GCVM 1005 Christian Faith and Western Humanism (3,2,1) (E)

Both in the West and in contemporary Chinese societies, there is a perceived tension between humanistic values and the Christian faith. Some posit a critique of the Christian faith on the basis of humanistic values, such as human rights and equality, whereas some Christians consider humanistic values deviating from genuine faith. The course will begin with putting this “quarrel” in a larger historical context, namely the interaction between Christianity and humanism in the course of western history. The course will: (1) uncover the spiritual roots of modern Western humanism in the ancient, medieval and modern Western culture; (2) explain and assess the critique of Christianity by secular humanism; (3) explore the possibility of an integration of Christian faith with humanistic values in Christian humanism; and (4) conduct an assessment of the rivalry and reconciliation between Christianity and modern humanistic values in the Chinese context (ethical and political issues of Hong Kong, in particular).

GCVM 1006 Dao and Good Life: Laozi and Zhuangzi (3,2,1) (E)

What is good life? How should I live my life? What values and ethics should guide me? This course will explore the answers that the Daoist philosophers Laozi and Zhuangzi have offered to these questions. Students will be introduced: (1) the major concepts and views of Laozi on the principles of Dao and the way of life in the Dao De Jing, including the notion of the constant Dao of emptiness, the idea of weakness, and the concept of reversal; (2) how these principles can be employed to tackle problems in life in order to achieve a good life; and (3) major concepts and views of Zhuangzi’s ethics and philosophy of life, including the notion of the Dao of transformation, the authenticity of the true self, the equality of things and opinions, etc.

GCVM 1007 Dao, Ch’an and Personal Freedom (3,2,1) (E)

What is freedom and what are the possibilities of humans acting freely? This course is designed to acquaint the student with an understanding of Daoism and Ch’an Buddhism in conjunction with the question of personal freedom. The course will explain how Ch’an is a blending of Daoism and Buddhism, and how a form of other-worldly oriented freedom of early Buddhism has been transformed into a form of this-worldly oriented freedom in Ch’an Buddhism. Special attention will be given to contemporary interpretation of the texts related to the concept of freedom and the traditional understanding of freedom related to other ethical issues such as happiness, personal integrity, and responsibility in both Daoist and Buddhist traditions.

GCVM 1015 Ethical Controversies in Hong Kong Today (3,2,1) (C)

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to ethical theories and their applications to ethical issues in Hong Kong in the last few years. The course will begin with an overview of the major ethical schools, namely, utilitarianism, deontological theories and virtue ethics, which will provide students with some basic concepts that can be used throughout the course to understand ethical problems. It will continue by looking at selected topics of ethical controversies in Hong Kong society. Major areas may include topics such as life and death, love, sex and marriage, environmental ethics and business ethics. Within this format, we will give special attention to issues relevant to these considerations in Hong Kong today.

GCVM 1016 Ethics for Professionals in a Multicultural World (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course examines a set of problems and dilemmas (e.g. deception, privacy and confidentiality, professional dissert, social responsibility and justice, professional virtue) that arise across a broad range of professions (e.g. business, medicine, journalism, social work, education, accounting) and discusses how they can be approached in morally and culturally sensitive ways. Students will recognize that life in many professions involves grappling with some common and interconnected ethical issues through case studies. Codes of conduct of different professions and codes of conduct of the same profession in different cultures will be compared. Different patterns of moral reasoning and their underpinning moral philosophies (deontological theory, Utilitarianism and virtue ethics) will be examined.

GCVM 1017 Freedom in Modern Society (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course will discuss the moral foundation of freedom and the ethical issues related to the ideas of freedom in the modern free society. First, the history of liberty and tolerance will be sketched. Then different concepts of freedom, e.g. negative and positive freedom, will be explained through discussions of the prominent philosophers like John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Isaiah Berlin, and Charles Taylor. Different theories of freedom from both secular and religious perspectives (such as secular liberalism, conservatism, Confucianism and Christianity) will also be expounded and compared.

GCVM 1025 Give and Forgive: Christian Perspectives (3,2,1) (E)

This course examines two major practices at the heart of the Christian faith—giving and forgiving, together with the underlying Christian concepts of grace and human person. It explores critically the implications of Christian giving and forgiving for our contemporary culture which is increasingly self-serving and unforgiving. Students will be introduced to the Christian concepts of creation and providence, justification and reconciliation, grace and personhood, God the Giver and the Forgiver, etc. This course evaluates critically these concepts together with all related theories in the contexts of competition and conflict.

