

San José State University
Department of Philosophy
PHIL120 / Online Session 80
Spring 2019
COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY:
Theory and Practice

SYLLABUS

(Tentative version of 16th October 2018)

- Instructor:** Dr. Bo Mou [<http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/bmou/>]
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Class Timeline: Weekly online sessions at the class website via Canvas [lecture note for each of the regular online sessions is to be posted on Tuesdays (intensive learning days)]
[Note: if the course is given in the classroom setting,
Office Hours: Due to online format of this class, there are no regular “in-office” office hours; you can raise your questions (besides “class-participating questions” to be explained below) anytime online at the “discussion” sections (I will reply on scene if questions are raised whenever I check the class website). However, in case you need a face-to-face meeting, you can come by at my office during 3:30-5:00 pm, Tuesday.
Class Website: www.sjsuu.edu/ecampus (via “Canvas” site where the class website is located)

Required Textbooks:

- <1> *Course Reader* (its contents are to be posted at the class website as the class proceeds) [R]
<2> Tim Connolly: *Doing Philosophy Comparatively* (Bloomsbury, 2015). [DPC]

Course Description:

This course will focus on selected topics concerning theories and methodologies in doing philosophy comparatively (how it is possible for distinct approaches from different philosophical traditions to talk to and learn from each other and jointly contribute to the contemporary development of philosophy) and a range of engaging case analyses.

This course, as given in Spring 2018, focuses on some closely related fundamental theoretic and methodological issues in comparative philosophy and several representative case analyses concerning distinct approaches from the two major philosophical traditions (Chinese and Western traditions).

The course has three learning objectives: (1) to develop the capacity to think critically, to look at things in a broad and dynamic way, and to apply philosophical methods to deal with some philosophically important issues; (2) to appreciate how distinct approaches from different philosophical traditions can make joint contribution to our understanding and treatment of the issues under examination; (3) to develop the ability to enter and appreciate ways of thinking and perspectives that may be quite different from what students have already had.

Prerequisite: 3 units of philosophy or upper division standing.

Course Format

All the regular class communications and required class activities will be made fully online (via the class website and/or the email) without requiring in-person meetings at physical locations on SJSU campus. SJSU currently uses the online class-learning software “Canvas” at <http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus> where the class website is located. Depending on need and situation (especially in case there would be technical difficulties with “Canvas”), we might also use regular email accounts as a back-up means for communication.

With consideration of the students’ variety of timeline availability, each of the indicated online session weeks is to be carried out intensively on its Tuesday (“intensive-learning day” for short) in this way:

- The instructor’s lecture note is to be posted at Canvas before 9 am on that intensive-learning day;
- You arrange your own timeline(s) sensitive to your own schedules on that day (anytime before 9 pm) to do the following learning/studying things: <1> carefully read the lecture note and understand /think about its addressed points and explanations/argumentations (via either its online version or its downloaded hardcopy), <2> raise your reflective questions (if any), and <3> discuss some of your classmates’ questions as far as you can [the foregoing <2> and <3> constitute your participation in discussion and would count in your class participation credit points];
- The instructor is to reply your questions (if any) when he is online (is to login in the class website multiple times on that day between 9 am and 9 pm).

In case you cannot make it to participate in an online session on its date, you can check its content later as the contents of all the posted online lecture-note presentations and discussions are to be kept at the class website until the end of the class; you can still post your question(s)/participate in the discussion on the class content of that date’s online session any time [or any time within one week before the date (next Tuesday) when the next online session is held (i.e., by the midnight of the week’s Monday), if your participation via the foregoing <2> and <3> is intended to be counted in your class participation credit].

Note: During one regular online session, instead of repeating everything that appears in the class handout(s) and the readings for the contents of that session, my posted lecture note and my replies to your raised questions (if any) on the content of that session will focus on: <1> emphasizing major points/argumentation lines, <2> explaining difficulty points, and <3> being sensitive to the specific contents of your raised questions (if any).

