

## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 科目簡介**

### **COURSES FOR TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

#### **PHI502 Cinema and Philosophy 電影與哲學 (3 credits)**

A number of major philosophers have written about the cinema, raising a wide range of issues about the artistic and expressive means and functions of audio-visual representations. In this course we will study some of these philosophical writings in relation to important cinematic works. The main goals of the course will be to acquaint students with an important vein of philosophical reflection, as well as to give them an enhanced understanding of an influential popular art form and persuasive medium. Philosophical essays as well as specific cinematic works will be explored with an eye to some of the following topics: (1) the nature and specificity of the cinematic medium; (2) realism and illusionism; (3) cinema and emotion; (4) story-telling and characterisation in the cinema; (5) problems of interpretation; (6) philosophical themes in cinematic works, such as personal identity and moral questions; (7) adaptation and evaluation; (8) cinema “as philosophy”, or cinema’s potential contributions to philosophical knowledge.

#### **PHI504 Contemporary Political Ideologies 當代社會政治哲學 (3 credits)**

This course explores a cross section of political philosophies and the issues that surround them, including utilitarianism, egalitarianism, libertarianism and communitarianism. The course will consider issues such as how utilitarian thought has come to dominate philosophical debate as well as the views of those who are opposed to it. The course will also consider Rawls’ theory of justice as well as Nozick’s response to it. Finally the course will deal with issues relating to communitarianism and the question of how this view has shaped the debate of contemporary political ideology.

#### **PHI505 Globalisation and Justice 全球化與公正 (3 credits)**

This course explores the global nature of contemporary social change. It pays particular attention to the continuing struggle for development in poor countries, the relationship between globalisation and inequality, the fate of cultural diversity in a globalising world, and issues of economic justice, the environment, and human rights. Central themes of the course are Individual Responsibility in a Global Age, World Poverty and Global Economic Justice, Nationalism and Special Allegiances, Democracy and National Interests, and the Limits of Domestic Political Theories.

#### **PHI506 Law and Democracy 法律與民主 (3 credits)**

Democracy cannot exist apart from the legal and political institutions that both serve to sustain and constrain the course of democratic governance. This course will examine these various institutions and the concept of the rule of law on which (as some thinkers have argued) democracy’s efficacy depends. Topics here will include both rationales for and critiques of democracy as well as a careful examination of the rule of law and democracy’s institutional foundations.

#### **PHI507 Normative Ethics 規範倫理學 (3 credits)**

The course will introduce ethical issues and theories with a focus on the principles governing character and behaviour. The following questions will be discussed in this course: What is the moral relation between people? How should we understand this relation? What are the limits of agents’ responsibility towards everyone in the world? How far is an

agent permitted to take care of his own well-being when he can do a greater good to others? Are there anything that individuals can't do to the others, no matter what are the circumstances? What would be the grounds of "moral protection" for individuals, if any? How far does the quality of one's intention count in the (moral) evaluation of one's action? How far should we take the quality of consequence into consideration in the overall evaluation of actions?

### **PHI508    Philosophy and Literature 哲學與文學 (3 credits)**

This course will deal with the central questions concerning the nature and function of literature, the way in which it is created, appreciated, and evaluated. Among the topics to be discussed will be the relationships between the literary work and the author, the work and the reader and the work and the world to which it refers. The problems in the philosophy of literature will lead to a discussion of the relationship between philosophy and literature, i.e. the relationship between philosophical themes and literary themes, between moral philosophy (ethics) and literature, between the constraints placed on literary discourse and other types of discourse, among them philosophical discourse. Discussion of these general issues in philosophy and literature will be grounded with reference to specific examples from poetry and short fiction.

### **PHI509    Philosophy of Love 愛情哲學 (3 credits)**

Since before Socrates, philosophers have had a keen interest in understanding the personal dimension of human relationships, a dimension which is essential to any sense of human flourishing. This course will look closely at different types of love in both the Western and Eastern traditions. Love comes in many varieties: parental love, filial devotion, fraternal attachment, friendship, eros, charity, etc. What is this thing, love, which they all have in common? What general properties does it have? Is there a duty to love every human being? Should we, or could we, be friends with every human being? Is friendship an expression of need or weakness, or is it something divine? These are just a sample of questions that will be raised and discussed in this course.

### **PHI511    Studies of Life and Death 生死學 (3 credits)**

Life is a learning process of facing death. In this perspective, death constitutes a significant, if not the whole meaning of life. This idea is shared by different schools of thought both East and West. In this course, students will study the meaning of death from a philosophical as well as from a religious standpoint. Though it is not likely that we can understand death intellectually, it is hoped that we can learn how much weight we should give to it in our lives, in what sense it can contribute to the meaning of life, and how we should face it and deal with it.

