

PH150-15 Introduction to Comparative Philosophy: East, West and Beyond

20/21

Department

Philosophy

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Massimiliano Lacertosa

Credit value

15

Module duration

9 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

In this module you will learn how to do Philosophy in a multicultural and multidisciplinary context. In the first part of the module, you will analyse and discuss the basic issues of Comparative Philosophy. In particular you will be encouraged to reconsider the Western philosophical boundaries and to redefine the primary comparative dichotomy in Philosophy, that is to say, the self-other relationship. In the second part of the module, through some case studies in Chinese Philosophy, Art, Metaphysics, and Ethics, you will learn how to apply the comparative method of analysis to a wide range of themes. This will help you to have a more specific idea of how the philosophical comparative analysis can become a fundamental ethical and epistemic tool.

Module aims

This module aims to train you to do philosophy in a comparative manner. In particular, the module aims to provide you with the fundamental theoretical tools in the study of other cultural traditions as both self-understanding – in the sense of acknowledging one's own pre-assumptions – and other-understanding – in the sense of acknowledging the different reference systems of other traditions. As a consequence, the final goal of the module is to offer you examples of how to proceed in the intracultural and cross-cultural analyses.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Week 1

Comparative Philosophy VS Philosophy of Comparisons. A redefinition of the philosophical boundaries.

Week 2

The problem of translation in comparing cultures.

Week 3

“Worldview” as a tool for comparison.

Week 4

Are presuppositions unavoidable in comparisons? The danger of cultural appropriation and cultural imposition.

Week 5

Self-understanding as a prerequisite for understanding the other.

Week 7

The self-other relationship as a cornerstone for comparison. Carl Schmitt and the problem of friend-enemy distinction.

Week 8

Case study 1. Comparing images. Images as representations of worldviews: the iconographical approach.

Week 9

Case study 2. Comparing metaphysics. Plato and Laozi .

Week 10

Case study 3. Comparing ethics. Weak thought and wuwei : a holistic vision of philosophy.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- By the end of the module you will be able to: Demonstrate a theoretical knowledge of the principles implied in the philosophical comparative analysis.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the main theoretical issues of doing philosophy comparatively and communicate clearly and substantively in speech and in writing on the questions addressed in the module.
- Critically assess the key claims and arguments of the core texts and the case studies analysed in the module.
- Organize philosophical research and engage independently in comparative philosophical analysis.

Indicative reading list

- Burik, Steven. 2009. *The End of Comparative Philosophy and the Task of Comparative Thinking: Heidegger, Derrida, and Daoism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Connolly, Tim. 2015. *Doing Philosophy Comparatively*. London; New York: Bloomsbury.
- Deutsch, Eliot, ed. 1991. *Culture and Modernity: East-West Philosophic Perspectives*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Deutsch, Eliot, and Ronald Bontekoe, eds. 1999. *A Companion to World Philosophies*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Escande, Yolaine, Vincent Shen, and Chenyang Li, eds. 2013. *Inter-culturality and Philosophic Discourse*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Felski, Rita, and Susan Stanford Friedman, eds. 2013. *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Goto-Jones, Chris. 2013. "What is (Comparative) Philosophy?" *Philosophy* 88 (1):133–140.
- Larson, Gerald James, and Eliot Deutsch, eds. 1988. *Interpreting across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Ma, Lin, and Jaap van Brakel. 2016. *Fundamentals of Comparative and Intercultural Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Smid, Robert W. 2009. *Methodologies of Comparative Philosophy: The Pragmatist and Process Traditions*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Van Norden, Bryan W. 2017. *Taking Back Philosophy: A Multicultural Manifesto*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Research element

Both assessments – video presentation and essay – require research elements.

Interdisciplinary

The module addresses the issue of how comparative analysis needs to combine methods and insights from different academic disciplines.

International

By definition, comparative analysis needs to consider different cultural traditions in a multicultural and international context

Subject specific skills

Through this module you will acquire

- (a) The ability to understand the distinctive features and aims of the comparative philosophical analysis;
- (b) The ability to apply different approaches in the comparative philosophical analysis;
- (c) The ability to pursue independent philosophical research.

Transferable skills

Through this module you will acquire

- (a) The ability to communicate information (verbally and in written form) to people both expert and non-expert in the field;
 - (b) The ability to analyse, evaluate, critique and apply complex information gathered from reading, reflection, reasoning or communication;
 - (c) The ability to effectively manage schedules and deadlines.
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	8 sessions of 1 hour (5%)
Private study	124 hours (83%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Private study and reading.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Video presentation	20%		Yes (extension)
2500 Word Essay	80%		Yes (extension)
2500 word essay.			

Assessment group R

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Resit Written Assignment (2500 words)	100%		Yes (extension)

Feedback on assessment

Feedbacks will be provided on essays and video presentations.

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 1 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 1 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 1 of UPHA-V700 Undergraduate Philosophy
- Year 1 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 1 of UMAA-GV17 Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy