

**City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public Policy
with effect from Semester A 2017/ 2018**

Part I Course Overview

Course Title:	<u>Ethics and Public Policy: East and West</u>
Course Code:	<u>POL5712</u>
Course Duration:	<u>One Semester</u>
Credit Units:	<u>3</u>
Level:	<u>P5</u>
Medium of Instruction:	<u>English</u>
Medium of Assessment:	<u>English</u>
Prerequisites: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<u>Nil</u>
Precursors: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<u>Nil</u>
Equivalent Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<u>Nil</u>
Exclusive Courses: <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<u>Nil</u>

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

This course aims to develop students' critical and analytical thinking skills for making normative judgment about major moral controversies in contemporary public policy. It discusses the three major approaches to ethics (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and their practical relevance to forming and evaluating various public policies. It also teaches students the basic concepts of social and political philosophy, including benevolent government, ethics of care, legalism, harmony, rights, virtue, liberty, democracy, justice, political obligation and civil disobedience, gender, and community, and how to employ them in the ethical analysis of public policy. A comparative perspective is adopted in the examination of the above approaches and concepts and their applications. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to develop their own theoretical framework to analyse public policy issues from an ethical perspective by drawing on the cultural resources in Eastern and Western traditions.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Investigate major moral controversies in contemporary public policy.		√	√	
2.	Evaluate critically the three major approaches to ethics (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and recognize their practical relevance in the moral evaluation of public policies from a comparative perspective.		√	√	
3.	Analyse the basic concepts in social and political philosophy and employ them to evaluate public policy from a comparative perspective.		√	√	
4.	Develop their own theoretical framework to analyse public policy issues from a normative perspective by drawing on the cultural resources in Eastern and Western traditions		√	√	√
5.	Generate innovative solutions to resolve the major moral controversies in contemporary public policy based on their own framework.		√	√	√
		100%			

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.					Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	
Seminar	Key concepts and theories in ethics, and social and political philosophy are introduced from a comparative perspective. Major moral controversies of contemporary in contemporary public policy are investigated with an examination on how they can be resolved by employing the concepts and theories introduced.	x	x	x			3
Group Presentations	Students are formed into small groups to do presentations on selected topics. This gives them opportunities to develop original solutions for resolving the major moral controversies of contemporary in contemporary public policy by applying the concepts and theories that they have learned in this course.	x	x	x	x	x	
Discussion	Students are given the opportunities to raise questions and discuss with the instructor about his lecture delivered in the seminar. There is also a Q&A session after each group presentation.	x	x	x	x	x	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.					Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5		
Continuous Assessment: 100%							
Participation in Seminar	x	x	x	x	x	10	
1 st Group Presentation	x	x	x			15	
1 st Essay (1500 – 2000 words)	x	x	x			25	
2 nd Group Presentation				x	x	20	
2 nd Essay (2500 – 3000 words)				x	x	30	
						100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
Participation; Group Presentation; and Essay		High standard of understanding and critical assessment of ethical and political theoretical basis of public policies and their implications on public life from a comparative perspective. Strong ability to identify key challenges and discover innovative resolutions for them in a culturally sensitive way. Excellent research, writing and communication skills.	Fairly good understanding and critical assessment of ethical and political theoretical basis of public policies and their implications on public life from a comparative perspective. Good ability to identify key challenges and some critical policy suggestions in a culturally sensitive way. Good research, writing and communication skills.	Rudimentary understanding of ethical and political theoretical basis of public policies and their implications on public life from a comparative perspective. Weak ability to identify key challenges and to develop moral resolutions for them in a culturally sensitive way. Basic research, writing and communication skills.	Poor understanding of ethical and political theoretical basis of public policies and their implications on public life. Very little ability to identify key challenges and understand the complex relationship between ethics and politics. Weak research, writing and communication skills.	Complete failure to understand the ethical and political theoretical basis of public policies and their implications on public life. Complete failure to develop and demonstrate an ability to identify key challenges. Inadequate research, writing and communication skills; failure to develop an adequate moral reasoning ability and analytical skill.

Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

1. Public ethics vs personal ethics.
2. Policy evaluation and normative analysis.
3. Major schools of thought in ethics, and social and political philosophy: East and West
4. Three major approaches to ethics: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics.
5. Major concepts in social and political philosophy, including benevolent government, ethics of care, legalism, harmony, rights, virtue, liberty, democracy, justice, political obligation and civil disobedience, gender, and community.
6. Selected ethical problems and issues in public policy, such as sexual morality, pornography and free speech, abortion, litigation vs mediation, death penalty, just and unjust war, international justice, human rights, social discrimination, social justice and welfare, education and the market, religious beliefs and state neutrality, intellectual property rights, immigration policy, nationalism vs cosmopolitanism, environmentalism: for and against.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1. William Aiken and Hugh LaFollette (eds.), *World Hunger and Moral Obligation*, Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996.
2. Tom Beauchamp and Borbert Veatch (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Death and Dying*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.
3. Francis J. Beckwith (ed.), *Do the Right Thing*, Belmont: Wadsworth, 2002.
4. Daniel A. Bell and Hahm Chaibong (eds.), *Confucianism for the Modern World*, Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
5. Nigel Blake, Paul Smeyeres, Richard Smith, and Paul Standish (eds.) *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.
6. Daniel Bonevac (ed.), *Today's Moral Issues*, 4th edition, Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.
7. Steven M. Cahn and Tziporah Kasachkoff (eds.) *Morality and Public Policy*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.
8. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (eds.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
9. Amitai Etzioni (ed.), *New Communitarian Thinking: Personas, Virtues, Institutions, and Communities*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995.
10. Ruiping Fan (ed.), *Confucian Bioethics*, Dordrecht ; Boston :Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.
11. R.G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman (eds.), *A Companion to Applied Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.
12. Hugh LaFollette (ed.) *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
13. Barbara MacKinnon, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues*, 4th ed., Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004.
14. Tomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty (eds.), *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 5th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.
15. Larry May and Shari Collins-Chobanian and Kai Wong (eds.) *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach*, 2nd ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994.
16. James E. White (ed.), *Contemporary Moral Problems*, 6th edition, New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2000.
17. Jonathan Wolff, *Ethics and Public Policy: A Philosophical Inquiry*, London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)