### **PHI512    Understanding Religion 思考宗教 (3 credits)**

This course aims at providing students with perspectives to understand the varieties of religious phenomena from magic to monotheism, and to think about issues like the relation between reason and religion, religious tolerance, and the role of religion in life. It should also contribute to the students' understanding of the religions of other peoples and cultures.

### **PHI513    Decision Making and Rational Choice 決定與理性選擇 (3 credits)**

There are two well-developed philosophical theories that try to characterise what it means to make choices rationally, i.e., Decision Theory and Game Theory. The course will survey the important features of the two theories and explain related concepts. It will also explore paradoxical situations where the theories appear to clash with ordinary intuitions about rationality. Both theories have a wide range of applications, including business strategies,

ethical and political choices, and the (dis)confirmation of scientific theories. This course will consider some of these applications, with an eye on their relation to certain general issues such as the evolution of the social contract.

**PHI514 Probability and Scientific Method 或然性與科學方法 (3 credits)**

“Probability is the very guide of life”, as Bishop Butler said in the 18th century. Nowadays, probability and statistics crowd in upon us. Births, marriages, deaths, drugs, commercial enterprises, and education – nothing escapes. Probability became the centrepiece of natural and social science. The course is intended as a survey of philosophical issues about probability and its relationship to scientific method. Topics include: interpretations of probability, the probability calculus, probability and inductive logic, paradoxes about induction, uncertainty and rational decision.

**PHI515 Reasoning and Argumentation 推理與論證 (3 credits)**

This course presents a systematic study of the principles of both deductive and informal reasoning, with an emphasis on reasoning and argumentation in ordinary discourse, and on their strategies. The aim of the course is to train the student in the skills of argument analysis, argument construction, and argument evaluation. The course will familiarise students with the vocabulary and grammar of various kinds of logic, and enable them to master the basic techniques in validity of arguments. Inductive reasoning, causal reasoning and inductive fallacies will also be addressed. Lastly, the applications of logic to everyday life will be examined, as well as its use in solving logical puzzles.

**PHI516 Buddhist Philosophy of Life 佛教的人生哲學 (3 credits)**

Buddhist Philosophy is neither deterministic nor libertarian. Buddhist thought aims to help clear up psychological problems. Buddhist wisdom enables the individual to overcome difficulties in his life. This course focuses on the basic characteristics of Buddhism, its philosophy of life, the conception of causality, the notions of subjectivity and non-subjectivity, Buddhist counselling and therapy, its theory of emancipation and enlightenment, the perfection of life (nirvana), wisdom of Prajñā, Buddha Land and Zen cases. The emphasis of the course is on the application of Buddhist Philosophy in our daily lives.

**PHI517 Confucianism and Daily Life 儒家與日常生活 (3 credits)**

The political, economic, social and technological changes that have taken place over the last century have diminished the political, economic and social foundation of the Confucian system. Confucianism seems to have been reduced to being merely a theory or a doctrine without practical meaning, an old paradigm lacking influence on and relevance to modern life. This course will consider how Confucianism can respond to the philosophical problems of modernity and how Confucian values can be revitalised in the context of modern life. The goal is to engage with Confucianism as a potentially live philosophy in the modern world.

**PHI518 Early Modern Philosophy 早期現代哲學 (3 credits)**

This course addresses what is certainly one of the most exciting periods in the history of philosophy, the pre-Kantian modern period. The course investigates the views of some of the principal European philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries: the rationalism of Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz; the empiricism of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. Towards the end of the course Kant's contribution to this great debate will be considered.

**PHI519 Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's Philosophy of Life 叔本華與尼采之生命哲學 (3 credits)**

This course introduces the philosophies of two so-called “life-philosophers”, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. It discusses the metaphysical, epistemological, ethical and aesthetic aspects of their thought and their significance for subsequent 20th century ideas like existentialism and postmodernism.

**PHI520 Philosophical Anthropology 哲學人類學 (3 credits)**

The course Philosophical Anthropology distinguishes itself from other disciplines by regarding man not only as a mere object, but also as a being. Man defines himself in a self-evident way. Therefore, with this approach, it will inevitably encounter a hermeneutic circle. In this course, main theories on man in eastern as well as western philosophy will be discussed. It will focus on the philosophical reflection of the distinctive structure of human existence.

**PHI521 The Taoist Wisdom of Life 道家的人生智慧 (3 credits)**

Confucianism and Taoism are generally regarded as the two main streams of Chinese philosophy. Although Taoism is unlike Confucianism in that it does not possess an institutionalised orthodoxy, Taoism has greatly influenced many aspects of Chinese culture, such as painting and literature. Its metaphysics is also considered to exhibit the most typically philosophical thinking in Chinese culture. In this course, students will study the philosophies of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, and their influence within and beyond philosophy.

