

# ETHICS AND SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

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## The Fifteenth Symposium on “Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical / Religious Perspectives”

Launched in 2007, this research symposium aims to nurture young researchers from mainland China under our supervision and to provide research leadership in the field. The fourteenth symposium was held via ZOOM on November 2, 2021 with around 100 participants, at which 9 scholars and practitioners from various mainland universities, research institution and hospital gave their presentations and responses. Our Centre’s fellows commented on each paper. Over the years, the symposium has fostered interdisciplinary research on Chinese intellectual traditions and contemporary bioethics issues and facilitated the further development of Chinese bioethics.

Selected papers were revised and published in the *International Journal of Chinese and Comparative Philosophy of Medicine*, Vol.19 Nos. 1 and 2.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Symposium on Bioethics from Chinese Philosophical/Religious Perspectives  
第十五屆 建構中國生命倫理學研討會  
社交機器人：中國倫理學的當代探索

2.11.2021  
09:30-16:00

ZOOM會議 924 5915 3160  
會議密碼 607393

協辦人  
香港浸會大學 | 張穎  
香港城市大學 | 范瑞平

評論人  
天津醫科大學 | 唐健  
同濟大學 | 曹松  
香港城市大學 | 范瑞平  
香港浸會大學 | 張穎真、陳成斌

社交機器人：儒家思想與象徵後果論證  
香港城市大學 翁若愚

與機器人玩房中術：道家/道教的視閥  
香港浸會大學 張穎

我們應該與社交機器人共情嗎？  
西安電子科技大學 王珏

儒家倫理學視角下的伴侶機器人的使用  
南開大學 徐漢輝

香港中文大學  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
應用倫理學研究中心  
Centre for Applied Ethics  
支持：ARTS-FNRA

## Abstracts

### Vaccine Hesitancy and Coercive Vaccination in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Preliminary Moral Evaluation

*Benedict S. B. Chan*

*Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

*Chi-Ngai Cheung*

*Middle Georgia State University, USA*

Vaccine hesitancy, a delay in acceptance or even refusal of vaccination, is a problem not only linked to public knowledge of science but also caused by complex beliefs and a lack of confidence in authority. People who support coercive vaccination argue that vaccination is a comparatively safe path for people in a community to reach herd immunity. Weighing the benefits and costs, coercive vaccination is morally permissible. However, whether we should enact it for Covid-19 vaccines or respect people who have vaccine hesitancy is a moral issue worthy of detailed investigation. Similar debates have also been around coercive use of the measles

vaccine, which will serve as a point of comparison in this evaluation.

There are different kinds of arguments for and against policies of coercive vaccination, but whether positive or negative, they involve values that are incommensurable but should be compared and ranked accordingly in different situations. We argue that consequential evaluation, as suggested by Amartya Sen, forms the moral reasoning and foundation to evaluate these plural values. Using consequential evaluation, we can compare the moral similarities and differences between Covid-19 vaccines and measles vaccines and develop a framework to evaluate the moral issue of coercive vaccination.

### How to Understand Governmental Intervention during the Pandemic? Moral Dilemmas from a Libertarian Perspective

*Ellen Y. Zhang*

*Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

For Libertarians, state interference or state paternalism has a pejorative meaning given that government often implies bureaucracy, corruption, and inefficiency. However, such a view has faced significant resistance since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the sake of public health, many people now believe that we must accept much greater governmental intervention in our lives and that it is morally permissible and necessary to have public policies such as lockdowns, mandatory social

distancing, border restrictions, and mandatory vaccination. Is it true that “there are no libertarians in a pandemic”? This paper explores the role of the government and the meaning of individual liberty in the face of the current public health crisis. The author contends that the Libertarian views of civil liberty and self-ownership should be taken more seriously as the government obtains more power and a host of extraordinary interventions are being implemented during the pandemic.

## On the Practical Dimension of the Traditional Chinese Concept of “Righteousness” in Fighting Against Covid-19 – An Analysis Based on Game Theory

*Kong Ying*

*Nanjing Normal University, China*

In the context of the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic and its impact on public health, the conflicts of interests between individuals and between an individual and society have become an ethical challenge. The traditional Chinese concept of “righteousness” (*yi*) calls for the need for public good, whereas “benefit” (*li*) is often associated with private interests, as

shown in the Confucian-Mohist debate. In this paper, I show that there is another reading of the concept of “righteousness” that does not necessarily exclude the idea of individual interest and benefit. In addition, I use “game theory” to illustrate the unity of public righteousness and private benefit.

