

**City University of Hong Kong**  
**Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public Policy**  
**with effect from Semester B 2020 / 21**

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**Part I Course Overview**

<b>Course Title:</b>	Ethics and Public Policy
<b>Course Code:</b>	POL 3204
<b>Course Duration:</b>	One Semester
<b>Credit Units:</b>	3
<b>Level:</b>	B3
<b>Proposed Area:</b> <i>(for GE courses only)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Humanities <input type="checkbox"/> Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations <input type="checkbox"/> Science and Technology
<b>Medium of Instruction:</b>	English
<b>Medium of Assessment:</b>	English
<b>Prerequisites:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	None
<b>Precursors:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	None
<b>Equivalent Courses:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	SA3204 Ethics and Public Policy
<b>Exclusive Courses:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	None

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

This course aims (1) to acquire and develop critical and analytical thinking skills for making normative judgment about major moral controversies in contemporary public policy, (2) to critically examine the three major approaches to ethics (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) and discover their practical relevance in forming and evaluating various public policies, (3) to discover the role of citizens in the collective resolution of moral controversies in public policy and in public judgment.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs <sup>#</sup>	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Discover and critically assess the major moral controversies in contemporary public policy.		x	x	
2.	Critically assess three major approaches to ethics (consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics) by way of comparison and discover their practical relevance in the moral evaluation of public policies.		x	x	x
3.	Articulate one's normative position by critically engaging with ethical theories and discover and develop alternative public policy suggestions that are socially practicable and ethically persuasive.		x	x	x
4.	Develop and master communicative skills to constructive-critically engage with other students who may hold different moral and philosophical viewpoints; discover how strong individuality (and individual moral judgment) is entwined with democratic citizenship (and public deliberation).		x	x	x
		100%			

\* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

<sup>#</sup> Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.				Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	
<b>Lecture and in-class discussion</b>	To acquire a good understanding of the relevant concepts and theories; to critically evaluate and analyse cases drawn from real life; to acquire and develop analytical skills and critical reasoning about moral dilemmas in public life and respond to these dilemmas.	✓	✓	✓	✓	3 hrs per week
<b>Individual essay (not more than 2,500 words)</b>	Students should demonstrate their own understanding of the central issues studied in the course; they should not only summarize what they have learned from the course.					
<b>Test</b>	Test students' ability to analyse the related ethical and social issues as well as their independent critical thinking.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Reading</b>	Two to three articles or book chapters per week.	✓	✓	✓	✓	About 6 hrs per week

### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.				Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4		
Continuous Assessment: <u>100</u> %						
Lecture and in-class discussion	x	x	x	x	25%	Students are expected to attend all lectures and take part in every session of in-class discussion
Individual essay (not more than 2,500 words)	x	x	x	x	35%	Students should demonstrate their own understanding of the central issues studied in the course; they should not only summarize what they have learned from the course.
Test	x	x	x	x	40%	Test students' ability to analyse the related ethical and social issues as well as their independent critical thinking.
					100%	

\* The weightings should add up to 100%.

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

*(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)*

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Lecture and in-class discussion	Participation and presentation skills in the discussion. Ability to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Very active participation and very good presentation skills. Very good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Outstanding ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Active participation and good presentation skills. Good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Strong ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Limited participation and limited presentation skills. Limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Some ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Very limited participation and very limited presentation skills. Very limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Very limited ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	No participation. Little evidence of being able to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Weak ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.
2. Individual Essay	Mastery of the reading. Ability to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Excellent mastery of the reading. Very good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Outstanding ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Satisfactory mastery of the reading. Good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Strong ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Limited mastery of the reading. Adequate explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Some ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Very limited mastery of the reading. Very limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Very limited ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Little or no mastery of the reading. Little evidence of being able to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Weak ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.
3. Test	Independent critical thinking. Ability to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Outstanding independent critical thinking. Very good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Outstanding ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Good independent critical thinking. Good explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Strong ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Limited independent critical thinking. Adequate explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Some ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Very limited independent critical thinking. Very limited explanation and evaluation of key concepts and theories. Very limited ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.	Serious lack of independent critical thinking. Little evidence of being able to explain and evaluate key concepts and theories. Weak ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

### **Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

#### **1. Keyword Syllabus**

*(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*

Public ethics vs personal ethics. Policy evaluation and normative analysis. Three major approaches to ethics: consequentialism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Concepts in social and political philosophy: legal paternalism and moralism, rights and liberty, social justice, etc. Ethical problems and issues in public policy: sexual morality, free speech, social justice, human rights, liberty, equality, social order, technology, drugs, social discrimination, well-being, individualism, the market, etc.

#### **2. Reading List**

##### **2.1 Compulsory Readings**

*(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)*

1. Pojman, Louis P. and James Fieser (2012). *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*. Wadsworth, mainly Chaps. 1-3.
2. Wolff, Jonathan (2019). *Ethics and Public Policy: A Philosophical Inquiry*. Oxford & New York: Routledge, mainly Chaps. 1, 5, 9.

##### **2.2 Additional Readings**

*(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)*

1. Frey, R.G. and Heath Wellman (eds) (2003). *A Companion to Applied Ethics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
2. White, James E. (ed) (2006). *Contemporary Moral Problems*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.