PhD and MA seminar, Spring 2015 William Franke

19:00- 22:00 Wednesdays, Philosophy and Religious Studies, and English

E 21, 1043

**Universals—Cognitive, Cultural, Linguistic, and Imaginative**

In a diffuse and widespread narrative concerning the growth of civilization, universalism counts as the great breakthrough in human history and evolution leading beyond the animal state and tribal and archaic stages of society to modern, democratic social forms based on equal respect for all. This transformation is connected by historians of the Axial Age (800-200 BCE) with the breakthrough to theoretical, reflective, philosophical thinking in terms of universal principles. China and the West are both central axes in this revolution reputedly at the source of our common sense of humanity. However, such universalizing theoretical cognizance in the course of history becomes detached from the living communities and their religious rites and the bonds out of which it first emerged. Thus abstracted from context, purportedly universal principles imposed on other peoples have provided ideological motivation for programs of racism, imperialism, and colonialism. This course will probe the need for and the limits of universals and attempt to discern what kinds of universality are appropriate in what contexts. The relations of universality with (modern) plurality and singularity will be recurring questions.

**Topics**

**Introduction**

Alain Badiou, “Eight Theses on the Universal”

My apophatic approach

**Cognitive science and universals**:

Edward Slingerland, *What Science Offers the Humanities: Integrating Body and Culture* (Cambridge UP, 2008), pp. 1-28

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, “Body and Mind in Early China: An Integrated Humanities Science Approach,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (2013): 1-50

Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind,* chapter 6: Theory of Imagination

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*

**The Axial Age. Emergence of a Universal Human Culture:**

Robert N. Bellah and Hans Joas, eds., *The Axial Age and Its Consequences* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012)

Robert Bellah, Introduction

Hans Jonas, “The Axial Age Debate as Religious Discourse”

Charles Taylor, “What was the Axial Revolution”

Matthias Jung,“Embodiment, Transcendence, and Contingency: Anthropological Features of the Axial Age,” 77-101

Ingolf Dalferth, “The Idea of Transcendence,” 146-190.

Eric Ziolkowski, “Axial Age Theorizing and the Comparative Study of Religion and Literature,” *Literature and Theology* 28/2 (2014): 129-50, special issue on “China and the West in Dialogue,” eds. David Jasper and Wang Hai

**Anthropology and the Axial Age:**

Robert Bellah,[*Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*](http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674061439)(2011), preface and introduction + c. 1 (1-43) + c. 7 (399-480)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, *The Axial Age and its Consequences*,

[Claude Lévi-Strauss](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_L%C3%A9vi-Strauss) (1966) *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: [University of Chicago Press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Chicago_Press) [first published in French in 1962].

[George P. Murdock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_P._Murdock) (1945), "The Common Denominator of Culture," in *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*, Ralph Linton (ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

**Literary Universals:**

[Borges, “Everything and Nothing”

Borges, “The History of Eternity”]

Borges, “Searching for Averroes” (“La busca de Averroes”) Borges, “Deutsches Requiem” Borges, “The analytical language of John Wilkens”

**Intercultural Philosophy:**

Jullien, *On the Universal: The Uniform, the Common and Dialogue between Cultures*

*Mencius,* Book VI, part 1 (Ideal Universal) comparison with Mohist universal love

*Zhuangzi*, “The Equality of All Things”

On *Zhuangzi* (Graham? Chad Hanson?)

**Humanities and Imaginative Universals:**

Vico, *New Science*, Degnità XXXVIII (*Universali fantastici*)

On the Ancient Wisdom of the Italians taken from the Origins of the Latin Language

Manuela Sanna, „Il sapere poetico e gli universali fantastici. La presenza di Vico nella riflessione filosofica contemporanea,” Rivista di storia della filosofia 3 (2003)

Rousseau, Discourse on Inequality

Encylopedia, article on “Universal”

**Linguistics:**

Chomsky, *Cartesian Linguistics*, especially c. 1: “Creative Aspect of Language Use”

Roger Bacon and Speculative Grammarians

Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia,* Book I

**Idealism, Political Utopianism:**

German Idealism, *Earliest System Program*

Lessing, *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*

Novalis,

**Pragmatic and Modern Enlightenment Universalism:**

Habermas, “Diskursethik – Notizen zu einem Begründungsprogramm,” in Moralbewußtsein und kommunikatives Handeln

Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*

**Medieval Nominalism and Realism:**

“Medieval Problem of Universals” Peter Abelard, John of Salisbury? *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

(further reference: http://www.ontology.co/universals-history.htm)

Medieval Philosophy and Birth of Modernity, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, Hardt and Negri, *Empire*

**Postmodern Philosophical Rediscovery of Universality:**

Badiou, *Saint Paul and Universalism*

Agamben, *The Time that Remains*

Zizek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf*

**Social, Gender, Racial Universals**

Racism

Feminism

Minorities Theory

Bonnie Honig, “Difference, Dilemmas, and the Politics of Home,” in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political,* ed. Seyla Benhabib (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 257-277

Linda Martín Alcoff, Michael Hames-García, Satya P. Mohanty, Paula M.L. Moya, eds., *Identity Politics Reconsidered: Future of Minority Studies* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

Each participant for credit is required to turn in a research paper (10-15 pages) and to give an oral presentation in class (about 15 minutes) on a topic of their choosing. The paper and presentation may be on the same or on different topics. Active participation in discussions, helping to advance dialogue, can serve the instructor in evaluating performance in the course.

Supplementary Topics

Universal Characteristic:

Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics, Characteristica Universalis, De arte combinatoria*

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, « Ars Combinatoria », *Acta Eruditorum*, février 1691, p. 63-64.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Hauptschriften zur Grundlegung der Philosophie. Zur allgemeinen Charakteristik.* Philosophische Werke Band 1

Questions of origin language in intercultural context.

Joachim of Flores

[Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*

Du Bellay, *Defense et illustration de la langue française]*

Plato, *Sophist,* Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A.

**學生身心障礙支援服務**

學生身心障礙支援服務澳門大學致力為身心障礙人士提供平等的學習機會，若您在肢體、視力、聽力、語言、學習或心理上的障礙，導致您在學習或日常活動中受到嚴重的限制，我們鼓勵您與老師溝通，讓他/她知道你的狀況，並作出適當的安排。此外，我們也鼓勵您與學生輔導及發展處之學生身心障礙支援服務聯繫，該服務將為有需要的學生提供相應的資源和設施，讓所有學生都能在大學裏享有同等的教育機會、大學生活及服務。如閣下對此服務有任何疑問，歡迎聯絡學生事務部---學生輔導及發展處（電郵：[scd.disability@umac.mo](mailto:scd.disability@umac.mo)；電話：88224901；瀏覽網頁http://www.umac.mo/sao/scd/sds/aboutus/cn/scd\_mission.php）。

**STUDENT DISABILITIES SUPPORT SERVICE**

The University of Macau is committed to providing an equal opportunity in education to persons with disabilities. If you are a student with a physical, visual, hearing, speech, learning or psychological impairment(s) which substantially limit your learning and/or activities of daily living, you are encouraged to communicate with your instructors about your impairment(s) and the accommodations you need in your studies. You are also encouraged to contact the Student Disability Support Service of the Student Counselling and Development Section (SCD) in Student Affairs Office, which provides appropriate resources and accommodations to allow each student with a disability to have an equal opportunity in education, university life activities and services at the University of Macau. To learn more about the service, please contact SCD at [scd.disability@umac.mo](mailto:scd.disability@umac.mo), or 8822 4901 or visit the following website: http://www.umac.mo/sao/scd/sds/aboutus/en/scd\_mission.php.

**Serviço de Apoio aos Estudantes Portadores de Deficiência**

A Universidade de Macau (UM) compromete-se a oferecer oportunidades iguais de educação para as pessoas portadoras de deficiência. Caso o aluno tenha deficiência física, visual, auditiva, mental, ou dificuldades de fala ou de aprendizagem, que afectem consideravelmente a sua aprendizagem ou actividades quotidianas, convém comunicar estas dificuldades aos professores para pedir apoio necessário. É também aconselhável contactar o Serviço de Apoio à Deficiência dos Alunos da Secção para Aconselhamento e Desenvolvimento dos Estudantes (SADE), à qual compete oferecer recursos e condições para que os alunos portadores de deficiência tenham oportunidades iguais na educação, actividades e serviços universitários na UM. Para mais informações sobre este serviço, é favor contactar a SADE via email: scd.disability@umac.mo, telefone 8822 4901 ou visitar a página electrónica http://www.umac.mo/sao/scd/sds/aboutus/en/scd\_mission.php.