

SYLLABUSES OF BROADENING COURSES¹

(I) Humanities and Social Sciences Studies

YEDU0007. A taste of Chinese opera (3 credits)

Chinese Opera is a very important and traditional branch of Chinese culture and art. The understanding of Chinese culture and art is getting more and more important in university education all over the world. It is especially important for HKSAR university education, in respect of our students, our society as well as our country.

The course will be a combination of academic study and hands on workshops for students of any background to understand this internationally renowned art of China. Knowledge of Chinese Opera is wide and deep. This course will introduce the following aspects in order to initiate students' interest for further exploration and study: themes, characters, scripts, lines, songs, music, movement, stage, costume and Chinese culture.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YLAN0007. African Islam (3 credits)

Students will be exposed to a plethora of different materials which emphasize the distinctly African quality of Islam: from the strictly conservative orthodox Sunni; Shi`ism, and its numerous subdivisions, to the more distinguishing features of African Sufism, and the numerous Sufi brotherhoods, to the more syncretic aspects of the local African religions and the monotheistic faith "brought" from afar. Special attention will be devoted to Islam in some Lusophone African countries, particularly Guinea Bissau and Mozambique, as well as Francophone African countries South of the Sahara.

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YARC0007. Architecture of theories – appreciation of integrative approach to the built environment (3 credits)

This is an introductory course for the comprehension of architecture and its background theories as compared and related with various disciplines for humanities. Students will be illustrated the creation of architecture from sketch and the analysis of the built environment in Hong Kong and other places. Different perspectives to identify the themes of architecture are revealed including culture, travelling, legislation, business, sustainability, music and heritage, etc. Building visits are also arranged in groups for direct experience and critique of local built environment.

Note: This course is not available to BA (ArchStud), BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

¹ For details, please visit <http://www.hku.hk/student/broadening>

YSOC0006. Asian heritages: symbolism and values (3 credits)

This course will explore the symbolic and social values behind the various types of cultural heritages among the Asian people. Cultural heritages include the built environment as well as the living cultures of the people such as religion, ethno-music and food. In this course, we will specifically focus on the intersection of the physical and the emotional aspects of cultural, lifestyle and living heritages and their significance to the various cultural groups. We will also explore how cultural heritages are appropriated, transmitted and transformed by different agencies such as the state, schools, religious organisations and local society, to cater to their own purposes. Cultural heritages from various Asian countries and ethnic minority groups will be explored. They include the heritages of the Japanese, Chinese, Tibetan, Uighur, Mongolian, Indonesian and Filipino societies.

The course will be approached from a multi-disciplinary perspective. The teachers for this course will be from the Faculties of Social Sciences, Arts and Education. Guest lecturers will also be invited.

The course adopts a multi-disciplinary perspective and will be delivered by teachers from the Faculties of Social Sciences, Arts and Education, as well as guest lecturers.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YCAS0005. Collective memory: unity and diversity in Hong Kong community (3 credits)

For a decade, the Centre of Asian Studies has developed expertise and remarkable research records on memory and history. Drawing upon the Centre's strengths and individual experiences, the teaching team will introduce a multi-disciplinary approach to understand collective memory about Hong Kong, a highly disputable terminology appeared in recent popular discourses. The course will demonstrate how oral history can be used as a research method to study the past lifestyles, memories of place and identity, community history and social change. Students will be organized into small teams and be guided to undertake practical projects of preserving and re-constructing collective memory of different aspects of lives in Hong Kong. Through interactions with people and community of diverse backgrounds, students will learn to appreciate cultural diversity and historical consciousness. These group projects will also train students to critically understand cosmopolitan Hong Kong through creative re-presentation of collective memories.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YMFT0002. Food, sex and human nature (3 credits)

Mencius believed that desires for food and sex constitute a great part of human nature. Although these two basic needs share much in common, most societies are able to manage food much more effectively than sex. For example, Hong Kong is reputed as a centre for high quality, international food and restaurants. However, it has made a bad name for being one of the most sexually handicapped societies of the modern world, especially after many social blunders it has created in reaction to some of the sexual issues in recent years. Why? Can we borrow what we learn from food to understand sex? Can the two really be compared and treated in similar ways? If not, why?

This course delineates in different perspectives how the two basic human needs infiltrate the many fine and subtle areas of our life, family and civilization, how they work in similar and dissimilar ways, how we have succeeded or failed in coping with them, and how these two areas reflect on the quality of family relationship and couple intimacy.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YECC0004. From paintings to stories: the interplay between art and literature (3 credits)

The main purpose of this course is to examine the relationship between art and literature, and how one form inspires the creation of the other. In each of the ten lectures, a pair of artistic and literary works will be presented for discussion. Some lectures begin with a painting, and go on to examine a literary piece that it gives birth to it; in other lectures, the process will be reversed: a poem, a short story, a play will be introduced first, and this is followed by a painting that is based on its literary counterpart.