**PHI522 Kant's Transcendental Philosophy and Post-Kantian German Idealism 康德的超驗哲學與後康德德國觀念論 (3 credits)**

This course is designed to outline the development of modern German philosophy from Kant to Hegel. The course investigates how Kant's “*Copernican turn*” revolutionises the traditional metaphysics and how the post-Kantian skeptical attacks on Kant's concept of thing-in-itself and the method of transcendental philosophy give rise to post-Kantian German Idealism. Finally, it also examines how, in answering these skeptical attacks on Kant, Fichte and Hegel develop their philosophies.

**PHI523 Wei Jin Metaphysics 魏晉玄學 (3 credits)**

The philosophers of the Wei-Jin period (魏晉) employed Taoist terms to give new meanings to Confucian ideas. They developed their doctrines in their commentaries on *The Classic of the Way and Its Virtue* (道德經), *The Book of Master Zhuang* (莊子), and *The Book of Changes* (易經), known as the “three profound studies” (三玄). These philosophers, mostly young literary men, often engaged in “pure conversation” (清談) with the goal to harmonise Taoism and Confucianism. These philosophers are known as the “Neo-Taoist”. Students in this course would mainly study the philosophy developed during this period.

**PHI524 Applied Ethics 應用倫理學 (3 credits)**

Students will learn from this course not morality, but moral thinking; not judgements to repeat, but how to judge. The course will consider a number of specific moral issues in applied ethics. These include abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty; issues of diversity and equality in regard to race, gender, and economic status; and the extent of our moral obligations to the poor and starving of other countries, to animals, and to the environment.

### **PHI525      Philosophy of Emotion 情感哲學 (3 credits)**

Emotions have always played a part in human life. Philosophers have often disagreed over the emotions' nature and influence on human agency. Are emotions intelligible, or are they simply physical reactions? Are they merely feelings that impede making rational judgements, or do they play a vital or even rational role in our judgements and actions? Both sides in this debate have a long history in philosophy, and studies in modern cognitive science, psychology, and neurology have renewed these discussions. This course will look closely at different theories and conceptions of emotion in which philosophers attempt to seek answers to the riddle of the role of emotions.

### **PHI526      I-Ching and Modern Life 《易經》與現代生活 (3 credits)**

*Book of Changes* is a literary text which was purposed to augur during Xi Zhou period. There have been huge changes in people's understanding to it as the original text passed on to different epochs. Ever since Chunqiu people developed various interpretations to the text as the Chinese society and culture prospered. This course does not only focus on the content and nature of the text but to investigate its knowledge and philosophy systematically in order to practice its philosophy in modern society and daily lives.

### **PHI527      Contemporary Neo-Confucianism 當代新儒家 (3 credits)**

In this course, students will study Contemporary Neo-Confucianism as one of the most significant intellectual responses to the cultural crises that have emerged since China started her modernisation in the 19th century. Although Contemporary Neo-Confucianism comprises various major thinkers in facing the crises of Chinese culture, this school of thought attempted to reveal the characteristics of Chinese culture and reflect on its values. The thinkers of this school also tackled the issues of the compatibility of Chinese and modern Western culture, as well as the possible contribution of Chinese culture in solving problems arisen in the modern world. Apart from introducing the common views and beliefs shared by the Contemporary Neo-Confucian thinkers, this course will focus on the individual thoughts of Mou Tsung-san, Tang Chün-I and Xu Fu-guan. Finally, the course will examine the problems of Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, in both theoretical and practical respects.

### **PHI528      Philosophy of Science 科學哲學 (3 credits)**

In this course, we will explore a number of the central issues in contemporary philosophy of science: How should we understand the progress of science? How are scientific theories tested or confirmed? Does social bias affect the content of science? Do scientific theories aim at revealing the deep reality of the world? Moreover, the students will be made acquainted with the views of some 20<sup>th</sup> century classics in philosophy of science (Carnap, Popper, Hempel, Kuhn, Feyerabend) as well as with the more recent developments in the field.

### **PHI529      Hegel's Philosophy of History 黑格爾的歷史哲學 (3 credits)**

Hegel's philosophy of history surveys the collective practice of nations, the evolution of cultural epochs, and the historical development of both the Eastern and Western worlds.

While insisting that reason (or freedom) is the end of history, Hegel dialectically identifies the desire for recognition as the necessary means towards the realisation of that end.

The subject raises an important issue of practical philosophy – the relationship between reality and the ideal.

**PHI530 Topics in Value Theory 價值哲學 (3 credits)**

Value theory, or axiology, is concerned with the nature and status of value as well as with the differences and relations between distinctive types of value, such as intrinsic and instrumental value, and ethical, aesthetic, and economic values. This course surveys philosophical investigations into these and related topics.

**PHI531 Special Topics in Chinese Ontology 中國形而上學探討 (3 credits)**

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.

