

REL 2250 Hermeneutics (3,2,1) (E)

An introduction to the art and science of interpretation. The course examines various contemporary and historically significant theories of interpretation, together with their philosophical assumptions. Students will be equipped with practical principles and guidelines for reading, understanding, and criticizing biblical and other texts. Special attention will be given to applying such principles to the interpretation of symbols, metaphors, myths, and other types of religious language. Examples will be drawn from the Bible and other specifically religious and/or philosophical texts.

REL 2310 Islam (3,2,1) (E)

This course seeks to pursue a historical study of Islamic doctrines, religious practices and institutions. Emphasis is placed on understanding the nature and teachings in the Qur'an, the sacred traditions (*hadith*), and some of their representative interpretations in medieval and modern settings.

REL 2320 Meaning and Knowledge (3,2,1) (E/C)

This course focuses on methodological problems in relation to the philosophy of language and epistemology. It also will give attention to the issues, problems or ideas in the philosophy of language and epistemology that are most relevant to understanding the major world faiths and religious traditions.

REL 2330 Morality and Society (3,2,1) (E/C)

The course focuses on the philosophical views concerning morality and society and their implications for thinking critically about the moral and socio-political dimensions of various philosophical or religious traditions. It will give attention to the philosophical theories or ideas that have important bearings on how we should go about answering the fundamental questions in moral and socio-political philosophy such as "How should we live?", "What do we owe to other people?", "Do we have good reason to believe that judgments of value are capable of being true or false?", "What rights and liberties should people have?", and "What rule or principle should govern the distribution of goods within society?".

REL 2340 Existence and Reality (3,2,1) (E)

This course investigates the different ways religious traditions conceive of and explain problems which relate finite life to transcendent realms. Philosophical methods in approaching issues related to existence and reality will be explained, so that students can proceed to explore both exegetically and critically differing religious accounts of the relationship between existence and reality.

REL 2350 Philosophical Issues in Chinese Religion (3,2,1) (C)

This course aims to introduce and investigate various philosophical issues in Chinese religion. The arguments for and against certain philosophical theses related to Chinese religion will be explained. Two or more traditions of Chinese religion will be explored at the discretion of the instructor. Students will be encouraged to arrive at their own judgments on, or views of, certain conceptions and doctrines of Chinese religion in a critical and rational manner.

REL 2360 Existentialism and Nihilism (3,2,1) (tbc)

The course is a study of the existentialists' quest for understanding human life and existence, with a focus on the issue of nihilism, i.e. the death of God and the denial of ultimate value and absolute truth. It begins with an introduction to the philosophical movement of existentialism: its historical background and its distinctive features in contrast with other kinds of philosophy. The central problematic of nihilism is introduced by a discussion of Nietzsche's thought. Then the thought of the major atheistic and theistic existentialists will be explored with a special emphasis on their response to the challenge of nihilism. Finally, the existentialists' major insights about the meaning of human existence will be systematically explored and critically assessed.

REL 2410 A Survey of Jewish and Christian Scriptures (3,2,1) (E)

This beginning course of biblical study investigates the background, growth, contents, and messages of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and the history from which they emerged. It introduces the results of modern biblical scholarship and its contribution to our understanding of the Bible. The situation, form, content, and message of a biblical text (or book) is studied as an integrated whole in order to arrive at a balanced understanding of the meaning of the text (or book). Attention is paid to the unity and diversity of different representations of various traditions, and the religious ideas behind them. The procedure of exegesis and the use of the pertinent tools are introduced.

REL 2420 Biblical Theology and Moral Life (3,2,1) (E)

This course focuses on (1) the moral teachings of the Jewish and Christian traditions and (2) issues, problems or ideas in moral and socio-political theology that are highly relevant to understanding these religious traditions.

REL 2430 Contemporary Theology and the Public World (3,2,1) (E)

This course gives a broad view of the emergence, development and interactions of major Christian thought since early twentieth century. The impact of the Enlightenment and the critical issues raised since then will be discussed. Fundamental ideas and main themes of selected contemporary Christian thinkers and related theological movements will be examined. Emphasis will be given to the contextual problems faced by the theologians who struggled to relate Christian faith to their life-situations and the relevance of creative and constructive theological insights to critical issues in the public world.

REL 2610 Christian Spirituality (3,2,1) (E)

This course aims at providing an introduction to the historical, intellectual as well as the experiential dimensions of the spiritual heritage of the Christian faith. The course will be complemented by a critical evaluation of some of the major conceptual components of the discipline of Christian spirituality.

REL 2720 Daoist Religion (3,2,1) (P)

This course aims to offer a comparative examination of Eastern (with an emphasis on Chinese Philosophy) and Western philosophies from a macroscopic point of view. The focus will be directed on the principal ideas advanced and the modes of thinking employed. Similarities as well as differences between Eastern and Western philosophies will be explored and discussed. Religious implications where relevant to the thoughts and theories concerned will be emphasized.

REL 2730 Contemporary Ethical Problems (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course will tackle three or more clusters of ethical issues that are especially relevant to Hong Kong society. Ethical issues in birth, death, sex and love will be discussed here because of public concern lately. Some other issues will be included when deemed necessary.

REL 2750 Christian Social Thought (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course examines the various theological tendencies within the Christian Church in regard to their understanding of Christian responsibility to society and culture, and of the forms of social action in response to the needs in society.