In this course, students will learn to appreciate paintings from different times and cultures, approach a range of literary works, and will be given ample opportunities to do creative writings based on artistic works.

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YLIT0007. Hong Kong community and cultural policy in the global context (3 credits)

Cultural production is becoming the new drive for the world's global and local economy. Dynamic cultural planning has been gaining currency worldwide as a way to integrate cultural demands, planning objectives, and socioeconomic goals. How does Hong Kong fare in this picture?

New studies on global cultural policies show that "managerialism" and "entrepreneurialism" in planning prioritize entertainment, tourism, and architecture, resulting in unsustainable build-up of cultural hardware. Similarly, the West Kowloon Cultural District is an issue of competitive urban growth vs. sustainable cultural development. The heavy reliance on the hardware build-up exposes not only the lack of perspective on culture policy (the "cultural" infrastructure), but essentially, the absence of cultural planning and cultural policy. Other countries in recent years have stressed the importance of cultural policies that are sustainable, democratic and grounded in community needs. This is an intellectual and policy gap that we can, and ought to, fill.

For example, we will ask: How can we understand and deal with developments like the West Kowloon Cultural District, the Star Ferry and Queen's Pier, Disneyland, as well as redevelopment and preservation projects all over Hong Kong like the Lee Tung Street (Wedding Card Street), the Blue House and Sham Shui Po?

This is a humanities course that equips students with the capacity to understand and participate in Hong Kong cultural policy and planning discussions in the local condition and the global context.

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YBUD0002 In search of happiness and the meaning of life (3 credits)

Happiness and fulfillment are something that most of us long for, but unfortunately, cannot get most of the time. How can people be happier? People are all alive, but are they living? Is there a meaning to life? These are both philosophical and practical questions that people would need to deal with one way or another during the course of their life. This course will try to approach these questions in practical ways that will eventually enhance the quality of one's life. Students will be invited to explore ways to comprehend existence, learn to manage emotions, and search for the meaning of life and understand death.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YECC0003. Language and the Internet (3 credits)

This course explores the role and forms of language in the Internet with specific focus on virtual environments and discusses the effect of the Internet on language. The Internet is a technological revolution, but also a linguistic revolution (Crystal, 2001) and this course will challenge students to examine how the Internet is used for communication as well as to examine and document and discuss the varieties of language and language situations on the Internet. This course will foster an awareness of the nature of language and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and assist students to develop greater “electronic literacies” (Warschauer, 1999) by requiring them to engage in online interaction within a virtual world.

In the first 6 weeks, students will be presented with a set of core readings including chapters from a core text, academic articles and authentic communications conducted in bulletin boards and a virtual environment. Students will use these texts, and discover examples of authentic “netspeak” as a foundation for an academic dialogue conducted online. In the final weeks of the course students will be challenged to apply their understanding of linguistic change when they break into presentation groups of 3-5 to develop a Communications Technology Presentation which is presented in real-time within a virtual environment. This culminating presentation will give students an opportunity to investigate a new or emerging technology from a linguistic perspective.

Student enrolling in this course should have regular access to a fast and reliable internet connection and a computer that meets the minimum specifications outlined at this URL: <http://secondlife.com/support/sysreqs.php>

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YPSY0007. Love, marriage, sex and family: a multi-disciplinary approach (3 credits)

Intimate interpersonal relationship takes up much of our personal time and resources, and is an indispensable building block of human society. It promises laughter but is sometimes tainted with tears. The family is where wounds are healed, but also a place where social and physical ills are transmitted. Has something gone wrong? We shall present a multi-disciplinary analysis of the relevant issues. Our postmodern society’s prevalent emphasis on rugged individualism and hedonism will be compared with a more relational value system. A forum immediately after each lecture allows students to ask questions, form their own educated opinions, and receive feedback. Reading assignments will be taken from the psychological, legal, and medical literatures. While no prior knowledge in these fields is assumed, students are expected to take their own initiative in learning outside an area that they are most comfortable with.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YJMS0002. Media literacy in the age of globalization (3 credits)

The course’s main objectives are to help students learn how to discover, record, focus, verify and assemble and critically assess modern media information – on any subject with a special emphasis on local and international news organizations. In doing so, the course fulfils many of the main criteria for broadening courses by helping students acquire self-directed learning and critical thinking skills and problem-solving and communication competencies essential to success in the Information Age.

Note: This course is not available to BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students, and students who have taken JMSC0101.

