

Metaphilosophy and the Politics of Knowing

YHU 2340/Philosophy

Semester 1, AY 2023-24

Tuesdays and Fridays, 14:30-16:00

Instructor: Christine Abigail L. Tan

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Fridays (Please make an appointment in advance via: <https://calendly.com/christine-tan-office-hours/consultation>)

Course Rationale:

This course is a postcolonial approach into the question of what it means to do philosophy. We will think through questions such as what is the nature of philosophy? What are its aims, limitations, and methods? Is the philosophical discipline truly inclusive and global? If not, are there ways in which it can be more inclusive and intercultural? We will discuss Plato, Kant, all the way through Spivak, as well as explore non-mainstream philosophy. By the end of the course, students are expected to have gained a critical awareness of the nature of philosophy, as well as its future direction.

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

- Understand key thinkers in the history of philosophy in relation to the formation of the discipline.
- Articulate and analyze the issues within the formation of the philosophical discipline and the politics around it.
- Reflect on the political nature of our epistemic transactions, which affect how we understand philosophy

Assessments:

- **Journal Critique** (~1000 words; **20%** of your final grade)

Your task for this essay is to evaluate a journal article of your choice (one which we have read) in terms of the effectiveness of its argument, that is, whether or not it is plausible and why. More specific instructions will be posted on Canvas at least two weeks before the due dates.

This is **due on 18 September**

- **Analytical essay** (~1000 words; **20%** of your final grade)

Your task for these this essays is to analyse certain argument/s from the text (using textual evidence) and provide a valid and sound interpretation. More specific instructions and guide prompts will be posted on Canvas at least two weeks before the due dates.

This is **due on 30 October**

- **Final Paper** (2000 words; **40%** of your final grade)

Your final essay is your term paper, which is the culmination of what you have learned during the course. This is a formal research paper, so you are expected to critically engage with ideas discussed during the course, as well as evaluate them, in order to make your own thesis and defend it with textual and logical support.

This is **due 1 December, 2023**

- **Seminar participation** (**20%** of your final grade)

As this is a small seminar course, your full participation is expected. However, do ensure that your engagements are informed, prepared, and respectful. Do also note that being able to listen to, as well as meaningfully respond to, what others are saying is an important part of participating in a conversation.

Course Structure/Schedule:

Week	Required readings T – F		Assessments due
Prototypes: (Re-)Inventing Philosophy			
1 Mon, 14 Aug – Fri, 18 Aug	Plato, and David Gallop. <i>Phaedo</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 73-83; Kant, Immanuel. "Preface," in <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> . Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan, 1992.	Russell, Bertrand. "XV The Value of Philosophy." In <i>The Problems of Philosophy</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.	
2 Mon, 21 Aug – Fri, 25 Aug	Guattari, Félix, and Gilles Deleuze. "Philosophy: What Is a Concept." In <i>What Is Philosophy?</i> , translated by Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.	Badiou, Alain. "The Desire for Philosophy and the Contemporary World." <i>The Symptom</i> , 2006. https://www.lacan.com/badesire.html .	
3 Mon, 28 Aug – Fri, 1 Sep	Laozi. "1," "28," and "29." In <i>Daodejing</i> . Translated by Brook Ziporyn. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2023.	Zhuangzi, and Brook Ziporyn. "Chapter 2," In <i>Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings</i> . Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2020.	
4 Mon, 4 Sep – Fri, 8 Sep	Dotson, Kristie. "How Is This Paper Philosophy?" <i>Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches toward World Philosophy</i> 3, no. 1 (2012). https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2012).030105 .	J., Park Peter K. "Introduction," and "Chapter 4: The Exclusion of Africa and Asia from the History of Philosophy." In <i>Africa, Asia, and the History of Philosophy: Racism in the Formation of the Philosophical Canon, 1780-1830</i> . New York: State University of New York Press, 2014. p. 1-11; p. 69-96	
Philosophy's Factories: Knowledge consumption, production, and distribution			
5 Mon, 11 Sep – Fri, 15 Sep	Friedrich, Hegel Georg Wilhelm. "Preface," In <i>Hegel's Philosophy of Right</i> . Translated by T. M. Knox. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.	Marx, Karl. "Part I: Feuerbach. Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook.: A. Idealism and Materialism" <i>The German Ideology</i> , 1845. https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ .	Journal Critique 1 due: 18 September
6 Mon, 18 Sep – Fri, 22 Sep	Nietzsche, Friedrich, and Walter Kaufmann. "First Essay 'Good and Evil,' 'Good and Bad.'" Essay. In <i>On the Genealogy of Morals. Ecce Homo Est: Ecce</i>	Rorty, Richard. "Philosophy as Transitional Genre." In <i>Pragmatism, Critique, Judgment: Essays for Richard J. Bernstein</i> . Edited by Richard J. Bernstein, Seyla Benhabib &	

