

HUM-479

Emotion, value, and life-defining choices II

Pé-Curto Alain Daniel

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Humanities and Social Sciences	MA2	Obl.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	3
Withdrawal	Unauthorized
Session	Summer
Semester	Spring
Exam	During the semester
Workload	90h
Weeks	14
Hours	3 weekly
Project	3 weekly
Number of positions	60

It is not allowed to withdraw from this subject after the registration deadline.

Remark

Une seule inscription à un cours SHS+MGT autorisée. En cas d'inscriptions multiples elles seront toutes supprimées sans notification.

Summary

In this master's project seminar, students prepare a high-quality article embodying the philosophical ideals of clarity, concision, and aspiration to truth. Students also defend the claim made in their article by delivering a professional talk.

Content

During the Fall semester (HUM-478), we examined the role that emotions and values play in defining the self (i.e., roughly, who we are) and making our lives meaningful. We did so partly by focusing on life-defining moments, such as transformative experiences and some of life's hard choices. The instructor introduced students to philosophy and the philosophical method. Moreover, the instructor presented strategies to deliver an effective presentation and to write a clear and concise article. Students practiced presenting, chairing a discussion, and writing through their assignments for the Fall semester. The instructor and peers provided feedback on the students' assignments.

In this master's project seminar, students will act on what they learned during the Fall. Partly in teams and partly individually, students will prepare a high-quality article based on the short essay and the personal addendum submitted in the Fall. Additionally, every team will present their work-in-progress to the rest of the class and defend the claim that they make in their article. Students will receive feedback from both the instructor and their peers. Both the article and the presentation should convey professionalism and aim at the philosophical ideals of clarity, concision, and truth.

Like in the Fall, a renowned expert in a field relevant to the topics of the course is expected to join us for a guest lecture.

Guest lecture: TBC.

Note: The instructor may adjust the content and structure of the course described above to a reasonable extent, in particular at the beginning of the semester, when the instructor will be able to assess more accurately the needs of enrolled students. The guest lecture mentioned above is yet to be confirmed and is subject to approval by the College des Humanités.

Keywords

Mind, self, transformation, transformative decision, personal choice, mental corruption, meaning, core preferences,

preference aggregation, empathy for others, empathy for future selves.

Ethics, moral philosophy, value, values, core values, instrumental value, intrinsic value, final value, personal value, impersonal value, norms, incommensurability, incomparability, parity, normative powers.

Emotion, affect, mood, sentiments, valence, emotion appropriateness, being moved, being struck by value.

Learning Prerequisites

Required courses

Please see the recommended course below.

Recommended courses

Ideally, students should have completed HUM-478 "Emotion, value, and life-defining choices I". Please contact the instructor if you did not attend HUM-478 and want to attend HUM-479 "Emotion, value, and life-defining choices II".

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Defend 1. Defend a claim or point of view effectively with arguments, including logical reasoning, counterexamples, and thought experiments in oral and written form.
- Compose 2. Write a professional article instantiating the philosophical values of clarity and concision.
- Develop 3. Develop sophisticated and balanced argumentation.
- Create 4. Create effective examples to illustrate ideas.
- Assess / Evaluate 5. Detect flaws in argumentation and discourse efficiently.
- Design 6. Design and deliver a professional, clear, and concise presentation involving elaborate positions and arguments.
- Manage 7. Guide and structure a discussion involving opposing views.
- Negotiate 8. Collaborate on sophisticated tasks and discuss complex topics with others.
- Interpret 9. Autonomously read, analyze, and assess complex text.
- Solve 10. Problem-solve in new and creative ways.
- Distinguish 11. Distinguish between philosophical demonstrations and scientific demonstrations.
- Critique 12. Present complex ideas in a compelling way.
- Present 13. Critique a claim or point of view effectively with arguments, including logical reasoning, counterexamples, and thought experiments in oral and written form.

Transversal skills

- Assess progress against the plan, and adapt the plan as appropriate.
- Communicate effectively with professionals from other disciplines.
- Chair a meeting to achieve a particular agenda, maximising participation.
- Take account of the social and human dimensions of the engineering profession.
- Take feedback (critique) and respond in an appropriate manner.
- Give feedback (critique) in an appropriate fashion.
- Demonstrate a capacity for creativity.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking
- Plan and carry out activities in a way which makes optimal use of available time and other resources.

- Set objectives and design an action plan to reach those objectives.
- Use a work methodology appropriate to the task.
- Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
- Evaluate one's own performance in the team, receive and respond appropriately to feedback.
- Identify the different roles that are involved in well-functioning teams and assume different roles, including leadership roles.
- Keep appropriate documentation for group meetings.
- Negotiate effectively within the group.
- Respect the rules of the institution in which you are working.
- Respect relevant legal guidelines and ethical codes for the profession.
- Assess one's own level of skill acquisition, and plan their on-going learning goals.
- Continue to work through difficulties or initial failure to find optimal solutions.
- Manage priorities.
- Use both general and domain specific IT resources and tools
- Access and evaluate appropriate sources of information.
- Make an oral presentation.