## The Ethical Challenges to Christian Healing in the Covid-19 Pandemic

*Kwok Wai Luen*

*Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

From its very beginning, the message and practice of the Christian faith have been inextricably related to healing. Although the eternal salvation of sinful human beings’ body and soul is provided by justification through faith, the Church teaches that our soul and body should be purified and healed by sacraments and communal Christian life. These in-person activities are essential to Christian practice. Moreover, historically, the Church has dispensed medicine and taken care of the sick during pandemics. Christianity’s caring service has been well respected by the public throughout its history, and in pre-modern

society, Christian healthcare services often contributed substantially to the psychological and physical wellbeing of many people. In modern society, however, the role of the Church has been replaced by the public healthcare and medical systems. Particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Christian understanding and practice of healing has sometimes been accused of endangering public health. This paper therefore investigates the ethical landscapes behind the change of public opinion and the strategies used by Christian churches to meet this challenge.

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## How to Help the Elderly Cope with Death and Dying during the Pandemic? The Moral Dilemma of Hong Kong Christians

*Carrie Wu Ho Yee*

*Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong*

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Christian faith has been a crucial influence on the cultural and ethical formation of Hong Kong since the 17th century, and many hospitals and institutions for elderly palliative care are associated with Christian churches. However, the past one and a half year have been a challenge because of the global covid-19 pandemic. The situation has been particularly difficult for the elderly facing their death as

well as for their family members. This paper therefore investigates the concept of a “good death” in Christian ethics and how Christians should practice the ethic of care during the pandemic. The author contends that we should not ignore the great physical and mental needs of these elderly people and their families in the name of public health concerns.

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## Constructing Modern Interpretations of Daoist Views Concerning Organ Donations

*Yu Ding Ching*

*Sun Yat-sen University, China*

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The ultimate concern of the Daoist religion is becoming an immortal with eternal youth. Yet with the influence of modern scientific development and increasing interactions between different religions, some Daoist sects have given up the old doctrine of immortality and replaced it with the Buddhist tenet of reincarnation. Nevertheless, Daoism is facing a moral dilemma between its deeply held idea of the somatic cultivation of the body and the

modern idea of organ donation. In this paper, the author interprets Daoist texts through the lens of phenomenology of religion and explores the possible reconciliation between traditional Daoist practice and the practice of organ donation. The paper shows that different Daoist sects hold different opinions, but that in general, Daoism grants agency regarding the decision to the individual practitioner.

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## Filial Obligation in the West

*Xu Hanhui*

*Nankai University, Taiwan*

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In the Western tradition, filial obligation dictates that adult children have a moral duty to provide financial and psychological support to their aging parents. In addition, children are required to meet their parents’ “reasonable demands” under given circumstances. There are three accounts of filial obligations that provide

specific answers to questions concerning parent-child relationships, such as on what grounds and when filial obligation is encouraged and required. In this paper, the author explores the idea of filial obligation in the West and offers a critical response to the issues involved.

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## Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo

*Kirstin R.W. Matthews and Sam Lowe*

*Rice University, USA*

*Ana S. Iltis*

*Wake Forest University, USA*

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After 40 years of abiding by an international guideline that barred human embryo research beyond day 14 of embryonic development, many scientists are now challenging this limit due to technological advances suggesting that embryos and cell-based models of embryos can be cultured to later points in early development. Some scholars have questioned the long-held belief that research beyond 14 days is unethical and have begun proposing alternative guidelines for research. In this paper, we examine a proposal for new human embryo and embryoid guidelines by reviewing

the history of the 14-day limit and emerging areas of research that are impacted by these guidelines. We then show how social and political philosophy, metaphysics, and ethics are central to interpreting and applying these new recommendations or developing alternatives. Before conducting any research beyond day 14, scientists must develop clear, thoughtful, and culturally sensitive guidelines that include limitations and oversight procedures to ensure that science responds to societal needs and values.

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## On the Moral Status of Embryos: Perspective of Confucian Ethics

*Shen Xiuqin*

*Shandong University Basic Medical School, China*

*Pan Feng*

*Jinan Central Hospital, China*

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For 40 years, international rules have limited human embryo research to the first 14 days of embryonic development. On May 26, 2021, in its latest guidelines for stem cell research and its medical applications, the International Society for Stem Cell Research eased the 14-day restriction. This raises myriad ethical

issues. At their core is the debate over the moral status of embryos, which exposes ethical conflicts between cultural perspectives. This article discusses the moral status of embryos and argues from the perspective of Confucian ethics that the 14-day limit should not be waived at the present moment.