Course Requirements and Assignments:

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

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| 1. Online Class Discussion Participation | 15% |
| Reflective discussion is one central part of doing philosophy; participation in discussion in ten of the following fourteen regular online sessions on 2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 4/1, 4/9, 4/16, 4/23, 4/30 and 5/7 (1.5 point for each of the ten online discussion participations): (1) raising reflective questions that show your carefully <1> reading the class textbooks and pre-session reading assignments and/or <2> thinking about the issues under examination; and/or (2) contributing to discussions on classmates’ reflective questions. | |
| 2. Take-home Midterm Exam | 25% (3/29) |
| 3. Term paper | 30% (5/10) |
| 4. Take-home Final Exam | 30% (5/17) |

Grading Policy

Normal grade rules. The final grade will be based on a computation of all of your scores and on the following scale:

A+ = 100-97%	A = 96-93%	A- = 92-90%
B+ = 89-87%	B = 86-83%	B- = 82-80%
C+ = 79-77%	C = 76-73%	C- = 72-70%
D+ = 69-67%	D = 66-63%	D- = 62-60%
F = 59-0% Unsatisfactory		

Term paper

This is the main philosophical writing of each student. Paper topics will be assigned around one month ahead of the submission due time. 5 full pages for undergraduates, and 7 full pages for graduate students (typewritten, double-spaced MS Word file; Time New Roman font with size 12; 1 inch margin (about 320 words each page).

Readings

Before taking each class session, the students are expected to complete the readings assigned for that session, which might consist of four types of readings: (1) source text(s), (2) supplementary reading(s), (3) relevant part(s) of the textbook, and (4) handout(s); for the sake of understanding, might start with (4) and (3).

Exams

The Midterm and Final Exams will take the take-home-exams format

Late assignment submission: late submissions will not be accepted unless there is justified emergency situation.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

PHIL120 Spring 2019

(2018-10-16 version)

Timelines	Contents	Reading Assignments
Week One Jan. 29 (T)	Introduction Preliminaries	None
Part One Fundamental Theoretic and Methodological Issues		
Week Two Feb. 5 (T)	Identity of Comparative philosophy as cross-tradition engagement in philosophy	<u>CR</u> : Readings 1 and 2 <u>DPC</u> : Chs. 1, 2 and 3
Week Three Feb. 12 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (1): Base norms for engagement	<u>CR</u> : Readings 3 and 4
Week Four Feb. 19 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (2): Issue of incommensurability	<u>CR</u> : Reading 5 and 6 <u>DPC</u> : Chs. 4 and 5
Week Five Feb. 26 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (3): Philosophical interpretation	<u>CR</u> : Readings 7 and 8
Week Six March 5 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (4): “one-sidedness” and “generalization” challenges	<u>CR</u> : Readings 9 and 10 <u>DPC</u> : Chs. 6 and 7
Week Seven March 12 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (5): universalism, relativist pluralism	<u>CR</u> : Readings 11 and 12 <u>DPC</u> : Chs. 8 and 9
Week Eight March 19 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (6): consensus pluralism, engagement pluralism	<u>CR</u> : Readings 13 and 14 <u>DPC</u> : Chs. 10 and 11
Week Nine March 26 (T)	How cross-tradition engagement is possible (7): constructive-engagement strategy as a unifying pluralism	<u>CR</u> : Reading 15
May 29 (F)	Take-home Midterm Exam	Due 11:59 pm, May 22 (F)
April 1-5	Spring Recess	
Week Ten April 9 (T)	Case Analysis (1) The <i>Yin-Yang</i> and Hegelian models	<u>CR</u> : Reading 16 and 17
Week Eleven April 16 (T)	Case Analysis (2): Confucius’ and Socrates’ approaches on virtue	<u>CR</u> : Reading 18 and 19
Week Twelve April 23 (T)	Case Analysis (3): Confucius, Lao Zi and Dewey on moral experience, moral rules, and moral foundation	<u>CR</u> : Reading 20 and 21
Week Thirteen April 30 (T)	Case Analysis (4): Gongson Long, Zhuang Zi and Aristotle on identities of things	<u>CR</u> : Reading 22 and 23
Week Fourteen May 7 (T)	Case Analysis (5): Zhuang Zi and Quine on knowledge	<u>CR</u> : Reading 24 and 25
May 10 (F)	Term paper due by midnight (11:59 pm)	
May 17 (F)	Take-home Final Exam	Due 11:59 pm, May 17 (F)
Note: <i>The above schedule is for guidance only and may change in the event of extenuating circumstances.</i>		