Teaching methods

Structure of sessions

Hour 1: Team presentation (15 minutes), questions-and-answers session (15 minutes), discussion and debriefing with the instructor (15 minutes).

Hour 2: Exercises prepared by the instructor involving work directly on the semester's assignments or free supervised research in teams--depending on students' needs.

Hour 3: Free supervised research in teams.

Assignments:

Each student remains part of the team formed during the Fall (HUM-478). The instructor offers advice on presenting and writing effectively, regularly checks on the progress of each team, provides feedback, points to additional references when necessary, and remains available throughout the supervised research hours.

A. Master's projects prepared in teams and individually (maximum of 5 pages in total).

(i) Work in teams on 4 pages (maximum): research, reflection, and development of a self-standing, high-quality article (4 pages maximum).

Ideally, the article will build on the short essay prepared in teams during the Fall (HUM-478 -- Emotion, value, and life-defining choices I).

(ii) Individual work on 1 page (maximum): research, reflection, and development of a personal addendum to the article prepared in teams. The addendum allows every student to complement the work submitted as a team with a personal contribution (e.g., by addressing something left out in the team's work or by presenting an argument of their own). Importantly, the personal addendum may concur with or dissent from the views defended in the writing assignment prepared as a team.

Ideally, the addendum will build on the addendum prepared individually during the Fall course (HUM-478 -- Emotion, value, and life-defining choices I).

B. Team presentation and questions-and-answers session chairing.

(i) Work in teams for the presentation (15-minute presentation + 15-minute questions-and-answers session): as students

develop their articles and personal addenda, the instructor schedules group presentations. Each team presents their work-in-progress to the rest of the class during ca. 15 minutes. A different team acts as a chair during the presentation: they introduce the speaking team, keep track of time during the presentation, and manage the questions-and-answers session of ca. 15 minutes that follows the presentation.

(ii) Chairing for another team: As noted above, every team will act as a chair during the presentation of another team during one session of the semester. The chairing team introduces the speaking team, keeps track of time during the presentation, and manages the questions-and-answers session of ca. 15 minutes that follows the presentation.

Students should conceive of the article that they submit as the final version of a paper revised--if not rewritten entirely--numerous times to aim at concision, clarity, and truth. Similarly, they should prepare their presentation carefully, practice numerous times, and anticipate the questions and objections that might arise during the questions-and-answers sessions. Both the article and the talk should incorporate feedback previously received from the instructor and, when appropriate, from peers. Both the article and the talk should convey professionalism.

Note: The instructor may reasonably adapt the assignments and the structure of the sessions depending on the needs of enrolled students.

Expected student activities

ECTS 3 credits for Semester 2: ca. 75-90 hours workload (i.e., roughly 3 hours in the classroom and 3 hours outside the classroom)

Supervised group and individual research, in-class discussion, delivering a presentation, responding to questions and objections during the questions-and-answers sessions, asking questions and raising objections during the questions-and-answers sessions, and article writing.

Note: For students expecting to be substantially absent from class, graded in-class activities may be substituted with equivalent graded activities. The instructor's permission is required. Students expecting to be substantially absent from class must immediately and spontaneously contact the instructor to discuss the mentioned accommodations.

Assessment methods

(i) 60% of the Spring semester's grade: Master's Project (5 pages maximum): team article (4 pages maximum) with personal addendum (1 page maximum) due by the end of the Spring semester.

This grade is attributed individually based on an assessment of the work submitted as a group and individually. The personal addendum is partly meant to ensure and check that all group members contribute fairly to the group work.

(ii) 40%: Team presentation, chairing, and class participation.

This grade is attributed individually based on the team presentation and individual participation in (a) the team presentation, (b) the team's chairing of another team's presentation, and (c) general class participation.

Note: For students expecting to be substantially absent from class, graded in-class activities may be substituted with equivalent graded activities. The instructor's permission is required. Students expecting to be substantially absent from class must immediately and spontaneously contact the instructor to discuss the mentioned accommodations.

Supervision

Office hours	Yes
Assistants	Yes
Forum	Yes

Others **Office hours:** the instructor will communicate the exact time and place at the beginning of the semester.

You may contact the instructor in the following ways:

- (i) Primary method: during supervised research hours.
- (ii) Secondary method: during office hours or by appointment (in person or on Zoom).
- (iii) For official and urgent matters: by email at alain.pecurto@epfl.ch.

Resources

Bibliography

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Ressources en bibliothèque

- [Deonna, J. A. & Teroni, F. 2012. The Emotions: A Philosophical Introduction](#)
- [Orsi, F. 2015. Value Theory](#)
- [Paul, L. A. 2014. Transformative Experience](#)
- [Williamson, T. 2020. Philosophical Method: A Very Short Introduction](#)
- [Rasmussen, T. 2021. The Value Gap](#)

Notes/Handbook

The video links provided below are indicative only. It is not mandatory to watch the relevant videos, but students may do so to discover some of the questions and topics that the course covers.

Moodle Link

- <https://go.epfl.ch/HUM-479>

Videos

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GQZuzIdeQQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMO2bDVhyHs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTnL3s2OQGM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNnxekMyPek>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=agMwrzO1SoY>