theories of professions, and, using various theories of ethics to analyse ethical dilemmas in various professions, reviews cases that call into question the extent to which professions are meeting their obligations to serve the public interest. Significant ethical issues, such as the need for professional objectivity and conflicts of interest that potentially impair objectivity, are considered in a variety of professional contexts. The use of common approaches to the promotion of ethical awareness and practice and the resolution of ethical dilemmas in the professions, such as professional codes of ethics, is also discussed.

**CLE9003 Why People Pay Taxes (3 credits)**

This course studies taxation issues from taxpayers' perspectives. It deals with the questions of "Why should people pay taxes?" and "Why do people pay taxes?" Thus, we examine (i) the values of taxation and the rationale for different kinds of tax (i.e. why should people pay different kinds of tax?) and (ii) how personal values, cultures, and the tax morale affect tax compliance (i.e. why do some people pay taxes and some don't?). The course also discusses the decision-making process that accompanies taxpayers' commitment to tax law compliance. The study of tax laws and tax systems is further developed in the context of current events to find out the values behind different kinds of taxes or tax systems.

**CLE9004 Greater China: Identity and Interdependence (3 credits)**

This course compares the economic, societal and political development of the four regions of Greater China – Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. Although the forces of globalisation have drawn these different parts of Greater China ever closer together, they remain separate and distinctive. Their differences are reflected in culture, society, values and norms, and political systems. This course examines the causal factors that have shaped the different destinies of Greater China as well as the forces that are pulling them together.

The concept of Greater China will be analysed and the other three regions' relationships with

the Mainland China will be examined. The focus will be put on the period of the last sixty years. During this period, the four regions have had their different paths of modernization, yet at the same time we witness increasingly significant interactions among the four regions. Based on the concept of Greater China, theoretical issues such as the explanatory powers of culture and ethnicity versus economic development and modernization are also considered.

**CLE9005 Reading Great Social Thinkers (3 credits)** (not offered from 2026-27)

The ability to read and digest writings from great classic and contemporary thinkers is an invaluable asset for any university career, but reading academic writing can be a daunting and often frustrating task for many university students. It is not uncommon for students to say that they know all the words in a reading but fail to grasp its central meaning. In this course, students will be introduced to a selection of writings from great social thinkers, including economists, philosophers, and social theorists. Using a “guided reading” approach, students will be familiarised with the rhetorical styles and normative conventions of classic and contemporary academic writing of great social thinkers, learn to overcome their fear of long sentences and jargon, and in the process learn how to appreciate and to produce good writing themselves.

**CLE9007 China Through the Eyes of the West (3 credits)** (deleted from 2024-25)

This course intends to give students an understanding of how Western views of China have changed through history, and how many of the same views still resonate today. One key theme is that often the West has viewed China in terms of its own needs, desires and fears, rather than through making any genuine attempt to “understand” China as it really is. The history of contacts between China and the West will be largely focused on contemporary texts, ranging through travellers’ and missionaries’ accounts, novels, poems, periodicals, newspapers, films, etc. If time allows, there will also be some discussion of Hong Kong in its historical role as a crossroads between East and West.

**CLE9008 Artificial Intelligence, Translation Technology and Cyber Culture** (from Term 2, 2023-24)/

**Bilingual Cyber Culture** (in Term 1, 2023-24 or before) (3 credits)

From Term 2, 2023-24

Translation is a crucial activity that enables global communication and bridges cultures and languages. In the last century, technology has had a transformative impact on translation.

This course enables students of various backgrounds (in arts, social sciences, and beyond) to understand the role of technology, artificial intelligence, and cyber culture.

Students will learn and read about several technologies and their role in transforming language and linguistic exchange. Examples will include the headphone, microphone, mainframe computer, and AI. In the second part of the class, students will focus on cyberculture. Specifically, they will understand how bilingual presentations in Chinese and English facilitate individuals and communities to create social impact. Those engaged in bilingual cyber publication are regarded as “cultural translators” who purposefully appropriate and re-contextualize information, news, and opinions across linguistic and cultural borders.

In Term 1, 2023-24 or before

This course enables students of various backgrounds (in arts, social sciences and beyond) to appreciate the role of translation in cyber culture.