REL 2760 Major Streams in Chinese Philosophy (3,2,1) (C)

This course introduces the origin and development of major philosophical themes in the traditional schools of Chinese philosophy and religion such as Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and Mohism. While providing a survey of the history and interrelationships between main streams of Chinese thought from before Confucius and stretching up to the modern period, the course also presents to students some critical assessments of these trends. In the course of discussions some attention will also

be given to sub-traditions such as the teachings of Gongsun Long and Hui Shi, as well as some of the new doctrines developed by Neo-Daoists, Chinese Buddhists and Neo-Confucians, and the criticisms raised by some modern Chinese philosophers. By this means students will be provided with broad historical accounts to the background and development of the problems addressed in various Chinese philosophical and religious traditions.

REL 3210 Philosophy of Religion (3,2,1) (E)

The course explores a whole range of philosophical problems related to religion, including issues such as proofs for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the intelligibility of religious language, the rationality of religious belief, the relationship between religion and morality, and the significance of religious experience. A selection of influential philosophers will be studied in depth, and students will be encouraged to compare and contrast their various approaches. This is an advanced course; students without adequate background should consult the course instructor before enrolment.

REL 3220 Comparative Religious Themes (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course attempts to provide students with a historically and culturally contextualized empathetic understanding of the world's major living religions by examining the relationships between these religious worldviews and their teachings on personal and social life. It also aims at finding out the prospects for obtaining universal, cross-cultural values in a religiously pluralistic world. Furthermore, it tries to draw on the ancient spiritual resources and various religious wisdom to address the urgent contemporary issues confronting humankind. This is an advanced course. Students without adequate background should consult the course instructor before enrolment.

REL 3230 Christianity and Chinese Culture (3,2,1) (C)

The course utilizes a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to provide a solid platform for the mutual reflections both on the Christian faith in its Western form, as well as on Chinese culture in its current modernization and rejuvenation. Special attention would be paid to Chinese Christian thinkers who have tried to address the cultural dilemmas that arose from their conversion to Christianity, or to non-Christian Chinese thinkers who felt a special need to address the cultural challenge from Western Christianity.

REL 3240 Religion and Modern Society (3,2,1) (tbc)

The course begins with an introduction on classical thinking concerned with the role of religion in society. It then examines the deeper problems of religions raised in the process of modernization/Westernization of society. It explores the religious situations of several typical societies, namely, that of a modernizing non-Western society, that of a modernized non-Western one, and that of a post-modern Western society. Students are invited to reflect existentially with participant observation on the religious situation of his/her own society. This is an advanced course; students without adequate background should consult the course instructor before enrolment.

REL 3260 Chinese Christianity (3,2,1) (C)

This is a study of the missions of the Syriac/Persian (Nestorian), Roman Catholic, Protestant and Russian Orthodox churches in China and their reception among different Chinese societies. The course will begin with a focus on the historical development of different forms of Christianity during the imperial era in China from the Tang to the Qing dynasty. Substantial questions will address cultural and theological issues which have emerged through the modern encounter of Roman Catholic and Protestant expressions of Christianity during modern times. These will include the adaptations required by them in post revolutionary periods of the 20th century China as well as current and long-term problems being faced in the broader realms of cultural China.

REL 3270 Mysticism and Religious Experience (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course examines the standard philosophical problems relating to the nature and interpretation of experiences that lead a person to believe he or she has come into contact with a "transcendent reality" (e.g. God). Special emphasis will be given to thinkers who have developed world views that centre upon such religious or "mystical" experiences.

REL 3410 Theology and Sex in Chinese Societies (3,2,1) (C)

This course introduces students to Christian theology of sex by focusing on the integral relation between sexuality and humanity. It studies the changing sex culture in the last few decades in the west and subsequent movements in contemporary Chinese societies. It explores the underlying ideologies and their impact. It introduces Christian theology of sexuality from biblical, historical and theological perspectives. The values of contemporary sex culture and the Christian tradition are compared and evaluated in light of the problems, tensions and challenges arising from selected various issues in contemporary Chinese societies. These issues include pornography and prostitution, marriage and family, procreation and reproductive technologies, gender and homosexual relations, etc. The relevance of Christian values in public life and postmodern society will also be explored.

REL 3420 Christianity, Modern Science and the Environment (3,2,1) (tbc)

This course is mainly a study of the complex interplay between science and the Christian religion. Some emphasis will also be placed on issues concerned with the meaning of life and the environmental problems. It begins with an invitation to the perennial problems of truth and meaning in science and religion. Different models of the interaction between religion and science will be explored. Then we will discuss whether modern science and the Christian religion are compatible in several major areas: biology, physics and methodology. Important cases of conflict will also be analysed in their historical contexts.

REL 3591-2 Honours Project (3,*,*) (tbc)

A project for BA (Hons) in Religious Studies students. Students will pursue in-depth research on a specific topic of interest to the student under guidance of an appointed lecturer from the Department of Religion and Philosophy. Students are to consult with their advisers regarding the necessary library and archival research, synthesis and writing. This project will be open only to Year III Honours Degree students.

REL 3610 Comparative Philosophy: East and West (3,2,1) (E)

This course aims to offer a comparative examination of Eastern (with an emphasis on Chinese philosophy) and Western philosophies from a macroscopic point of view. The focus will be directed on the principal ideas advanced and the modes of thinking employed. Similarities as well as differences between Eastern and Western philosophies will be explored and discussed. Religious implications where relevant to the thoughts and theories concerned will be emphasized.

REL 3620 Selected Topics/Readings in Philosophy (3,2,1) (E/C)

This course will study a selection of classical literature from the main streams of Chinese philosophy, especially those concerned with Confucianism, Daoism and/or Chinese Buddhism. The course will focus upon specific texts selected from the areas (e.g. Daoism). In studying the selected texts, emphasis will be given to the examination of the philosophical ideas and problems related to the texts. This is an advanced course. Students without adequate background should consult the course instructor before enrolment.