GCVM 1026 Globalization and Ethics (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course is designed to introduce students to the identification and evaluation of moral dilemmas in the context of change and development in an increasingly globalized world. This course interrogates the relation between globalization and ethics in two steps, analytic and constructive. The sessions of analysis include the attempt to understand the constitutive economic and cultural dynamics of globalization, some of its ecological impacts, and the ways in which it generates different forms of social life and modes of thinking. Then it will turn toward study of the insights of some philosophers, such as Peter Singer, William Sullivan and Will Kymlicka, in order to learn from as well as to challenge the questions they raised.

GCVM 1027 Good Life in a World of Self-interest (3,2,1) (tbc)

Some philosophers characterize the contemporary world as a world of self-interest. People of this age live largely self-interested lives. Is living a self-interested life the only rational option that we have? Is there still anything else to live for? Is anything worth pursuing apart from money, love, good career, prestige and social status? Is there any better alternative to the conventional pursuit of self-interest? The course will address these questions through exploring philosophical ideas and theories that have important bearing on how to answer the questions. Special attention will be given to the philosophical views such as Hedonism, Egoism, Aristotle’s theory of good life, Utilitarianism, Confucianism and Daoism.

GCVM 1035 Green Living and Spirituality (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course will study the statements made by the five established religions within the People’s Republic of China—Buddhism, Catholic Christianity, Daoism, Islam and Protestant Christianity—along with the Ruist (“Confucian”) tradition about environmental ethics and “green living” in order to justify them in the light of their spiritual traditions. Much can be learned about the different worldviews they represent and some of their significant shortcomings regarding environmental ethics. Problems such as how they conceive the relationship between humans and the natural environment, and how influential these various claims are within Chinese social and political contexts (including Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the mainland) will be addressed and compared.
GCVM 1036 Human Rights in a Multicultural World
In this course, the basic concepts of rights will be explained and the historical development of these ideas traced briefly. Then the perspectives of different philosophical traditions (such as liberal-deontological, liberal-utilitarian, communitarian and Marxist) on human rights will be expounded. Further, both western and non-western religious views on human rights will be introduced, e.g. Confucianist, Buddhist, Islamic and Christian. Students will learn to identify, understand and reflect on ethical issues such as the ethical foundation of rights, the balance or tension between individual rights and good society, and conflicts between different kinds of human rights.

GCVM 1037 Marriage and Family: Dreams and Reality
This course aims to introduce students to ethical issues in marriage and family such as cohabitation, adultery, open marriage, homosexual marriage, polygamy, divorce, having children, rearing children, and duties of grown up children to their parents. Different underpinning moral-social-political philosophies (liberalism, communitarianism, feminism, Confucianism) will be discussed and analysed. Both the human aspirations and dreams about marriage and family and the reality of human nature and human society will be taken seriously. Both the arguments for and against a certain view will be critically examined.

GCVM 1045 Matters of Life and Death
The course aims at helping the students to develop a critical understanding of issues concerning life and death such as suicide, abortion, euthanasia and grief. Ideas of life and death in philosophical and religious traditions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity, German idealism, existentialism etc will also be discussed. The course also intends to equip students with not only the knowledge about values and beliefs concerning life and death in different religious and philosophical traditions and cultures, but also help them to appreciate beliefs other than their own.

GCVM 1046 Moral Challenges in Chinese Popular Culture
This course will address the problem of the increasing tension among traditional Chinese value systems (Confucianism and Daoism), Communist moral codes, and new values generated from mass-mediated popular culture in contemporary China. In the light of a globalized world, and analyse how such critical factors as self-identity, gender, age, sexuality, class, region and state are shaped by and reshaped in consumerism and popular culture as seen in fashion, fads, entertainment, religion, art, and literature. The course will offer a critical reflection on contemporary China which is confronting with ethical challenges and urgent moral renewals. Relevant moral theories such as utilitarianism, deontological principles, and virtue ethics are discussed in preparing students to analyse critical issues they face in their daily experience of popular culture.