If language is power, then those who command more than one language also command particular privileges – especially in an age of information and globalization. Students of this

course will learn about the increasingly prominent existence of bilingual web publishing and blogging in the cyberspace. Specifically, they will understand how bilingual presentations in Chinese and English facilitate individuals and communities to create social impact. Those engaged in bilingual cyber publication are regarded as “cultural translators” who purposefully appropriate and re-contextualize information, news and opinions across linguistic and cultural borders.

By examining exemplary bilingual websites and blogs (written by Chinese or otherwise), students become usefully aware of the complex dynamics between language use and identity (race, gender, class etc.), social networking, (trans-)nationalism, activism, transcultural fusion and global economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is a course with service-learning component and the students are expected to take part in building bilingual blogs or websites and apply what they have learnt to community service.

### **CLE9009 Reading Popular Fiction (3 credits)**

(Language of Instruction: Chinese and English)

Popular fiction, as a cultural product, has always been trivialized for being formulaic. However, it bears the potential of engaging and influencing a large group of readers from different backgrounds. This course is designed to provide a thorough understanding of the ways in which popular fiction is read, enjoyed and interpreted by readers. In particular, attention will be focused on the characteristics that make some works bestsellers, not just in their place of origin but also, through translation, elsewhere in the world. Besides studying how works of popular fiction appeal to the reader as an individual and as member of a community, this course will examine the external, institutional factors (like publishers, libraries and educational establishments) that lie behind their success. Selected works in several genres — romance, crime/detective fiction, thriller and fantasy — will be analyzed, some in the original, some in translation.

### **CLE9012 Financial Markets and Their Impacts on Society (3 credits)**

From 2025-26

This course introduces students to the contributions of financial markets and institutions to society. The course will discuss how financial markets foster innovation, entrepreneurial business, and economic growth while also exploring financial markets’ social, cultural, and political dimensions. Students will conduct a cross-cultural and comparative analysis of financial regulations, financial crises, and ethical finance. Case studies from different regions will highlight how financial institutions operate under varying economic and political conditions. The course also covers microfinance and its role in economic development and social stabilisation. Through interactive activities such as debates, blogs, and comparative case studies, students will develop a critical understanding of how financial markets impact different societies.

In 2024-25 or before

This course is an introduction to the contributions of financial markets and institutions to our society. The course will discuss how financial markets have helped foster innovation, entrepreneurial business, and economic growth. It will examine the role of financial institutions, the costs and benefits of financial regulations, and the causes and consequences of financial crises. The course will also cover the important topic of microfinance and its benefits to economic development and social stabilization. Through this course, students are expected to understand the impacts of financial markets on our society and develop the ability to think critically about financial issues. This is a self-contained and non-technical introductory course.

**CLE9013 Consumer Culture and Values (3 credits)**

This course aims to analyse the rise of consumer society that reflects the saturation of the modern ideals of progress, well-being and individualism as well as the emerging values, lifestyle and self-responsibility of individuals within a free market.

**CLE9014 Ethnicity and Nationalism (3 credits)**

A central goal of liberal arts education is to enable students to acquire international awareness and become a citizen of the world community, and political, social and cultural movements rooted in conceptions of ethnicity or nationhood have undeniably shaped, and is continuously shaping, the modern world that we live in. This course focuses on the role of ethnic communities and nations within the domestic politics of sovereign states. It will introduce students to concepts and definitions of ethnicity and nationalism, and explore the historical and contemporary basis for their development and significance. It will also examine some exemplar research that will guide us to understand these phenomena better. Conflicts generated by nationalist demands for political recognition, and how states deal with them, will be discussed. This course will conclude with an investigation into the controversial issue of intervention by other states and international organisations in civil wars within sovereign states.

**CLE9015 Rethinking Global Issues (3 credits)**

This course aims at promoting two central goals of liberal education: critical thinking and global citizenship. For Lingnan graduates to compete effectively in a globalised economy, they need to develop both the ability for critical thinking and a global vision. The course is designed around a series of questions about important international issues, with interdisciplinary approaches. Students are expected to see not only the complex nature of these issues but also how they impact on us in Hong Kong from various perspectives. Rather than emphasising traditional lectures and factual information, the course is centered around discussions, debates, and outside-classroom activities, which enhance students' ability to critically evaluate world events.

