City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Taught Postgraduate Course
offered by Department of Public Policy
with effect from Semester A in 2014 / 2015

Part I

Course Title:	Ethics and Public Policy: East and West
Course Code:	POL5712
Course Duration:	One Semester
Credit Units:	3
Level:	P5
Medium of Instruction:	English
Prerequisites:	Nil
Precursors:	Nil
Equivalent Courses:	Nil
Exclusive Courses:	Nil

Part II

1. Course Aims

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)
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	Discover and critically assess the major moral controversies in contemporary public policy.	
2.	Evaluate critically the three major approaches to ethics (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and discover 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 their application to public policy evaluation 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.	

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)
(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course.)

CILO No.	TLAs	Hours/week (if applicable)
CILO 1 - 3	Seminar	3
CILO 1 - 5	Group Presentations	3
CILO 1 - 5	Discussion	3

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities
(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course.)

CILO No.	Type of Assessment Tasks/Activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
CILO 1 - 5	Participation in Seminar	10%	
CILO 2, 3	1st Group Presentation	15%	
CILO 2, 3	1st Essay (1500 – 2000 words)	25%	
CILO 1, 4, 5	2nd Group Presentation	20%	
CILO 1, 4, 5	2nd Essay (2500 – 3000 words)	30%	

5. **Grading of Student Achievement:** Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

Letter Grade	Grading criteria in relation to CILOs
A+ A A-	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.
B+ B B-	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.
C+ C C-	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.
D	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.
F	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

Keyword Syllabus

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.

Recommended Reading
Text(s)
William Aiken and Hugh LaFollette (eds.), *World Hunger and Moral Obligation,* Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall,1996.
Tom Beauchamp and Borbert Veatch (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Death and Dying,* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.
Francis J. Beckwith (ed.), *Do the Right Thing,* Belmont: Wadsworth, 2002.
Daniel A. Bell and Hahm Chaibong (eds.), *Confucianism for the Modern World,* Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
Nigel Blake, Paul Smeyeres, Richard Smith, and Paul Standish (eds.) *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Education*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.
Daniel Bonevac (ed.), *Today's Moral Issues*, 4th edition, Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.
Steven M. Cahn and Tziporah Kasachkoff (eds.) *Morality and Public Policy*, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003.
Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (eds.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
Amitai Etzioni (ed.), *New Communitarian Thinking: Personas, Virtues, Institutions, and Communities*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995.
Ruiping Fan (ed.), *Confucian Bioethics*, Dordrecht ; Boston :Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.
R.G. Frey and Christopher Heath Wellman (eds.), *A Companion to Applied Ethics*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2003.
Hugh LaFollette (ed.) *Ethics in Practice: An Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.
Barbara MacKinnon, *Ethics: Theory and Contemporary Issues,* 4th ed., Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004.
Tomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty (eds.), *Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy*, 5th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997.

Larry May and Shari Collins-Chobanian and Kai Wong (eds.) *Applied Ethics: A Multicultural Approach*, 2nd ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1994.

James E. White (ed.), *Contemporary Moral Problems*, 6th edition, New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2000.

Jonathan Wolff, *Ethics and Public Policy: A Philosophical Inquiry*, London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

Online Resources