YPHI0007. Morality, metaphysics and the meaning of life: philosophy through film (3 credits)

Philosophical issues will be introduced through a variety of thought-provoking films and developed through lectures and discussion, and will include such topics as the meaning of life, the nature of reality, skepticism, free will, defining the self, utilitarian and deontological ethical approaches, and contemporary ethical issues such as topics in environmental ethics, medical ethics and social ethics. Diverse popular and classic movies with philosophical themes will be shown and analysed, which may include such films as *The Matrix*, *Memento*, *Thank You for Smoking*, *Gattaca*, *Bicentennial Man* etc. Debates and discussions on the philosophical themes introduced will be conducted through smaller seminars in which students will have the opportunity to express and defend their stances on the various issues.

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YCHI0004. The art of presentation (3 credits)

Introduction to Marshall McLuhan's well known theory "The Medium is the Message", that a medium affects the society in which it plays a role not by the content delivered over the medium, but by the characteristics of the medium itself. Through his theory, we encourage students to develop a new presentation strategy in the digital era.

We also explore how different media invite different degrees of participation on the audience, and how is that associated with successful presentation method.

There is discussion on appropriate gestures, vocabulary and taboos in communication, particularly allow students to be aware of the Chinese custom and multi-cultural differences.

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

YECC0001. Understanding narratives (3 credits)

This course has three objectives:

1. To introduce students to the nature of narratives and the function they serve in stories, poems, plays, and movies;
2. To cultivate in students an interest in reading, and the ability to appreciate imaginative works;
3. To provide students with opportunities to write narratives in the form of short stories, poems, as well as short plays and to perform them.

Note: This course is not available to BA, BJ, BSocSc, BSocSc(Govt&Laws) and BSW students.

(II) Science and Technology Studies**YSCN0027. Chemistry in sport (3 credits)**

Sport and fitness are for everyone. With the huge success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, we are more concerned about the development of the sport in Hong Kong. Chemistry and Sport – is there any relevance? Have you ever wondered why World records in sport continue to improve? One of the reasons is better equipment, like track surfaces, shoes, and clothing, to help improve athletes' performances. Besides, dietary supplements can be used for increasing muscle strength and quicker

training recovery. It is just right to say nearly every sport relies on modern materials and chemicals. With chemistry, not only athletes, but also you and I, can make the most out of sport for health and excitement.

In this course, students will be engaged in laboratory work so as to better understand the major topics covered and appreciate the relevance of chemistry to modern sport and their daily life.

Note: This course is not available to BSc and BSc(ActuarSc) students.

YSCN0006. Food: facts and fallacies (3 credits)

This course aims to provide greater understanding of foods in our daily diet, and to discuss factors affecting safety and healthfulness of food. An outline of the origin, history and processing of foods such as rice, tea, noodles, beer, wine, cheese, yogurt, chocolate, tofu, etc., will be given. Students will find answers to common questions, such as: Is red wine really good for you? Is there anything wrong with instant noodles? Does yogurt promote health? An outline of food safety problems in Hong Kong will be included. Students will learn how to interpret manufacturers' health claims for foods and nutritional products.

Note: This course is not available to BSc students following the Food and Nutritional Science programme, students following the Food and Nutritional Science major/minor, and students who have taken BIOL0002.

YSCN0017. From Sherlock Holmes to modern forensic science (3 credits)

Forensic science is the application of scientific principles to criminal and civil laws within a criminal justice system with the goal toward the establishment of guilt or innocence. This course is designed to introduce some of the specialised fields of forensic science, to learn the fundamental principles of science and technology upon which they are based, and to apply them to a number of suspicious situations and criminal cases. Aspects of forensic science involving the examination of physical, chemical and biological items of evidence will be explored. Following an introduction to the concepts of basic chemistry, and analytical and instrumentation techniques, students will understand the forensic analysis of substances such as glass, soil, hair, ink, bullets, gunpowder and drugs. Focus is on evidence gathering and preservation; identification and comparison of body fluids and hair; fingerprints; present-day DNA finger printing techniques; databases; and legal issues. The methods used for the analysis for alcohol and drugs and in the characterisation of blood and other body fluids will be discussed in the context of the principles of biochemistry, toxicology, pharmacology and serology. Problem-solving, case studies as well as "hands-on" casework examples of fingerprints, hairs and fibers and the interpretation of results will also form part of the course.

Note: This course is not available to Science and Engineering students.

YSCN0007. Hong Kong's natural environment (3 credits)

Hong Kong is one of the world's pre-eminent cities with a population of 7 million people occupying a small fraction of southern coastal China. It is famous for its skyscrapers and frenetic life. Yet within a few kilometres of the urban areas are jagged mountains, secluded valleys, spectacular rock formations and breathtaking vistas. The aim of this course is to explain the natural environment, from the rocks beneath one's feet to the forces that have sculpted them. Students will be introduced to many topics from rock cycles to climate change. The course will look at the remarkably beautiful coastal features of HK and assess man's impact on the environment to see where human beings are going wrong and to consider various solutions. On completing the course, students from all disciplines will have a better understanding and appreciation of their local environment.

Note: This course is not available to BSc students following the Earth Sciences or Environmental Life Science programme, students following the Earth Sciences, Ecology and Biodiversity, Environmental Protection major/minor, or Environmental Science major, and students who have taken YSCN0024 and EASC0101.

YSCN0032. Life in the Universe (3 credits)

What is life? How did life originate and evolve to its current state? Are we alone in the Universe? This course deals with these central and important scientific questions. Students will have the unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of these central themes by interrelating key aspects of astronomy, Earth and planetary sciences as well as biology, and they will also gain an appreciation of scientific debate and knowledge testing. The topics to be discussed in the course include: the Solar System and its formation; the conditions on early Earth; the origin of life's building blocks; the emergence and evolution of life; life in extreme environments; the possibility of life elsewhere in the Solar System; the discovery and diversity of extrasolar planetary systems; the search for habitable extrasolar planets and signs of life; and SETI, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence.

Note: This course is not available to BSc and BSc (ActuarSc) students.

YSCN0025. Living with microbes – a practical approach (3 credits)

Bacteria have been living on Earth for billions of years and they can be found in almost everywhere. You may have heard about the harmful effect of microbes (such as disease causing bacteria, the SARS virus and the birds' flu) on human health. But have you heard about the beneficial use of microbes in improving our standard of living and health? Many pharmaceutical products that we use nowadays are made by microbes. Many food and commodities that we consumed are processed by microbes. Without the microbes, we cannot survive! The aim of this course is to provide students with an overview on the importance of microorganisms and our relationship with them. Students will be given the opportunity to explore the world of microbes via hands-on experience. Prior knowledge of biology is NOT required. You will learn to work and think like a scientist.

Note: This course is not available to BSc students following the Animal and Plant Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Biology, Environmental Life Science or Food and Nutritional Science programme, students following the Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Biology, Microbiology, Ecology and Biodiversity, Environmental Science, Environmental Protection or Food and Nutritional Science major, BSc(Bioinformatics) students, and students with a pass in AL/AS Biology.

YSCN0001. Science and technology in the modern world (3 credits)

This course provides non-science students with a general understanding of the principles and applications of various aspects of science and technology in this modern society. Through this course, students are expected to increase their scientific literacy and ability to approach scientific materials intelligently. The course consists of three main components: (1) Materials, which takes a look at how humans have made use of various materials; (2) Energy, which explains the range of energy sources exploited by Man (fossil fuels, plant biomass, nuclear, solar, wind, water and geothermal sources); and (3) Life, which deals with cell division (growth), reproduction, genes and genetics, biotechnology and cloning.

Note: This course is not available to BSc, BSc(ActuarSc), BSc(Bioinformatics), BEng students, BBA(IS) graduates enrolled in BEng(CompSc), and students with a pass in AL/AS Biology, Chemistry or Physics.

YSCN0023. Scientific perspectives on obesity and anorexia (3 credits)

Many in Hong Kong suffer from overweight problems. Some have gone the opposite direction by starving themselves to look as thin as they can to match their vastly underweight idols (fashion models or songstress). Both situations stem from the lack of general scientific knowledge on how to maintain a normal healthy body.

This course is designed for non-science majors. An overview will be provided on food science and nutrition. The course examines the health effects arising from obesity (overweight) and anorexia (underweight) and discusses ways to prevent such problems. The style of teaching will be interactive. Students are expected to visit dry and wet markets, drug stores, health food stores to gain first hand knowledge of the local situation (food) and to examine their own nutritional facts. Students will be graded by continuous assessment methods. There is no formal examination at the end of the course.

Note: This course is not available to BSc and BSc(ActuarSc) students. Preference will be given to students who DO NOT have a pass in AL/AS Biology.

YSCN0004. The gene (3 credits)

We are at the dawn of a true biotechnology and information technology explosion. It is only a little over 50 years ago that Watson and Crick first described the double helical structure of the DNA molecule initiating the advancement of molecular biology and that we have already finished the first complete sequence of the human genome (complete set of genes). The completion of the human genome sequencing project leads us to a better understanding of disease genes, new diagnostic assays and the subsequent development of therapeutic drugs, leading to a better quality of life. It will also bring about many technical and ethical issues with which the general public will have to deal with. The learning outcomes are: to enhance students' understanding toward to the basic knowledge of genetic and inheritance; scientific knowledge of the gene and its impacts in various ethical and social disciplines. Topics include the chemical basis of the gene; human and viral gene evolution; genes and food; animal cloning; genes and disease; genes and crime; the human genome and computer science; genes and behavior; and genetic implications to law and society.