**CLE9016 Sexuality and Society (3 credits)**

Sex and sexuality are arguably the most as well as the least “natural” aspect of modern human life. While sexual reproduction and sexual desire are widely agreed to be “natural” in humans, their manifestations are subject to a wide range of social norms and formal regulations that vary greatly according to time and space. Sex and sexuality are highly sensitive and politicised issues in today's world. How are we to make sense of our own, and other people's sexual desires, behaviours, values and attitudes? How do we make sense of different society's stances on the issues of sexuality? This course introduces students to ways of understanding human sexuality in societies past and present by referring to historical records, empirical data and conceptual perspectives.

**CLE9017 The Value of Sport (3 credits)**

Sport has become a global phenomenon, but it is also an integral part of society and history at a national and local level. Students will be introduced to the development and dynamics of this particular aspect of globalisation. Despite evidence of emerging sports monocultures across the globe, the diffusion of sports has stimulated or reinforced cosmopolitan and ethnic consciousness. In addition, sport embodies and transmits important values that are integral to human societies. Examples will be drawn from Hong Kong and the region, and case studies of well-known sporting personalities and of particular sports will be used to illustrate the debates.

**CLE9018 Religious Behaviour, Belief and Experience (3 credits)**

Religion is an important part of human civilisation. People from all cultural traditions

engage in some form of religious practices with variations in the beliefs and values tied to different religious systems. Social scientists have long been interested in the explanations and implications of religion to people's thinking and behaving as an individual or a member of a group. This course aims to provide students a systematic introduction of the concepts and theories about religious behaviours, beliefs, and experiences. The major focus will be on the understanding of religious practices and the scientific study of religion. Key contents include definition of religion and religious worldviews and experiences, psychosocial impact of religion, religion-related social behaviours and associated controversial issues, and relationship between religion and humanism.

**CLE9019 The Legal System of the People's Republic of China (PRC) (3 credits)**

The course introduces to students the legal system of the PRC including Chinese legal history, the Constitution, sources of law and the law-making system, legal institutions including courts and procuratorates, lawyers and mediation. Comparisons will be made with the legal system in the HKSAR.

**CLE9020 Popular Culture and Hong Kong Society of the 50s and 60s  
香港五六十年代的流行文化與社會 (3 credits)**

(Language of Instruction: Cantonese)

The 1950s and 1960s are generally regarded as the formative years, in the development of Hong Kong culture and society. On one hand, Hong Kong had the heritage link with Mainland China especially following 1949 when a "flood" of refugees brought dramatic changes to society. On the other hand, Western culture also played an important role in the cultural development of Hong Kong in the 1950s and 60s. This course studies the development and characteristics of major popular culture of the two decades in relationship to the formation of Hong Kong society and its relationship to contemporary Hong Kong.

**CLE9022 Real Estate and Its Social Value in the Societies (from 2019-20)/  
Real Estate and Its Social Value in Asian Societies (in 2018-19 or  
before) (3 credits)**

This course is designed to introduce the nature, practice and social value of real estate development, including the importance of real estate to society, the economic value of real estate, government policies on real estate development, and discussions on how culture and traditional concepts influence the real estate markets in Hong Kong. The course also emphasises the different perspectives on real estate investment from citizens, industry practitioners and the government. Comparisons will be made among real estate investments in Hong Kong and other cities. The course involves non-technical introductory content, real-life case studies and practical tools for real estate investments from the perspective of ordinary investors.

**CLE9023 Service Leadership (3 credits)**

Service leadership involves collaboration with others with the sincere purpose of contributing to their well-being and development, and/or of serving society, while also meeting the leader's personal needs. This course introduces students to the principles and practices of service leadership, emphasizing on how it can be practiced effectively in various cultural, social, and ethical contexts. Through case studies and service-learning projects, students will be able to recognize the enormous value of service leadership, analyze and address real-world issues from personal, cross-cultural and global perspectives, and adopt a service leadership mindset to meet the needs of people, communities and environments - ultimately cultivating the skills necessary to drive positive social impact. The course also identifies organisational values and systems that encouraging and empower organisational members at all levels to practice service leadership.

