

**Division of Humanities**  
**Course Syllabus**

<b>Course Code:</b>	HUMA 1920
<b>Course Title:</b>	Introduction to Moral Philosophy
<b>Course Offered in:</b>	Spring 2018
<b>Course Instructor:</b>	Dr. Nahum Brown
<b>Class Schedule:</b>	Fridays, 10:30- 13:20
<b>Classroom:</b>	1104
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays, 10:00- 12:00 (by appointment)
<b>Office:</b>	3334
<b>Email:</b>	hmnahumbrown@ust.hk
<b>Teaching Assistant</b>	Mark Kevin Cabural
<b>TA Email:</b>	mkcabural@connect.ust.hk

**1. Course Description:**

This course introduces students to moral philosophy by way of themes about universal morality and global justice. It uses philosophy as well as examples from films and history to explore some of the most pressing moral and political dilemmas we face in the world today. Students begin by reading short selections from Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Mencius' story of the child in the well, Hobbes' *Leviathan*, Berlin's "Two Concepts of Liberty," Kant's *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and Buber's *I and Thou*, while focusing on debates about whether self-interest or a regard-for-others is the more primary characteristic of human nature. The course then offers resources for how students can apply these philosophical ideas to historical and contemporary debates about global justice. Students look at selections from the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt and Henry David Thoreau, and analyze films such as *Citizenfour* (about Edward Snowden) and *Gandhi* as a way to learn about international law, crimes against humanity, and human resistance to unjust political regimes.

\*This syllabus may go through modifications during the semester so please look for further versions on Canvas.

**2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs): Upon completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:**

**Division of Humanities  
Course Syllabus**

<b>1</b>	Rehearse important arguments about human nature in the history of moral philosophy
<b>2</b>	Critically analyze contemporary debates about moral philosophy
<b>3</b>	Develop argumentation and reasoning skills
<b>4</b>	Develop clear writing and clear thinking skills

**3. Course Outline:**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	
<b>1</b>	Feb 2	Course Introduction; Plato, “the Story of Gyges’ Ring”
<b>2</b>	Feb 9	Hobbes, <i>Leviathan</i> ; Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty”
<b>3</b>	Feb 16	Holiday (Lunar New Year)
<b>4</b>	Feb 23	Rachels, “A Critique of Ethical Egoism”
<b>5</b>	Mar 2	Socrates’ Response to Glaucon; Mencius’ story of the child falling into the well; Buber, <i>I and Thou</i> ; In-class Quiz
<b>6</b>	Mar 9	Aristotle’s <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ; Gansberg, “Moral Cowardice”
<b>7</b>	Mar 16	12 Angry Men
<b>8</b>	Mar 23	Midterm
<b>9</b>	Mar 30	Holiday (Good Friday)
<b>10</b>	April 6	Mill, <i>Utilitarianism</i>
<b>11</b>	April 13	Kant’s <i>Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals</i>

**Division of Humanities  
Course Syllabus**

<b>12</b>	April 20	Arendt's <i>Eichmann in Jerusalem</i>
<b>13</b>	April 27	Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"; Citizenfour (Edward Snowden)
<b>14</b>	May 4	Final Exam

#### **4. Requirements**

Students are expected to read each week's assigned text carefully and in advance. There will be a number of group exercises that combine with class lectures.

#### **5. Readings:**

Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*  
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*  
Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty"  
Buber, *I and Thou*  
Gansberg, "Moral Cowardice"  
Hobbes, *Leviathan*  
Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*  
Mencius, *The Book of Mencius*  
Mill, *Utilitarianism*  
Plato, *The Republic*  
Rachels, "A Critique of Ethical Egoism"  
Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"

#### **6. Assignments:**

Attendance:	16%
In-class Quiz	12%
Midterm Exam:	36%
Final Exam:	36%

**Division of Humanities**  
**Course Syllabus**

**7. Attendance and Lateness Policy**

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and on time. Attendance will be checked only at the beginning of class. Missing one or more classes makes it increasingly difficult to keep up with the material. Attendance and punctuality will affect your grade. As a general rule, there will not be any make-up exams or written participation assignments. In severe and justified cases, a make-up exam might be offered, which will be at least as difficult as the original exam.

**8. Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in immediate failure of the assignment or exam. I also reserve the right to take further appropriate steps, including consultation of the dean, with the possibility of expulsion from the University.