Note: This course is not available to students with a pass in AL/AS Biology and students who have taken BIOL0120.

YSCN0033. The science of music (3 credits)

This course follows the basic structure of the excellent book "Science and Music" written by Sir James Jeans in the early 50s. It develops a basic understanding of the physics of harmonic sound leading to understanding of tone and timbre. The physics of musical sound production by wind and stringed musical instruments is taught. The different musical scales are dealt with together with an appreciation of the differences between Chinese and Western music. The course also deals with the practical side of modern music making such as the electronic detection of sound, amplification, mixing and hi-fidelity reproduction. The electronic production of music is demonstrated and the optimal design for concert halls discussed. The anatomy and perception of sound by the ear are described and the reasons behind harmony and disharmony are explained on the theory of Helmholtz. The course will contain only simple mathematical and physics concepts.

YPHY0001. Your life style and your health (3 credits)

This course aims to provide a general (for non-biologists)/advanced level (for biologists) of background knowledge on the biological functions of the human body; identify and discuss life-style factors that affect body functions; and communicate the significance of life-style factors that influence

body functions. Lecture topics include: healthy and unhealthy: your body at a glance; healthy heart; smoking, air pollution and your lungs; “We are what we eat”; exercise: keeping good health; and (for biologists) eating disorders: feasting or starving. Laboratory topics include: test of lung function; assessment of body fat; heart and lung functions in exercise; (for non-biologists) blood pressure and heart sound; (for biologists) exercise and the heart; and basal metabolic rate.

Note: This course is not available to students in the Faculty of Medicine. The first-semester subclass is not available to students with a pass in AL/AS Biology, while the second-semester subclass is not available to students without a pass in AL/AS Biology.

YEEE0004. Electronic technologies in everyday life (6 credits)

In this age of information explosion, it is easy for one to get lost in the labyrinth of new technology surfacing everyday in mass media and the Internet. While some of these new technologies will eventually change our ways of living, some, unfortunately, are mere marketing hypes. This course aims to:

- (a) arouse students general interest in science and technology, particularly with regard to current “high-tech” products that the students encounter everyday;
- (b) train students to develop critical intellectual enquiries concerning existing and latest technologies they encounter in their everyday lives through scientific evidence and information.

Through lectures and discussions, students will be able to not only recognize the latest advancement in technologies and identify misinformation presented in the mass media, but also be able to understand their social implications, as well as to develop critical thinking and to carry educated discussion about merits and common misconceptions associated with new technologies.

Note: This course is not available to BEng(CompSc), BEng(CE), BEng(EComE), BEng(EE), BEng(InfoE), BEng(ME) and BEng(ME-BSE) students and BBA(IS) graduates enrolled in BEng(CompSc).

YMEH0004. Energy: its evolution and environmental impacts (6 credits)

Energy is essential to our daily lives. Electricity, fuel gas and fuel oil have brought us much convenience, luxury as well as prosperity. However, our present heavy reliance on fossil fuels has caused serious energy crisis, air pollution and climate change problems. Active technological development is needed on both supply and demand sides to enhance the energy industry to achieve sustainability.

This course is designed to enable students to develop a broader perspective and critical understanding of energy issues that they are confronted with, to cultivate students’ appreciation of various viewpoints and responsibilities as a global and local citizen, and to develop their problem-solving ability through lectures and discussion of the key energy and environmental issues.

The topics of the course include:

1. World energy resources
2. Fossil fuel-based, nuclear and hydro energy technologies
3. Energy conservation and energy efficiency
4. Clean and renewable energy technologies
5. Scheme of control and deregulation in electricity supply
6. Environmental impacts of energy industry
7. Social, economic and political issues
8. Remedial measures and policies

Note: This course is not available to BEng(ME) and BEng(ME-BSE) students.

YSCN0034. Hidden order in daily life: a mathematical perspective (6 credits)

Although not obvious, mathematics actually permeates through many areas of our modern society, affecting us fundamentally on an everyday basis. For example, the Human Genome Project, GPS systems, and mobile phones use mathematics extensively as well as other non-science matters such as financial investment, data encryption, and internet searching. Even the voting systems, an important feature of our democracy, can be analyzed with the help of mathematics, enabling us to gain a deeper understanding of what is meant by fairness of a voting system or a social choice procedure and its limitations.

