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Keio University Syllabus and Timetable

PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS ON THE IDEAL IMAGES OF HUMAN BEINGS; CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN JAPANESE AND THE WESTERN CULTURE

Subtitle	Philosophical Topics on the Images of Ideal Human Beings in Various Cultures.
Lecturer(s)	HAYASHI, AKINORI
Credit(s)	2
Academic Year/Semester	2026 Fall
Day/Period	Wed.3
Campus	Mita
Classroom	466
Class Format	Face-to-face classes (conducted mainly in-person)
Registration Number	79815
Faculty/Graduate School	INTERNATIONAL CENTER
Year Level	2, 3, 4
Grade Type	S, A, B, C, D
Course Description	A course to aim to examine the images of ideal human beings from a philosophical point of view by means of using various philosophical methods.
K-Number	CIN-CO-00143-212-01

[▼ Detail](#)

Course Contents/Objectives/Teaching Method/Intended Learning Outcome

We have various kinds of the images of ideal human beings. Thinking of those images often leads us to answer the questions such as "How ought we to live?", "What is the best way of living for us?", "What ought we to pursue in our lives?" and so on. In this course, I shall examine those questions from a philosophical point of view by means of using various philosophical methods.

There are two notable features in this course. Firstly, I shall attempt to use the images of ideal human beings taken both from western culture and Japanese culture. I do not mean to, however, make a contrast between two cultures in a hackneyed manner, but rather intend to show that some similarities and differences of the images transcend the difference of cultural background. In doing so, I expect the participants to ask yourself of what image of ideal human beings you have; in short, the aim of this course is to "know yourself" which has been a deep motive for pursuing philosophy in various cultures.

Secondly, unlike a conventional philosophical course, I shall use not only classical philosophy texts, but also various kinds of materials for the objects of investigations including Descartes's and Kant's philosophy texts, Muneyoshi Yanagi's writings on the works of Japanese folk art (Mingei), and Kenji Miyazawa's poem. Although I attempt to use various kinds of materials, the nature of investigations is thoroughly philosophical; this course is not for art criticism, or comparative literature.

Roughly, topics in this course will be divided into the following four parts.

1. Rationality and Intellect as an Ideal Capacity for Human Beings.
2. Anti-intellectualism and its Problems.
3. Beauty and the Image of Ideal Human Beings.

The important part of this course, furthermore, is to learn how to discuss with each other in English both for native and non-native speakers. Yet this course is not a language course; what you expected to learn is to

formulate your own opinions in English with an articulated manner in an international opportunity. Thus active participation to the discussion is required to take this course

Course Taught by Faculty Member with Professional Experience

Not applicable

Active Learning Methods [Description](#)

Discussions, Debates

Preparatory Study

Reading assignment

Course Plan

Lesson 1

Week 1, Introduction and guidance: what is the ideality? Why does it matter in philosophy?

Lesson 2

Week 2, Descartes 1: Reading assignment, Discourse on the Method part 1.

Lesson 3

Week 3, Descartes 2: Reading assignment, Discourse part2

Lesson 4

Week 4, Kant 1: Reading assignment, What is enlightenment?

Lesson 5

Week 5, Kant 2: Reading assignment, What is enlightenment?

Lesson 6

Week 6, Modernity vs. Kenji Miyazawa's poem

Lesson 7

Week 7, Introduction to folkcraft art and the thought of Yanagi: Reading assignment, Towards a standard of beauty

Lesson 8

Week 8, Yanagi 1: Reading assignment, Seeing and Knowing

Lesson 9

Week 9, Yanagi 2: Reading assignment, Seeing and knowing

Lesson 10

Week 10, Yanagi 3: Reading assignment, The Beauty of Irregularity

Lesson 11

Week 11, Yanagi 4: Reading assignment, The Beauty of Irregularity

Lesson 12

Week 12, Yanagi 5: Reading assignment, The Buddhist Idea of Beauty

Lesson 13

Week 13, Yanagi 6: Reading assignment, The Buddhist Idea of Beauty

Lesson 14

Week 14, Summary and final discussion.

Other

Supplement discussion

Method of Evaluation

- 1, Attendance; 30%
- 2, Two short term papers; (35×2)% About 2-3 page papers
- 3, Participation (extra 20%)

Generative AI Policy for Classes

Not allowed

Textbooks

Copies of texts will be distributed in the class. You don't have to buy any text book for this course.

Reference Books

TBA

Lecturer's Comments to Students

TBA

Question/Comments

You are always welcome to ask me a question before and after the class. If you want to talk with me more, please make an appointment.

If any trouble or worry, send me an e-mail first.