**PHI532 The Pre-Qin Mainstream Philosophy 先秦諸子 (3 credits)**

This course covers the Pre-Qin period in Chinese philosophy. It concentrates on the distinctive features of Chinese philosophy, including the main concerns, themes and approaches of different schools of thought. Equal weight will be given to the philosophy and the history component: the meaning, implications, significance of philosophical problems and their solutions as well as the development of these problems and conceptions will be under scrutiny. The interaction between schools of thought will also be examined. Students will be supervised in their study of texts so as to understand the original context from which the problems and concepts spring.

**PHI533 Gender and Philosophy 性別與哲學 (3 credits)**

This subject will introduce gender debates in the field of philosophy in various aspects. It will first conduct a reflection on gender construction and the formulation of some of the main agendas in feminist thoughts. Feminists’ critique on the development of Western philosophy in relation to the notions of “masculinity” and “femininity” in the areas of epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, the mind and body issues and the problem of the self will be studied and reviewed through works of representative thinkers. The discussion will also introduce critical reflections of feminist philosophies as alternative and integrative modes of thought and the similarities and contrasts between them and Chinese philosophy. Evaluation of these philosophical debates will be initiated as well as their revelations in daily lives.

**PHI534 Philosophy of Technology 科技哲學 (3 credits)**

In this course we will examine the social phenomenon of technology from a philosophical angle. Among the questions discussed will be (1) the question of the exact relationship between a particular society, its institutions, and its technologies; (2) how technologies shape our way of thinking and our perception of the truth; and (3) ethical questions posed by technology, for example whether and how technology affects democracy, or the consequences of the technological divide between technology users and parties which are, for various reasons, excluded from using them.

**PHI535      Faces of Utopia 烏托邦面面觀 (3 credits)**

This course explores classic as well as contemporary themes of utopia in both West and East. It sets out to examine theoretic as well as practical dimensions of utopia in its complex forms of manifestation and multi-layered relations to other notions such as equality, harmony, freedom, happiness or self-realisation, spontaneous order or rational design. Discourses of utopia often go beyond the image of what the ideal social life would be and become claims about what it can and should be. Utopia is then not just a dream to be enjoyed but a vision to be pursued. But the question whether utopia is not escapist nonsense or an impossible fantasy, any serious pursuit of which would lead to social and political disaster, imposes heavy burden on those devoted utopian seekers who want to change the world according to their dreams.

**PHI536      Song Ming Confucianism 宋明理學 (3 credits)**

The Song and Ming Confucianism or, in other terms, Neo-Confucianism is the second phase of development of Confucianism. It not only systematised the ancient Confucian moral ideas, but also expanded the scope of Confucianism in various aspects, such as cosmology, ontology, social philosophy, philosophy of history, and moral psychology. This course is designed for the study of the major works of some important Neo-Confucian philosophers. Students are expected to have basic knowledge of traditional Chinese philosophy (Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism).

**PHI537      Guided Studies in Eastern Philosophical Classics: the *Zhuangzi* 《莊子》原典導讀 (3 credits)**

The *Zhuangzi* has had a profound impact on every aspect of Chinese culture. In particular, its ideas and modes of thinking has shaped Chinese philosophy and has become a formidable alternative to Confucianism within the wider tradition of Chinese intellectual history. This course guides students in terms of being able to critically interpret the *Zhuangzi* by studying its historical background, analysing its central concepts and images, as well as articulating and evaluating its views on themes including the possibility of knowledge, the nature of the self, the conception of sagehood, the progress of cultivation and the inevitability of human limitations.

**PHI538      Analytic Aesthetics (3 credits)**

This course introduces the students to some of the contemporary debates in analytic aesthetics. Aesthetics is here understood as the study of a certain kind of value, which derives from a certain kind of experience. The study of aesthetics in contemporary analytic philosophy involves the analysis of such experiences along with discussions on a series of related properties, concepts, and mental faculties, e.g. beauty, ugliness, aesthetic pleasure, aesthetic properties, aesthetic perception, taste, imagination. Problems in aesthetics largely overlap but do not fully coincide with the problems discussed in philosophy of art. In this course, we will also address some of those problems in philosophy of art that are more strictly connected to the study of aesthetics.

**PHI601      Health Services and Ethics (3 credits)**

The course offers an introduction to some of the most fundamental ethical issues in the broader health services provision, taking into account the perspective of the service users (e.g. social care users, patients), healthcare providers and other professionals working in this sector. Following a brief introduction to some of the main contemporary approaches to moral theory and reasoning, the course will discuss, among other things: the value of health services and its relation to well-being; the purpose and value of consent, trust and autonomy

in the user-provider relationship; principles and problems related to justice, equality and fairness in health services (including the distribution of limited resources). Other topics will include ethical research on human and animal subjects. Where possible, case studies will be utilised to discuss these issues.

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