

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
2024/25 2nd semester
PHIL1413 Philosophies of Life
Course Outline

Instructor: Dr. Kwok Pak Nin, Samson
Time: Thursday 13:30-16:15
Venue: LSK 515

Course overview:

This course aims to help students understand important theories and ideas in philosophies of life, and learn how to use these ideas and theories in thinking and analyzing contemporary social, ethical and political problems in our everyday life. Topics to be discussed include Food, Sexuality, Rationality, Liberty, Equality, Morality, Well-Being, Meaning of Life, and Death.

Learning outcomes:

1. Be familiar with the main ideas and theories in philosophy of life.
2. Understand the contemporary practical issues in our life.
3. Demonstrate the/an ability to analyze life issues and defend their own views.
4. Acquire skills in argumentative discussion and in writing about the debate on real-life issues.

Learning activities and workload:

- 1. Lecture:** 3 hours each week.
- 2. Reading:** 2-3 hours per week. Students are required to read the reading material assigned.

Assessment:

Task nature	Description	Weight
Discussion	In Class Presentation & Discussion	30%
Reading Assignment	Argument Analysis	30%
Exam	Term End Essay Questions	40%

Grade Descriptors:

http://phil.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/~phidept/UG/Grade_descriptors.pdf

Late submission policy:

Assignments submitted after the due date will incur a 5% grade reduction per day. Extensions will only be granted in cases of unexpected or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control.

Details of course website:

Lecture notes and information on assignments will be posted on the Blackboard Learn website.

Course schedule:

Week	Date	Discussion	Lecture
1	Jan 9	Introduction	Food
2	Jan 16	David Fraser, “Animal Ethics and Food Production in the Twenty-First Century”	Sexuality
3	Jan 23	Alan Goldman, “Plain Sex”	Love
4	Jan 30	<u>Lunar New Year Holiday</u>	
5	Feb 6	Robert Nozick, “Love’s Bond”	Rationality
6	Feb 13	Stephen Ellis, “The Varieties of Instrumental Rationality”	Liberty
7	Feb 20	Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty” (selection)	Equality
8	Feb 27	Derek Parfit, “Equality and Priority”	Morality
9	Mar 6	<u>Reading Week</u>	
10	Mar 13	Kai Nielsen, “Why Should I Be Moral? Revisited”	Well-Being
11	Mar 20	Shelly Kagan, “Me and my life”	Meaning of Life
12	Mar 27	Thomas Nagel, “The Absurd”	Religion
13	Apr 3	J. L. Mackie, “The Problem of Evil” (selection)	Death
14	Apr 10	Thomas Nagel, “Death”	<u>Exam Question Announcement</u>
15	Apr 17	<u>In Class Exam</u>	

Recommended learning resources:**General References:**

David Benatar (Ed.). *Life, Death, and Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

David Kaplan (Ed.). *The Philosophy of Food*. University of California Press, 2012.

Derek Parfit. *Reasons and Persons*. Oxford University Press, 1984.

Guy Fletcher. *The Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Well-Being*. Routledge, 2015.

Harry Frankfurt, *The Reasons of Love*. Princeton University Press, 2006.

Isaiah Berlin. *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Julian Young, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life*. London & New York: Routledge, 2003.

Raja Halwani, Alan Soble, Sarah Hoffman and Jacob M. Held (Eds.). *The Philosophy of Sex-Contemporary Readings*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2017.

Thomas Hurka, *The Best Things in Life-A Guide to What Really Matters*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Thomas Nagel. *Mortal Questions*. Cambridge University Press, 1979.

郭柏年，《流光之中：時間向度的人生哲學短篇》，香港：牛津大學出版社，2024年。

Reading list:

Topic-specific lists of references, required and suggested readings will be given in lecture notes and bibliographical notes (separate) for each topic.

Feedback for evaluation:

1. Students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback on the course via email or meetings with lecturer.
2. Students evaluate the course through a survey and written comments at the end of the term as well as via regular feedback between teacher and students. This information is highly valued and is used to revise teaching methods, tasks, and content.

Contact:

Lecturer	
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Academic honesty and plagiarism:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations.

Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed **declaration** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.