

Course number		U-LAS70 10002 SE50				
Course title (and course title in English)	ILAS Seminar-E2 :Critical Thinking in Ethics (倫理学における批判的思考)		Instructor's name, job title, and department of affiliation	Graduate School of Letters Senior Lecturer,Campbell, Michael		
	ILAS Seminar-E2 :Critical Thinking in Ethics					
Group	Seminars in Liberal Arts and Sciences		Number of credits	2	Number of weekly time blocks	1
Class style	seminar (Face-to-face course)	Year/semesters	2025 ・ First semester		Quota (Freshman)	15 (15)
Target year	Mainly 1st year students	Eligible students	For all majors		Days and periods	Wed.5
Classroom	22, Yoshida-South Campus Academic Center Bldg. West Wing				Language of instruction	English
Keyword	Philosophy / Metaphysics / Personal Identity / Political Philosophy / Ethics					
[Overview and purpose of the course]						
<p>In this seminar we will develop critical thinking skills by considering central issues in moral philosophy. Along the way we will learn fundamental philosophical skills, including: how to identify and evaluative arguments; how to present a thesis clearly; and how to defend a view against possible objections.</p> <p>Students will be encouraged actively to participate in discussions concerning topics including the nature of the self, moral dilemmas and the possibility of free will. Lessons will be primarily conducted through group work and presentations by students, supported by handouts and short lectures by the lecturer. The lectures will summarize the content to date and place the essays under consideration in their historical and conceptual context.</p>						
[Course objectives]						
<p>- To introduce students to a range of classic issues in moral philosophy.</p> <p>- To foster students' abilities to participate in philosophical debate and to improve their confidence in articulating their ideas.</p> <p>- To develop students' communication and presentation skills.</p> <p>- To develop students' abilities to reason critically, to interpret philosophical texts and to construct and critique arguments.</p>						
[Course schedule and contents)]						
Week 1 Introduction What is philosophy? Different definitions of the subject considered.						
Weeks 2 - 3 Philosophical Methodology Introduction of foundational concepts such as argument, proof, refutation, reasoning. Thought experiments introduced and critiqued.						
Weeks 4 - 5 Luck, Misfortune and Moral Emotions Discussion of cases where an individual's character is deeply shaped by chance events, and related issues. What is an emotion and how do the emotions relate to perception and reason?						

Continue to ILAS Seminar-E2 :Critical Thinking in Ethics (倫理学における批判的思考) (2)						

Weeks 6 - 7 Wishing Never to Have Been Born

Is it coherent to wish never to have been born?

Puzzles of death, non-existence and the meaning of life.

Weeks 8 - 9 Duties to Future Generations

The concepts of rights and duties and their relation to freedom.

Do we have duties to future generations, and if so on what grounds?

Weeks 10 - 11 Free Will and Determinism

Is it possible to be responsible for something which one was powerless to stop? If not then how can responsibility be a coherent concept in a deterministic universe?

Weeks 12 - 13 Life in a Perfectly Just World

What is a (political and moral) utopia? Would it be desirable to live in such a world, or is the existence of wrong necessary for goodness to its distinctive value?

Week 14 Recap of themes covered in the course

Discussion of connections between the themes broached, and the relation between metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.

Recapitulation of the philosophical methodologies introduced in the start of the course.

Week 15 Feedback class

[Course requirements]

Students will be expected to read one text in English in preparation for each class, to be provided by the instructor. The text will be 1-2 pages long.

[Evaluation methods and policy]

Students will be evaluated by two quizzes (each worth 50%) one in the middle of the semester and one at the end of the year.

[Textbooks]

Not used

[Study outside of class (preparation and review)]

Students will be expected to read approximately 1-2 pages of philosophy in English every week.

[Other information (office hours, etc.)]

For any inquiries, students can contact me by email, and we can arrange in-person or Zoom office hours on request.

[Essential courses]