**CLE9024 Democracy versus Dictatorship (3 credits)**

Political systems in the world, broadly speaking, can be classified into either democracies or dictatorships. These two political systems have differing philosophical backups, different institutional and bureaucratic arrangements and divergent social, economic and cultural backgrounds which sustain their existence. This course examines the philosophical origins, institutional characteristics and relevant economic, social, cultural and political conditions sustaining and changing democracies and dictatorships.

**CLE9025 Understanding Life and Happiness: An Interdisciplinary Approach (3 credits)**

This course applies an interdisciplinary approach to positive living, with a view to equipping students with the practical skills to make the most of their lives. It introduces students to the concepts of mental capital and mental goods, and shows how mental capital is shaped by habits and culture. Examples will be drawn from history as well as current events to show how people can be bogged down unnecessarily by “sunk costs and past glory” and how personal effort can make a huge difference to the “set range of happiness” and even circumstances, both of which are over the long run affected by consistent effort and voluntary choices.

**CLE9026 The Everyday Culture of the Web (3 credits)**

From 2025-26

From search engines to digital platforms, the internet has become an essential part of our everyday life. Drawing from the fields of cultural studies, media studies, and internet history, this course examines the everyday practice of the internet. Taking a cross-cultural and comparative approach, this course will introduce case studies from different social and cultural contexts to explore a variety of critical issues ranging from platform economy, surveillance, geopolitics, e-waste, to AI and algorithms. It encourages students to 1) look critically at our relations to existing technologies and 2) imagine creatively how they could be designed and practiced differently. We read recent texts in media studies with reference to the cultural and material politics of internet technologies. We examine such technologies in the contexts of work, consumption, participation, affect, and identity. Through guest lectures and workshops, we seek a dialogue with the designers to reflect on the promise and peril of the internet.

In 2024-25 or before

This course studies the role of material media in everyday communication. It connects the analysis of the technical features and design of digital communication technologies to social norms, meanings, and cultural performances. It encourages students to 1) look critically at our relations to existing technologies and 2) imagine creatively how they could be different. We read recent texts in new media studies with reference to the cultural forms and workings of concrete technologies such as search engines, tags, like buttons, and filters as well as norms such as “user-friendliness” and “interactivity.” We examine such technologies in the contexts of work, consumption, participation, affect, and identity. Through guest lectures and workshops, we seek a dialogue with the local community of coders and new media designers in Hong Kong.

**CLE9027 Global Impact Project (from 2019-20)/ Cross-Border Service-Learning: Theory and Practice (in 2018-19 or before) (3 credits)**

(replaced SLP1201 from 2015-16)

(Restriction(s): Students are not allowed to take both this course and SLP1201 Cross-Border Service-Learning: Theory and Practice.)

#### From 2019-20

This course aims to enrich students' understanding of global social issues, such as poverty and inequity, through a series of lectures, seminars, guided research, and cross-border field trips and Service-Learning projects. In order to heighten students' awareness of cross-cultural similarities and differences and examine social issues from a global perspective, a Service-Learning field trip in inspiring locations will be organised either by the office of Service-Learning or self-initiated by the student in close collaboration and agreement with the course instructors. Students will examine different social issues, acquire knowledge on sustainable development, and train their problem-solving skills during their service and research work. Students are also expected to develop a strong sense of social responsibility, leadership, and commitment to cross-cultural interaction.

#### From 2018-19

The 8-week course aims to enrich students' understanding towards global social issues, such as poverty and inequity, through series of lectures, seminars, guided research, and multinational field trips and Service-Learning projects. To cultivate students' culture competence, the students from the partner universities will be invited to participate in the course. Moreover, students will develop a better understanding of contemporary social issues by comparing local, regional and global issues in relation to UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from theoretical layers to practical methods. Students will be able to apply their academic knowledge and creativity to develop innovative solutions to real-world problems. The course focuses on a selection from five major topics:

1. Understanding Global Citizenship
2. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
3. Alleviating Social Inequality
4. Encouraging Active Ageing
5. Advancing Social Innovation

In order to heighten students' awareness of cross-cultural similarities and differences, a unique Service-Learning field trip in China or other inspiring locations, such as Central-Asia will be organized. Students will examine different social issues, acquire new knowledge, and develop impactful insight for their services and research work. Students are expected to develop a strong sense of social responsibility, leadership, and commitment to cross-cultural interaction.