Through exploring non-technically some mathematically rich daily life topics, this course aims to help students gain essential mathematical literacy for living in the 21st century. Students will learn the mathematical concepts and principles of things that they encounter in the modern society, and learn how to handle and interpret numerical and other forms of mathematical data that affect their daily life.

(* Note: Mathematics beyond the level of general school mathematics is not required. The focus of the course is on demonstrating analytical reasoning, formulating evidential and logical arguments, and presenting and communicating the coherent body of knowledge acquired.)

Note: This course is not available to BEng(CompSc) students and BBA(IS) graduates enrolled in BEng(CompSc).

YSCN0035. Origin and evolution of life (6 credits)

Among the most fundamental questions we can ask ourselves as human beings are:

Where do we come from – how did life begin and evolve?
 Are we alone- is the Earth unique in our universe in supporting life?
 Where are we going – what is the long-term future for mankind?

These questions focus on the origin, evolution and future of life, a field of study collectively termed astrobiology. Answers have been sought via scientific inquiry throughout human history, and technological advances have created paradigm shifts in the way that society reconciles new scientific findings with accepted norms and belief-systems. The course will examine:

- (a) How the conditions for life arose in the universe and how scientific and technological advances have changed this perception over time;
- (b) The various scientific threads supporting the appearance of cellular life on Earth and its evolution over time; and
- (c) The societal implications of discovering extraterrestrial life.

Students will:

- (a) Gain a better understanding of the environmental conditions necessary for life and the extreme conditions under which life can exist;
- (b) Learn to discriminate scientific evidence supported by data from other belief-based explanations for evolution;
- (c) Learn to appraise scientific findings that indicate other planets such as Mars may have been capable of supporting life in its recent history; and
- (d) Learn to identify the finiteness of Earth's life as a habitable planet, the technological challenges that face mankind if we are to colonize a new planet, and potential solutions indicated by recent advances in technology.

YSCN0036. Understanding climate change (6 credits)

Climate change is consistently in the news, yet there is little public understanding of what is now one of the biggest issues facing humanities. This course aims to provide students with the scientific literacy needed to understand climate change and consider existing and proposed solutions. The guiding objectives will be to promote the understanding needed to evaluate, develop, and propose emerging and creative solutions at individual, local and global levels. Students are required to critically examine different media on the subject including critiques of “An Inconvenient Truth” and “The Great Climate Swindle” films that present opposing sides of the climate change argument. Besides traditional lectures, the course will use self-directed web-based learning and “blog” discussions together with a field trip to stimulate student thinking. An interest in climate change issues and the ability to think critically and express ideas are the only prerequisites for the course.

Note: This course is not available to BSc students in Earth Sciences or Environmental Life Sciences programme, and students following Earth Sciences, Ecology and Biodiversity, Environmental Protection major/minor, Environmental Science major or Global Climate Change minor.

YSCN0037. Feeding the world (6 credits)

Continuing human population increases, competition for water supplies, and concern about energy prices have led to profound pessimism about long-term food supplies. Already a billion people go hungry every day. This course will offer an in-depth look at key issues in global food sufficiency, food production, food distribution, prospects and constraints. Students will develop a strong integrated technical, economic and political understanding of the global food supply crisis. They will be equipped to understand and appreciate media reports related to this issue in their lives as informed and influential citizens.

Topics covered will include:

- Global food production and population trends
- The special problem of China, the world’s biggest producer and consumer of food
- The Green Revolution: the rapid increase in agricultural productivity (wheat in Mexico and India; rice in Asia) in the 1960s and 1970s
- Alternative agricultures
- Meat production
- Food and health
- Agriculture – an energy-intensive business
- Water and agriculture
- Biofuels

Note: This course is not available to students who have taken BIOL2503.

(III) Culture and Value Studies**YLAN0005. An introduction to France and the francophone world (3 credits)**

This course offers an introduction to contemporary France through a range of key aspects, such as the historical and political development of the nation, its people, customs and popular culture, its institutions and society. These aspects will be discussed in relation with important current issues facing the country, as well as France’s position today within the European framework and its standing in the world today. In addition, the course will undertake a broad exploration of the French-speaking world (la Francophonie), a community of nations from all over the world where French is widely spoken. Through the presentation of this variety of distinct realities united by a single language, we shall also investigate the notions of cultural identity and cultural representation, and how these notions structure our own life and our way of thinking about other cultures.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCogSc students.

YSOC0003. Body, beauty and fashion (3 credits)

This course takes students on an exploration of the links between body, beauty and fashion from a variety of perspectives ranging from sociology, social policy, economics, psychology and medicine. These various perspectives together offer students a way of seeing how individual level issues (like self-esteem, stigma and identity) shape and are shaped by community level issues (mass media), societal level issues (gender) and global level issues (globalisation and westernisation). This course examines these issues in a variety of formats using guest lectures, mass media analysis, video clips, problem solving activities and in class surveys.