	<i>Homo</i> . New York: Vintage Books, 1989. P. 24-56	Nancy Fraser, MIT Press. (2004) p. 3-28 Llanera, T. (2022). Précis of Richard Rorty: <i>Outgrowing modern nihilism</i> . <i>The Philosophical Forum</i> , 53, 151– 155. https://doi.org/10.1111/phil.12324	
Sat, 23 Sep – Sun, 1 Oct	Recess Week		
7 Mon, 2 Oct – Fri, 6 Oct	Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Philosophy. (I)." [^]	Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Philosophy. (II)" [^]	
	^Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Philosophy." In <i>A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present</i> , 1–67. Harvard University Press, 1999. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvj541.4 .		
8 Mon, 9 Oct – Fri, 13 Oct	Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "'Can the Subaltern Speak?': Revised Edition, from the 'History' Chapter of Critique of Postcolonial Reason." In <i>Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea</i> , edited by Rosalind C. Morris, 21–78. Columbia University Press, 2010. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/morr14384.5 .	N/A	
9 Mon, 16 Oct – Fri, 20 Oct	Mills, Charles W. "White Ignorance." In <i>Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance</i> , edited by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007. p. 13-38	Alcoff, Linda M. "Epistemologies of Ignorance: Three Types." In <i>Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance</i> , edited by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007. p. 39-58	
10 Mon, 23 Oct – Fri, 27 Oct	Berlin, Isaiah. "Two Concepts of Liberty." In <i>Four Essays on Liberty</i> . London: Oxford University Press, 1971.	Tan, Christine Abigail. "'Freedom in': A Daoist Response to Isaiah Berlin." <i>Dao</i> 22, no. 2 (2023): 255–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11712-023-09881-z .	Analysis paper due: 30 October
New and Improved 2.0: The Future of Philosophy			
11 Mon, 30 Oct – Fri, 3 Nov	Latour, Bruno. "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern." <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 30, no. 2 (2004): 225–48. https://doi.org/10.1086/421123 .	Martín Alcoff, Linda. "An Epistemology for the next Revolution." <i>TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World</i> 1, no. 2 (2011). https://doi.org/10.5070/t412011808 .	

<p>12 Mon, 6 Nov – Fri, 10 Nov</p>	<p>Medina, José. “Active Ignorance, Epistemic Others, and Epistemic Friction.” <i>The Epistemology of Resistance</i>, 2013, 27–55. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199929023.003.0001.</p>	<p>Olberding, Amy. “It’s Not Them, It’s You: A Case Study Concerning the Exclusion of Non-Western Philosophy.” <i>Comparative Philosophy: An International Journal of Constructive Engagement of Distinct Approaches toward World Philosophy</i> 6, no. 2 (2015). https://doi.org/10.31979/2151-6014(2015).060205.</p>	
<p>13 Mon, 13 Nov – Fri, 17 Nov</p>	<p>Carlson, Licia, and Eva Feder Kittay. “Introduction: Rethinking Philosophical Presumptions in Light of Cognitive Disability.” <i>Metaphilosophy</i> 40, no. 3/4 (2009): 307–30. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24439787.</p>	<p>Conclusion</p>	
<p>Final paper due: 1 December</p>			

Course Policies:

1. **Academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited.** Plagiarism and cheating in any form will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic failing grade. Please cite all your sources, whether directly quoted or paraphrased. Do familiarize yourself with Yale-NUS’s policies on academic integrity to know more: <http://studentlife.yale-nus.edu.sg/policies/academic-integrity/>
2. Please notify me in advance if you cannot make it to class. There will be no penalty for **absences**, but keep in mind that this will affect your participation grade. Each class that you do not attend is a class where you miss the opportunity to participate.
3. Please observe the **prescribed deadline for the submission of all your requirements.** Late submissions are accepted with an Assistant Dean’s note; otherwise, it will be docked one step (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) per day. In some extenuating circumstances however, I may grant extensions even without an AD note if requested in advance, and within a reasonable timeframe.

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at her discretion.