#### In 2015-16 to 2017-18

This course is a summer-term course that incorporates guests' lectures and seminars, research and discussion forums, agency visits, service-learning practicums, and field trips. Students will also engage in service-learning field work and site visits guided by the university's advisors and instructors. The course provides an opportunity for students to obtain a better understanding of social issues in Hong Kong, China, and the world, through theoretical input and practical experience. Students will be able to connect their academic knowledge to action in the real world. The focus will be on three major topics:

- Service-Learning and Global Citizenship
- Service-Learning and Active Ageing
- Service-Learning and Social Enterprises

This is a summer course focusing on service-learning and facilitating the collaboration of 12 local Hong Kong and 12 international students. In order to heighten students' awareness of cross-cultural similarities and differences, there is a unique service-learning field trip to Yunnan, China. Students get to understand the work of selected Non-governmental

Organisations (NGOs) in China, examine various social issues in China, and integrate the acquired knowledge into their services and research work. Students are expected to develop their sense of social responsibility, leadership, and commitment to cross-cultural interaction.

### **CLE9028 Sexual Cultures in Asia (3 credits)**

(Restriction(s): This course is only available to students aged 18 or above.)

This course examines how the changing sexual cultures in Asia pose a series of new questions to the previous articulation of gender-cum-sexual issues. With the help of new critical vocabularies/perspectives and ethical discourses, students will study the burgeoning sex markets and new sexual scenes in East Asia (including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and Korea) by focusing on popular cultural forms such as film, drama, animation, comic, entertainment industry and clubbing culture. They will reflect on these new sexual phenomena, in light of the current thinking in selected gender and sexuality discourses. Through reading, discussion, group work, and seminar, students will learn how to reflect critically on a range of new sexual forms, examine sexual diversities and varieties from multiple perspectives, and develop critical and creative understanding of the new inter-Asia sexualscape.

### **CLE9030 Mind, Body, and Emotion (3 credits) (deleted from 2022-23)**

This course explores how the mind, body, and emotion have been studied in philosophy and psychology. In the first part of the course, we will discuss different ways people have understood the relationship between mind and body, and see how these views have changed over time. In the second part of the course we will discuss in-depth two particular theories of mind, body, and emotion that will help us understand the answers to a surprisingly broad set of questions about our experiences, our emotional life, and the choices we make.

### **CLE9032 Emotional Happiness (3 credits)**

This course provides psychological insights into how people can achieve a greater sense of happiness in their lives in the globalized and multicultural world. This course explores the meanings, benefits, and scientifically-validated strategies of boosting happiness. Strategies that are scientifically proven to enhance happiness include savoring, meditation, gratitude, acts of kindness, and physical activity. Obstacles to the pursuit and promotion of happiness are examined. This course also discusses cultural influences on happiness and specific techniques regarding how best to implement various happiness enhancing strategies to attain lasting happiness, as suggested by psychology research.

### **CLE9033 Truth and Justice (3 credits)**

How can we deal with the legacies of historical injustices and gross human rights violations? The course examines various measures of dealing with the past and their ability to meet diverging needs of divided societies. Namely, the course will examine the ability of various measures of justice to deal with instances of historical injustices committed by Japan in Asia, apartheid in South Africa, military dictatorships in Argentina, Chile, and Myanmar; the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, war in former Yugoslavia, genocide in Rwanda and Cambodia, and other instances. It will focus on the ability of truth commissions, lustrations, trials, amnesties, reparations, and apologies to deal with these historical legacies and at the same time assess their ability to meet various social needs for justice and reconciliation in cross-cultural and comparative perspective. It is an interdisciplinary course that welcomes students of sociology, psychology, political science, history, philosophy and other subjects.