Note: This course is not available to BCOGSc students.

YECC0002. Gay identity: an exploration through world literature (3 credits)

The course will cover the same-sex tradition in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, of China until the end of the Qing dynasty, and of Japan until the end of the Edo period. It will also explore the creation of the modern gay identity over the past 150 years in literature and film, and the evidence for same-sex relations in other cultures (Amer-indian and African) and in the animal world. By the end of the course, students should have read a selection of literary texts from around the world about love and desire, and should have understood the diversity of ways in which same-sex love and desire have been expressed in different places at different times.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCOGSc students.

YLIT0005. Hong Kong cinema in the context of globalization (3 credits)

Hong Kong cinema cannot be regarded merely as a local cinema. In an age where cross-cultural interactions and trans-regional traffics are frequent, Hong Kong cinema is an interesting site where complex global processes can be easily traced. Not only will students witness the massive outflows of film personnel from Hong Kong to Hollywood, they will also observe that the inflows of financial capital for co-production and sponsorship are increasingly vibrant in both Hong Kong popular and independent cinemas. With a wide selection of Hong Kong films, this course takes students on an exploration of the intricate interactions between the local and the global. Students will also learn the recent debates about globalization from a variety of perspectives, ranging from cinema studies, critical and cultural theory, sociology and cultural anthropology. To expand students' horizons, film critics, scholars, and industrial and independent filmmakers will be invited to dialogue with students.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCOGSc students.

YLAN0002. Italy and the wider European framework (3 credits)

This course is articulated on some significant moments:

The Past:

(1) Rome and its empire: Rome and its role in the spreading of Christianity; Rome as a political, economic, and cultural centre of the ancient world; (2) Italy meeting and departure point: the great Renaissance courts as international crossroads, the maritime republics, the great voyages of exploration and discovery; the crusades; (3) Italy in the conflicts of the XIX century: the rising in Europe of the national states, the unification of Italy, Mazzini and the dream of a united Europe.

The Near Past:

(1) The XX century: Italy and the other European countries from the two world wars to the European Union (EU); (2) the Italian stages in the building up of the EU; (3) the XXI century.

Today and Tomorrow:

Topics on contemporary Italian life and culture will be discussed ranging from arts, literature, music, Italian customs and traditions in the different regions and cities, to cinema and tourism, food, fashion, environment, education, sports and politics with particular focus on the youth world.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCogSc students.

YSWK0006. Knowing the unknown: an introduction to death, dying and bereavement (3 credits)

Death is a universal event for human beings, yet it remains a taboo in different cultures in the contemporary society. This course provides an opportunity for students to better understand various issues on death, dying and bereavement, which are seldom thoroughly discussed in our everyday life. Different perspectives on death, dying and bereavement, including physiological, psychological, social, cultural, philosophical and religious, will be introduced. Students may better reflect on the cultural implications, as well as their own values on this topic. Life and death is inter-related. By knowing the unknown of death and dying, students may re-experience what is life and living.

Note: This course is not available to BCogSc students.

YLAN0006. Living in the land of the midnight sun – towards an understanding of contemporary Scandinavia (3 credits)

An introduction to Scandinavia—Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Iceland—through its history and culture. Course will explore features common to Scandinavia as a whole as well as aspects unique to each country, Sino-Scandinavian relations, and draw comparisons between the contrasting lifestyles of Scandinavia and Hong Kong. Students will gain an understanding of a region famous for balancing the demands of an advanced and highly competitive economy with one of the world’s most comprehensive social welfare systems.

Topics (common to all four Scandinavian countries) will include:

Viking Era and Early Christianity, Religious reforms and wars, Emergence of nationalism and democracy, Scandinavia during WW1 and WW2, Popular Movements.

Political systems/current political debates/trends.

Construction of the welfare state and its role in the 21st century, comparison to Hong Kong.

Culture in Scandinavia, including Scandinavian influences on world culture, Scandinavian literary giants and Scandinavian film.

Scandinavia and China through history and current relations.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCogSc students.

YEDU0003. Sexual and gender diversity (3 credits)

At birth every child is labelled “boy” or “girl”. Most people grow up accordingly, learning to think of themselves as either male or female, and developing many of the characteristics culture deems appropriate for their sex. Most adults search for partners of the other sex and, sooner or later, settle down with one. As their relationship develops so we expect the nature of the sexual relationship to

change. This course will look at some of those who take different developmental paths: for example homosexuals (who are attracted to members of their own sex), and transgendered people (who behave much like members of the other sex, some desperately wanting to be of that sex). Besides looking at what people feel about themselves and whom they are attracted to, some of the more unusual ways in which some people actually express their sexuality will also be examined. We will be asking students to consider what is and might be acceptable and unacceptable in HK society.