GCVM 1047 Moral Heroes in an Immoral World
Women and men who have championed visions of a better life, enduring personal threats and social opposition to realize their goals, are moral heroes. On the basis of this understanding, students will be introduced to some of the most influential moral heroes and heroes of the last two hundred years, including Nobel Peace Prize winners such as Mother Theresa and others who have endured the controversies inherent in moral leadership and become highly regarded paragons of particular societies, e.g. William Wilberforce, Mohandes Gandhi and Chuck Colson. The course will identify the values which prompted these people to challenge the status quo, explaining the power of these values in the light of virtue ethics, deontology, and the specific religious and/or philosophical traditions these heroes represent (including Burmese Buddhism, Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity, and popular Hindu traditions).

GCVM 1055 Real Sex, Naked Truth: Christian Values in Changing Chinese Societies
This course examines Christian perspectives on sex/uality, together with the underlying Christian faith and values, as well as the integral relation between sex/uality and the whole person. It explores critically their implications for and relevance in fast changing Chinese societies in the last few decades. Students will be introduced to Christian concepts of body, intimate relation, sexual intercourse and personhood, etc. These concepts and related theories will be critically evaluated in the context of contemporary Chinese societies, including the problems, tensions and challenges arising from selected social issues. Special attention will be given to public discourses as reflected in Chinese mass media and popular writings.

GCVM 1056 Religious Values and Pop Culture
The course utilizes various forms of pop culture such as films, games, internet web innovations and modern play and drama as powerful new cultural media comparable to literature as modern people’s main venue for experiencing, appreciating and reflecting on human life. Such reflections of modern life would be taken to the religious dimension in its search for meaning and value that seeks to transcend temporality and secularity of life, and reaches for the ultimate elevation of the human spirit. The course examines the various ways in which modern people’s myriad endeavors in socio-cultural actions embark on a profound search for human reality, possibility, value and meaning in this globalized and networked world.

GCVM 1057 Reflections on Romantic Love in Humanistic Perspectives
This course introduces recent theories of romantic love and sex in humanistic perspectives utilizing insight from both arts and science. This course explains humanistic perspectives on romantic love from different cultures made available in literature, philosophy, religion and mythology, and supplement them with new understandings of romantic love and sex due to advances in scientific and sociological disciplines. Students would also learn through tutorial some psychology of romantic love and sex, understand their role in the formation of modern identity, and learn to assess authenticity of romantic love experience.

GCVM 1065 The Art of War and the Art of Living
The Art of War (《孫子兵法》) by Sunzi is not just about warfare; it is about strategy. It is not only about battlefield maneuvers, but also about economic, political, psychological and moral factors behind corporate leadership and success. Its most famous literature on strategy, “The 36 Stratagems”, is widely read and applied to the business world, sports, negotiation and lawsuits, and leadership training today, East and West. This course will extrapolate further the rich ideas of this book and similar books of that period (known as “military strategy” school (兵家), e.g. 《孫臏兵法》, 《吳子兵法》) and show how they shed light on many ethical issues in life, such as when and how to use violence and the moral ambiguity of deception. The ethical thought and reasoning behind different strategies will also be examined. This course shows how ancient Chinese culture can still provide practical wisdom (phronesis, as Aristotle puts it) to guide the journey of life.

GCVM 1066 The Art of Thinking and Living
Three ethical perspectives, namely, the perfectionist, utilitarian and Kantian, will be discussed in this connection. In this course, students will be introduced to the basic concepts and principles of good decision-making and effective problem-solving. Special attention will be given to how these concepts and principles can help students improve their decision-making and problem-solving technique. Students will also learn how to apply the concepts and principles in making decisions and tackling problems in everyday life situations critically and creatively. In this regard, general issues and problems in relation to work, wealth, love, health, death and seeking one’s meaning of life will be used as examples for discussions.
GCVM 1067 Understanding Christian Ethics (3,2,1) (C) in a Pluralistic Society
This course presents a model for ethics in a pluralistic society, examining the ethical theories of obligation and value from secular and Christian perspectives. The lectures survey various ethical systems, identify untaught assumptions in ethical theories, and evaluate those theories for legitimacy, relevance, and cogency. This course addresses the interplay between norms in differing moral situations and in cases of conflict of duties. We will examine moral issues of human life, sexuality, class relationships, management of resources, law and authority in conflict situations.

GCVM 1075 Virtuous Living in a Virtual World (3,2,1) (E)
This course lets students to critically comment on how can virtues of discernment, moderation, wisdom, humility, authenticity and humanness as presented in traditional and modern virtue ethical theories (Aristotelian, Confucian, Christian, Humanist and Nietzschean) be realized with the habits of our high-tech lifestyles? It teaches students to develop critical attitudes related to the ideological overstatements and addictive practices associated with cyber-shaped lifestyles. It tells students how to debunk the so-called pseudo-religious ideologies informing informationism as the panacea for human problems and human boredom. This course also teaches students a need to develop habits of moderation which neither support bandwidth envy nor allow for impersonal crudeness.