### **CLE9034 Cultural Heritage and Sustainability (3 credits)**

This course examines the relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable development. It considers heritage as a central thread of sustainability, not only as an issue

of preservation but of creation, adaptation and resilience to change. It thus emphasizes the role that heritage can play in contributing through cultural substantiality to human well-being and social, economic and ecological development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This course will first introduce key concepts and issues that are considered as indicators of the changing nature of cultural heritage in a sustainable society. It is followed by topics broadly divided into categories including memory and identity politics, World Heritage and tourism, intangible cultural heritage, heritage preservation, and urban renewal, living heritage and community, and the issues relating to exhibiting, interpreting and digitizing heritage. Particular attention will be paid to the actors who preserve, use and develop cultural heritage at different levels, local, national and international. We shall discuss how their practices and policies have contributed to social sustainable and inclusive growth. The course will enhance students' capability in understanding the theory and practice in heritage and sustainability and provides them with a chance to explore the heritage of Lingnan University.

### **CLE9035 Information, Misinformation, and the Media (3 credits)**

(Restriction(s): Students are not allowed to take both this course and PHI3373 Social Epistemology in a Digital Age.)

The rise of social media and the growing dominance of the internet have made becoming an informed member of society simultaneously easier and harder than ever before. On the one hand, we can now access, from within our homes, academic research, government statistics, NGO reports, and newspapers from around the world. The internet has also brought about a radical democratization in the ability to produce information: alternative media is now cheaper than ever to set up, and blogging and large social media websites allow ordinary citizens to broadcast their opinions to a global audience, leading to more diversity in public discourse than at any time in the past. These same features, however, have also made it harder to stay informed. Ordinary citizens cannot easily evaluate the credibility of academic research or the significance of government statistics on their own. The ability to search out news stories makes it easier to reconfirm our preexisting biases. Alternative media may not follow ordinary journalistic standards, and at the most extreme may simply manufacture propaganda. Social media has aided the spread of dangerous conspiracy theories and opened new platforms for violent extremists to recruit followers. The ease with which people can be publicly criticized may lead to more self-censorship.

This class will approach these issues from a philosophical perspective, which examines how evidence, knowledge, understanding and learning depend on aspects of social life, from individual testimony, to publicly recognized standards of expertise, to institutions and conventions that facilitate the spread of good information and check the spread of bad. We will examine how conspiracy theories work, the role of science in finding truth, and particularly the influence of new technologies, social media and artificial intelligence in the creation, spread and control of misinformation. We will examine the issues of misinformation across times and cultures. This framework will be used to examine questions about our ethical obligations to critically assess sources, strategies for recognizing how our information may be inaccurate or biased, and questions about whether legal or institutional reform is needed to control the spread of fake news.

### **CLE9036 Buy, keep, throw: Consumption as a way of life (3 credits)**

(not offered from 2026-27)

(Restriction(s): Students are not allowed to take both this course and SOC3340 Consumption and Society.)

Who doesn't love shopping? In Hong Kong, as in many other societies, shopping is a way of life. We buy stuff for sustenance, everyday use, fun, gifting, vanity, identity, social status,

to cope with pressure and more. Shopping keeps the economy going, makes our lives more comfortable and enjoyable - or does it? Shopping can also become an addiction, create debts, waste, and take up valuable time and living space. This course examines how meanings, identities and relationships are created by producers and consumers, and what happens to stuff after we bought them. We will also look at shopping and disposal of consumer goods from the perspective of the global economy and environmental sustainability.

### **CLE9037 Japanese Society (3 credits)**

This course introduces students to sociological perspectives on contemporary Japan. Japan is a unique Asian country that (1) had “modernized/industrialized” rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; (2) was defeated in World War II and transformed its social system drastically; (3) has achieved remarkable economic growth and been praised for “Japan as Number One” in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century; (4) has faced a serious economic recession afterwards and experienced the “Lost Decades”; and (5) now comprises various socio-economic characteristics (e.g., the most aged population worldwide, only Asian country among G7, a high suicide rate, serious gender inequality, modest economic inequality, and popular culture). Among these features, what are peculiar to Japan and what are common across societies including Hong Kong? Why are some of them observed only (or particularly) in Japan? Answering these questions contributes to better understanding not only Japanese society per se but also broader social problems even in other parts of the world. In this course, students will consider the characteristics of contemporary Japan through sociological theories and methods with close attention to 11 topics: population, economy, politics, education, health, work, family, gender, stratification, happiness, and culture. Students will also undertake original research projects to analyse the current situation of Japan from a comparative perspective.

