

# HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

## COURSE OUTLINE

1. **COURSE TITLE**

Death and Culture

2. **COURSE CODE**

HUMN3027

3. **No. OF UNITS**

3 Units

4. **OFFERING DEPARTMENT**

Department of Humanities and Creative Writing

5. **PREREQUISITES**

N.A.

**COREQUISITES**

N.A.

6. **MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

English

7. **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

This course aims at introducing the examining the problem of death from different perspectives like religion, philosophy, art and literature. It examines the religious representation of life after death, philosophical reflections of death and its meanings, and the representations of death in different art forms like literature, drama, visual art and film. Examples from Western, Chinese and other cultures will be used whenever it is appropriate. It helps students to understand and engage in critical discussion about the meanings of death from the cultural, religious and philosophical perspectives.

8. **COURSE CONTENT**

- I. Death in mythologies (Greek, Egyptian, Babylonian, Chinese, etc.)
- II. Death and afterlife in the Graeco-Roman and Christian traditions
- III. Death and afterlife in the Chinese tradition (Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist)
- IV. Death and Dying: from Ars moriendi to Tibetan Book of the Dead
- V. Philosophical Reflections on death: from Epicurus, Heidegger to Zhuangzi
- VI. The world of the dead in classical literature: from Homer to Dante
- VII. Death in modern literature: from Tolstoy to Thomas Mann
- VIII. Death in drama: from Everyman to Jedermann

- IX. Death in art: from danse macabre to Gothic art  
 X. Death in film: from Seventh Seal to Departures

9. **COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (CILOs)**

CILO	By the end of the course, students should be able to:
CILO 1	Evaluate the representations of death and afterlife in different religious and cultural traditions
CILO 2	Analyze the cultural meanings of death based on the selected literary texts
CILO 3	Critically interpret the cultural meanings of death based on the different forms of art
CILO 4	Evaluate the religious and philosophical issues related to death

10. **TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)**

CILO alignment	Type of TLA
1	The students will be: introduced materials illustrating the representations of death and afterlife in different cultures and religions
2	given in selected literary and philosophical texts related to death for in-depth analysis and discussion
3	required to critically discuss the representations and meanings in different works of art, drama and film in oral presentation and tutorial discussion
4	given written task as a research paper on about cultural and philosophical reflections on the meanings of death

11. **ASSESSMENT METHODS (AMs)**

Type of Assessment Methods	Weighting	CILOs to be addressed	Description of Assessment Tasks
Oral Presentation	30%	1-3	Tutorial presentation on a selected topic, with concentration on the interpretations of representations of death in different religious and cultural traditions and art forms
Long Essay/ Book Report	30%	2-4	A long research paper or a book report on a selected topic will test the students' ability on understand and analyze original literary texts and art works related to death
Examination	40%	1-4	The examination will concentrate on the critical discussion on meanings of death from cultural, philosophical and religious perspectives. Students are expected to demonstrate analytical and critical ability in the discussion from different perspectives, and should substantiate their arguments with concrete examples.

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