The course will look at sexual and gender diversity, and examine what it is to fall into various sexually diverse groups, and how society responds to the challenges that they pose.

Note: This course is not available to BCogSc students.

YSRP0001. Stress, depression and suicide (3 credits)

Depression is a community wide problem which affects many people of all ages (CSRP, 2005), and is commonly experienced by university students. What is more, there is a strong relation between depression and suicide. Suffering from mood disorders is a significant risk factor for dying by suicide.

The course aims to help students learn how to achieve critical self-reflection and greater understanding of self and others, how to tackle novel situations, and how to appreciate effective interpersonal communication. The course will help students acquire the essential knowledge of stress, depression, and suicide, as well as enhance their life skills in managing stress, depression, and suicidal tendencies based on a cognitive-behavioural model. Under this approach, mental disorders are tackled based on the assumption that emotional responses are mediated through the interpretations, or meanings, that we give to experience. Thus, in order to improve one's mental health, the behaviour and the cognition of an individual need to be educated or trained.

Note: This course is not available to BCogSc students.

YJAP0004. Understanding popular culture in Japan and Hong Kong (3 credits)

This course begins with an introduction of various socio-cultural theories on popular culture. It then examines the development of popular culture including comics, shopping culture, TV dramas, movies, pornographic culture, food, magazines, fan culture and popular music in post-war Japan and Hong Kong. Finally, this course will investigate the transfer and reception of Japanese popular culture in, and the impact on, Chinese societies in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Mainland China.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCogSc students.

YLAN0004. Understanding the German way – an introduction into contemporary life in Germany (3 credits)

This course provides an introduction into political, economic and social issues of contemporary life in Germany and discusses the country's cultural and linguistic diversity. Topics will include: Post 1949 German History, Germany's Reunification, Germany's Political System, German Economy and International Relations, Women and Society, Education, German Culture and Language, Foreigners in Germany, German Customs and Traditions and German Characteristics.

Lectures and discussions will be supported through the usage of contemporary documents and authentic materials such as audio and video clips, newspaper articles and sources from the World Wide Web. Furthermore, guest speakers from selected German institutions in Hong Kong will be

invited to give talks on different topics covering social and cultural aspects of contemporary life in Germany. Lectures and guest talks aim at encouraging students to contribute their ideas and comments in open group discussions.

All lectures are conducted in English.

Note: This course is not available to BA and BCogSc students.

YPHI0006. Ethical dilemmas in the modern world (3 credits)

In this course, contemporary ethical issues will be presented through various media, including films, documentaries, short stories, essays and philosophical writings and then evaluated and analysed in class. For each topic, some philosophical background will be provided by the lecturer, and then class discussions will be held, with lively debates into the advantages and disadvantages, attractions and problems of alternative stances. Topics may include animal rights, utilitarian vs. moral absolutism, individual rights vs. paternalism, genetic engineering, DNA testing, euthanasia, etc. Depending on the total number of students enrolled, discussions may be held together as a class or in smaller groups.

Note: This course is not available to BCogSc students and students who have taken PHIL2340.

(IV) Information Technology Studies

YITC1001. Foundations to information technology (3 credits)

The objectives of the course are to introduce students to basic information technology (IT) knowledge, arouse students' interest in IT by aligning the course content with their needs and foster resource-based learning that will directly promote lifelong active learning. The course is divided into three parts: theories of computer systems; usage of some computer software; and using the HKU Libraries. Topics include computer hardware and software, networking and the Internet, legal aspects of computing, recent developments in IT, computer applications like document processor, presentation software etc, and information search strategies.

Note: This course is not available to BA(ArchStud), BBA, BBA(Acc&Fin), BBA(IBGM), BBA(IS), BBA(Law), BEng and BSc students, BBA(IS) graduates enrolled in BEng(SE) or BEng(CompSc), or students who have successfully completed YITC1002.

YITC1002. Information technology proficiency test (non-credit-bearing)

The objective of the test is to enable students to demonstrate their basic IT knowledge through the test. A list of studying materials (books, e-books, online tutorials) and voluntary teaching sessions are offered to students. Students are assessed by a two-hour test, which covers the same topics as that of the course YITC1001. Students are encouraged to take the test in the first year of their studies.

Note: This course is not available to BA(ArchStud), BBA, BBA(Acc&Fin), BBA(IBGM), BBA(IS) and BBA(Law) students, or students who have successfully completed YITC1001.