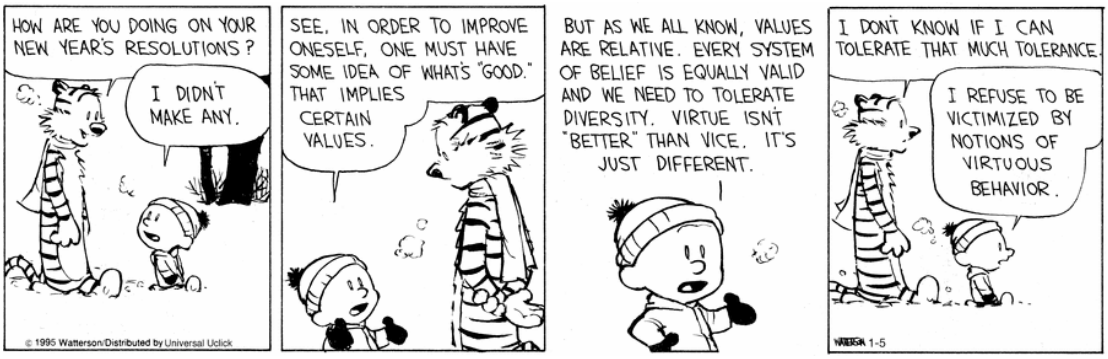
ANTH 2360/UGED 2666/ANTH 5385
Ethics and the Human Experience
Spring 2021

Lecture: Thursday 9:30 AM – 11:15 AM
MA Tutorial: Thursday 11:30 AM – 12:15 PM
UG Tutorials: Thursday 3:30 PM – 4:15 PM
Thursday 4:30 PM – 5:15 PM

Instructor: Teresa KUAN, tkuan@cuhk.edu.hk, NAH 325, 3-7728
Office Hours: Friday 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM, and by appointment

Tutor/RA: Jingwen ZHANG, 1155151945@link.cuhk.edu.hk, NAH 406, 3-7726



(By Bill Watterson, *Calvin and Hobbes*)

This course introduces students to the study of ethics and morality from a social and cross-cultural perspective. Ethics and morality may appear to be an abstract subject for philosophers, but this course shall demonstrate how they are in fact a close part of our everyday lives. Human beings living in different societies have different ideas about what constitutes the good and the right. How and why do they differ? Does the cross-cultural study of morality and ethics lead to moral relativism? What are some shared human problems? How do people manage to get along with each other, and how does a person learn to get along with oneself?

"Ethics and the Human Experience" will prioritize context in understanding what shapes the good and the right. But ultimately, the class aims to expand our moral imagination beyond the usual concerns, and to understand the human experience more deeply.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will acquire intellectual resources for thinking about ethics and morality from a holistic perspective.
2. Students will learn to differentiate between the various factors that create unique social, cultural and historical circumstances.
3. Students will learn to connect the seemingly mundane to broader philosophical themes.
4. Students will have a better understanding of their own life experience.
5. Students will apply the skills they have learned in doing a class presentation on a topic of their choosing, in collaboration with group-mates.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

Grade	*Criteria for 1) the course and 2) for coursework*
A	1) Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes. 2) The work has creatively synthesized course materials and key ideas in an original way. Observations are nuanced, the argument is logical and cohesive, the discussion is well-organized, and the writing is clear. Concrete evidence corresponds to statements and claims. The work responds directly to the assignment prompt.
A-	1) Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes. 2) The work synthesizes course materials and key ideas in an original way, but there are areas for improvement.
B-range	1) Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance. 2) The work demonstrates a solid grasp of course materials and key ideas. There are areas for improvement with respect to handling complexity, building a cohesive argument, organizing the discussion, communicating clearly, and/or identifying relevant evidence. Response to the assignment prompt may not be sufficient.
C-range	1) Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses. 2) The work shows some effort, but course materials have not been sufficiently engaged. The argument and the writing is not clear, and/or there is no evidence for statements and claims made. Understanding of course materials and key ideas has not been demonstrated.
D-range	1) Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. 2) The work shows little effort to engage course materials. There are major problems with clarity of argument and writing.
F	1) Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements. 2) The work has failed respond to the assignment prompt.

Required Texts

All readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Evaluation

Grade Item	*Percentage*	*Due Date*
Midterm Paper	30%	March 15
Presentation proposal	--	March 26
Research Presentation	20%	April 15 and April 22
Final Paper	35%	May 5
Participation	15%	--

Paper questions and choices will be posted ahead of time.
UG students and MA students will have different requirements.
All assignments must be submitted to VeriGuide, and declarations uploaded to Blackboard.

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NOTE: "🕮" indicates required readings for both UGs and MAs, "🕮🕮" indicates required readings for MAs.

Week 1 (January 14): Course Introduction

☞ No readings.

The Anthropological Rebellion Against Moral Universalism (?)

Week 2 (January 21): Beyond Right and Wrong

🕮 Beth CONKLIN, "Introduction" and "Transforming Grief." In *Consuming Grief: Compassionate Cannibalism in an Amazonian Society.*

🕮🕮 Richard SHWEDER, "Relativism and Universalism." In *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*.

Week 3 (January 28): The Case of Transplant Ethics

🕮 Nancy SCHEPER-HUGHES, "The Last Commodity: Post-Human Ethics and the Global Traffic in 'Fresh Organs.'" In *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*.

🕮🕮 Nancy SCHEPER-HUGHES, "The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology." *Current Anthropology.* (Read pp. 409-20, and Aihwa Ong's response, pp. 428-30.)