### **CLE9038 Understanding Cultural Differences (3 credits)**

Culture shapes the way we see the world, interact with others, and define our identities. But why do cultural differences exist, and how do they influence societies today? Why do people from different cultures have distinct ways of thinking, communicating, and behaving? This course explores these questions through an interdisciplinary lens, examining the key frameworks that help us understand cultural diversity across the globe. It considers how cultural values evolve over time, how globalization fosters both integration and resistance, and how technology is transforming the ways people express, maintain, and negotiate cultural identities. More than just a social construct, culture is a powerful force that shapes how societies govern, innovate, and adapt to change—driving everything from political ideologies and economic systems to technological advancements, including AI adoption and bioengineering, thus holding the key to future societal development. Students will learn about both classic and contemporary frameworks, as well as new approaches enabled by technological innovation and big data, to examine cultural dynamics and uncover their role in shaping the world around us.

### **CLE9039 Popular Culture and Society: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (3 credits)**

Popular culture refers to a wide range of cultural practices and content that are consumed in our daily lives. Although we usually perceive it as a source of entertainment, hedonism, and fun, it is in fact much more than these. Popular culture is a powerful force that helps shape social class, nationalism, gender, race, and other major aspects of society. It constitutes a significant contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a major employer of workers. It is the base of youth subcultures, symbolic resistance, and alternative discourses. It is a considerable force that shapes contemporary urban and regional formation. It is a major link through which the local and the global impact each other. This course introduces students to the most prominent social scientific approaches to the study of popular culture. By revealing the powerful social functions and impacts of popular culture, these approaches

will encourage and equip students to proactively engage with the popular cultural environment in their lives instead of remaining a passive audience.

**CLE9040 Care and Society (3 credits) (from 2026-27)**

Over the past decades, care has become an influential concept shaping socio-cultural and political-economic aspects of private and public life worldwide. Care is a quality through which individuals exercise agency and navigate ethics; a practice that affects interpersonal relationships and cultivates a collective sense of belonging; a form of culture that structures human behaviours, interactions, and norms; a political ideal influencing organisational practices, policy regimes, and ideologies; and a universal goal driving transnational development initiatives and collaborations. In an age of rapid technological advancement and growing socio-economic and geopolitical uncertainty, how do we understand and apply the evolving implications of care—both conceptually and practically—to address challenges at individual, collective, digital, social, and global levels? This course offers an introduction for students to explore care as a sociological concept, a moral concern in modern ethics, and a generative social project increasingly central in today's changing world.

**CLE9099 Special Topics in CLE Cluster (3 credits)**

The subject matter of this course varies according to the expertise of the subject teachers or visiting scholars available. Special topics will mostly complement regular courses offered in the CLE cluster, to provide a broad range of general knowledge and wide perspectives for students to investigate, analyse and reflect on issues and topics related to Values, Cultures and Societies.

**CLE9099a Special Topic in CLE Cluster: International Relations of Northeast Asia (3 credits) (deleted from 2022-23)**

This course examines the nature of international relations in East Asia. Since one cannot understand international relations among these countries without analysing their past and present domestic political climates, this course will explore how domestic politics, political culture, history and social changes in these countries shape and how they are shaped by international politics in the region. This course also intends to expose the students to theoretical and empirical inquiry of international relations literature.

**CLE9099b Special Topic in CLE Cluster: Asians and Popular Culture (3 credits) (in Summer Term, 2022-23) (deleted from 2024-25)**

This course will examine the ways in which Asians have been constituted in popular culture and have constituted themselves through popular culture. As such, it is divided into two halves: the former will focus on “Asians in Popular Culture” while the latter will focus on “Popular Culture in Asia.” Thus, we will juxtapose the racial representations of people of Asian descent produced from the mainstream media with how Asian peoples have chosen to represent themselves to the rest of the world. We will begin with the “model minority myth” and then explore the interminable debate surrounding cultural appropriation, examples of anti-Asian sentiment, the ignominious legacy of Yellowface, the contrasting gendered depictions of Asian women vis-à-vis Asian men, and cross-racial intersections. Case studies in the second half of the course will include: South Korean films, television dramas, and popular music; the global popularity of Hello Kitty; Japanese manga and anime; Japanese hip-hop; Hong Kong cinema; and Asian American independent media projects.