GCVM 1076 Whose Justice? And for Whom? (3,2,1) (E)
Justice is a moral idea that we all appeal to in conflicts of modern societies. Opposing sides of an issue both claim to be the apolite of justice. Hence we need to reflect critically on the questions "Whose justice?" and "Justice for whom?". This course introduces students to some major philosophical schools of thought on justice, such as liberalism, libertarianism, utilitarianism, egalitarianism, socialism, and the theory of desert. Topics that will be discussed include selected examples from corrective justice, gender justice, sexual justice, racial justice, penal justice, economic justice, international trade justice, inter-generational justice, and climate justice.

GCVM 1077 Wisdom in Chinese Religious (3,2,1) (tbc)
Tales and Fiction
The course will focus not only on the wisdom in traditional Chinese religions such as the Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, but also that of the popular religions as well. Through a study of the wisdom embodied and manifested in Chinese tales and fictions, this course will critically explore wisdom and moral situations and in cases of conflict of duties. We will examine moral issues of human life, sexuality, class relationships, management of resources, law and authority in conflict situations.

GCVM 1085 Zen Buddhism and Modern World (3,2,1) (tbc)
This course provides a broad and deep understanding of Zen Buddhism in the aspects of doctrine, practice and application in life. In particular, students will learn to: (1) understand Zen from a critical viewpoint as to how it can be a useful and living religion to be lived and enjoyed in modern world; (2) reflect on the ideas and efforts of important contemporary Buddhist schools such as the Tzu-Chi School, Dharma Drum Mountain and Buddhist Light Mountain in dealing with key problems in modern world; and (3) effect upon the possible contributions and limitations of Zen ideas and practices for both the modern world and the students themselves and, thereby, enrich their future development towards the ideal of a whole person.

GDAR 1005 俠義精神與現代世界 (3,2,1) (C/P)
Chinese Knight-errant Heroism and the Modern World
The course will explore an important aspect in Chinese culture and society through readings and discussions of literary works on knight-errant heroism (俠義精神). It will guide students to investigate the origin and development of knight-errant heroism through the reading of representative literature. Students will also study the concept from philosophical, social, and literat perspectives, with emphasis on the sense of moral responsibility (當仁不避, 見義勇為), the use of un-authored force (taking law into one’s own hands), and the manly tragic aesthetics. Its relevance in modern society and its contrast with the regard of rule by law will also be discussed.

GDAR 1006 中國文學與大眾文化 (3,2,1) (C/P)
Life Style, Chinese Literature, Mass Culture
This course will study the adaptation and transformation of Confucian culture in an Asian country undergoing modernization. Korean television dramas of various themes, such as historical heroes, love stories and family affairs will be used. Through analysing the behaviour and thinking patterns of modern and ancient characters in the drama, the course will examine the significance of Confucian culture in Korea and whereby draw comparison between Korean Confucian culture and that in the original Confucian classics.

GDAR 1015 世界文化遺產與中國旅遊文學— (3,2,1) (tbc)
Understanding Chinese Literature through World Cultural Heritage in China
This course will study the adaptation and transformation of Confucian culture in an Asian country undergoing modernization. Korean television dramas of various themes, such as historical heroes, love stories and family affairs will be used. Through analysing the behaviour and thinking patterns of modern and ancient characters in the drama, the course will examine the significance of Confucian culture in Korea and whereby draw comparison between Korean Confucian culture and that in the original Confucian classics.

GDAR 1016 Aesthetics, Youth, Action (3,3,0) (E)
This course sensitize students to the kaleidoscopic world of youth with particular reference to how youth culture is manifest in literary and linguistic expressions. This course is theme-driven (e.g. Youth Identity, Love, Sex, Drugs, Aspirations.) And the choice of topics within each theme would be flexible, depending on the interests of the class.

GDAR 1017 Improvisation Comedy for Better (3,3,0) (E)
Linguistic Awareness
This course will study the most fundamental concepts of linguistics with which students may more effectively manipulate to achieve humour. The kind of humour intended here focuses on theatric comedy typical of Improv and Standup. The point is to train students in the ability to take different perspectives of any information presented to them and communicate those