📽 *Dirty Pretty Things* (2003) (Please watch the entire film either this week or next week on your own time. The University Library has a DVD copy.)

Week 4 (February 4): The Unintended Consequences of "Good Intentions"

🕮 Miriam TICKTIN, “Where ethics and politics meet: The violence of humanitarianism in France.” *American Ethnologist.*

🕮🕮 Didier FASSIN, “Compassion Protocol: Legalizing Diseased Undocumented Immigrants.” In *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present.*

Week 5 (February 11): Holiday

☞ No class. Happy Chinese New Year!

Week 6 (February 18): The Morality of Bureaucracy

🕮 Lisa STEVENSON, “Cooperating.” In *Life Besides Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic.*

🕮🕮 David GRAEBER, “The Utopia of Rules, or Why We Really Love Bureaucracy After All.” In *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*.

“Wherever there are societies, there is altruism…” – Durkheim

Week 7 (February 25): The Sociological Foundation

🕮 Yunxiang YAN, “The Good Samaritan’s new trouble: A study of the changing moral landscape in contemporary China.” *Social Anthropology*.

🕮🕮 Émile DURKHEIM, “Division of Labor in Society: Consequences” and “Division of Labor in Society: Conclusion.” In *Émile Durkheim: On Morality and Society.*

📽 *Disorder* /《现实是过去的未来》(2009) (Clip only)

Week 8 (March 4): Local Moral Worlds

🕮 Jason THROOP, “Subjectivity, Embodiment, and Social Action.” In *Suffering and Sentiment: Exploring the Vicissitudes of Experience and Pain in Yap*.

🕮🕮 Xiangjun FENG, “Productivity: The Work Life of *Guazi.*” CUHK MPhil Thesis.

🕮🕮 Jarrett ZIGON, “Introduction.” In *Morality: An Anthropological Perspective*.

📽 *Yap… How Did You Know We’d Like TV?* (1981) (Clips only)

MIDTERM PAPER DUE: March 15

🖮 Guiding questions will be posted March 5, by 5:00 p.m. Paper is due March 15, no later than 11:59 p.m.

Why Ethics? Why Now?

Week 9 (March 11): The Burden of Self-Development in Neoliberal Times

🕮 Nancy ABELMANN, So Jin PARK, and Hyunhee KIM, “On their Own: Becoming Cosmopolitan Subjects beyond College in South Korea.” In *Global Futures: Youth, Nation, and the New Economy in Uncertain Times*.

🕮🕮 Ann ANAGNOST, "Life-Making in Neoliberal Times." In *Global Futures: Youth, Nation, and the New Economy in Uncertain Times*. (Skip chapter summaries, pp. 15-24.)

🕮🕮 Nikolas ROSE, "Governing Enterprising Individuals." In *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood.*

Week 10 (March 18): Ethics as Self-Formation

🕮 Michel FOUCAULT, "Self-Writing." In *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth.*

🕮🕮 Michel FOUCAULT, Introduction to *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2.*

Ordinary Ethics

Week 11 (March 25): Ordinary Ethics and the Case of Forgiveness

🕮 Lotte MEINERT, "Every Day: Forgiving after War in Northern Uganda." In *Moral Engines: Exploring Ethical Drives in Human Life*.

🕮🕮 Veena DAS, "Ordinary Ethics." In *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*.

🕮🕮 Hannah ARENDT, "The Human Condition" (sections 1-3) and "Action" (sections 24-26, 32-33). In *The Human Condition*.

PRESENTATION PROPOSAL DUE: March 26

🖮 The proposal is not a graded assignment. It is instead a chance for us to communicate about your project idea. Please submit by email March 26, no later than 11:59 p.m.

Week 12 (April 1): Reading Week

☞ No class.

Week 13 (April 8): The Ethics of Care

🕮 Janelle TAYLOR, "On Recognition, Caring, and Dementia." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly.*

🕮🕮 João BIEHL, "Care and Disregard." In *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*.

Week 14 (April 15): Student Presentations

☞ No readings. No tutorials.

Week 15 (April 22): Student Presentations

☞ No readings. No tutorials.

FINAL PAPER DUE: May 5

🖮 Guiding questions will be April 23, by 12:00 noon. Paper is due May 5, by 11:59 p.m.

TIPS & POLICIES

Opinions vs. Arguments

There is a difference between opinion and argument. Your personal viewpoints are welcome during class discussion, but your papers will be evaluated based upon your ability to formulate an argument rather than your ability to express an opinion.

An argument is analytical. Arguments propose relationships between variables, and they support assertions being made with empirical evidence – either ethnographic data, or, in the case of studying theory, passages from original texts that illustrate how a particular theorist formulated an idea.

There is also a difference between opinion and perspective. An opinion usually contains some kind of judgment about how the world should or should not operate. A perspective, on the other hand, is a way of looking at the world. In other words, having perspective involves the ability to see patterns and themes, or differences and divergences, which may not be obvious at first glance. Having an opinion is easy. Having the insight that comes with perspective is much harder.

Late Submissions

Papers submitted after the due date will suffer a fraction of a grade deduction for every day it is late. For example, an A- will become a B+, a B will become a B-, et cetera.

Academic Honesty

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of *zero tolerance* on cheating in examinations and plagiarism. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Students should read the detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources in the University's website at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty. Students are required to submit all papers through VeriGuide, which is also explained at the above website.