## Increasing and Improving Public Participation for the Development of a Chinese Scientific Research Ethics Regulation System

*Yu Lian*

*Xi'an Jiaotong University, China*

It is an inspiring idea that public participation should be the key factor for determining the human embryo research policy. However, public participation is missing from the Chinese government's vision of an ethics regulation system for scientific research. This article argues that to develop human embryo

research policy for China and a new regulation system globally, the most important tasks may be to set rules for public participation and to understand the views on human embryo and cell-based embryo research ethics held by different stakeholders and the Chinese public.

## A Response to “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo”

*Guo Yuyu and Zhang Xueying*

*Nanjing Medical University, China*

This paper responds to “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-Day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo” by analyzing the moral status of the embryo. We hold that the embryo has a limited moral status that is influenced by local ethical and cultural factors. The moral status of the embryo can be evaluated according to its potential value to and

relationship with society within the specific ethical and cultural context. On whether the embryo should be used in research, we recommend that researchers follow the principle of permission, i.e., seek consent from the agents who best represent the interests of the embryo (usually the parents).

## Changing the “14-day Rule”: Rebalancing Bioethics and Public Engagement

*Tang Jian*

*Tianjin Medical University, China*

This article argues that the ISSCR's changes to the 14-day rule should be welcomed. In the future of human embryo research oversight in

China, bioethics and public engagement should be fully balanced. This is essential to safeguard the public's trust in science.

## On the Legitimacy of Amending the “Soft Law” of Human Embryo Research

*Ding Chunyan*

*City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

This commentary briefly discusses the substantive and procedural justifications for amending the longstanding 14-day rule, a soft-law limitation on the culturing of human embryos. The 14-day rule was established on the basis of general recognition of the human embryo’s special status, accompanied by widespread public conversation and engagement. In principle, amending this rule would require the same substantive and procedural justifications. However, such

justifications were absent prior to the lifting of the rule by the ISSCR in its 2021 guidelines. This article also discusses the value and importance of the 14-day rule to the development of human embryo research in the last three decades. Discarding the rule without the proper substantive and procedural justifications is likely to damage public trust and confidence in future human embryo research.

## An Argument against the Abandonment of the 14-day Limit on Human Embryo Research

*Zhang Xinqing*

*Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College, China*

This article explores prominent arguments in favor of and against extending the current 14-day statutory limit on the maintenance of human embryos. I discuss the history of the 14-day limit and the reasons behind the decision to opt for a compromise between competing moral views. I then argue that the ISSCR’s

guidelines for extending the 14-day limit are not a valuable tool, despite their potential to contribute scientific knowledge. The importance of respecting the 14-day rule should be acknowledged by ethics committees in the current research ethics climate of mainland China.

## Policy Formulation for Human Embryo Research from the Perspective of Good Governance

*Nie Ye*

*Southwest Medical University, China*

In the article “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo,” one of the authors’ core aims is to encourage scientists to look at human embryo research policy from the perspective of promoting good governance.

Starting with the characteristics of good governance, this paper responds to Iltis et al. by discussing how to realize good governance in the formulation of human embryo research policy.



## Should the 14-day Restriction be Revoked for Emerging Human Embryo Research?

*Wang Hongqi*  
*Shanxi Medical University, China*

Developments in research have made culturing human embryos beyond the 14-day limit seem technologically feasible. In the article “Emerging Human Embryo Research Technologies, the 14-day Rule, and the Special Status of the Embryo,” the authors examine a proposal for new human embryo and embryoid research guidelines by reviewing the history of the 14-day limit and emerging areas of

research that are impacted by these guidelines. However, as noted by the authors, changes in science policy should not be developed solely by scientists. Instead, policy development should reflect the reality of science as a public endeavor. After 40 years of consensus, any attempts to revoke the 14-day limit on the in vitro culturing of human embryos should rely on public and stakeholder engagement.

## Broad Public Support without Principles of Democratic Governance: A Critical Reflection

*Man-To Tang*  
*City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

Iltis and colleagues take a close look at the historical development of the guidelines in light of controversies in the US and the UK since 1978. Despite many unsettled disputes, the 14-day limit was established through a deliberative process involving public and stakeholder engagement. However, the 14-day limit was lifted in the 2021 guidelines without such public discussion and engagement.

In this regard, Iltis and colleagues show the self-contradictory nature, or at least inconsistency, of the 2021 guidelines. On the one hand, the new guidelines note that scientists have called for public engagement

on the topic. On the other hand, the guidelines were themselves created in the absence of such public engagement. I agree with Iltis and colleagues that the guidelines may not achieve “broad public support,” as emphasized in recommendation 2.2.2.1 of the 2021 guidelines, and as defined by Iltis and colleagues. However, from a Confucian perspective, I doubt that the strong public consensus stipulated by Iltis and colleagues will prove vital as long as the new guidelines are implemented in a transparent and responsible manner.

## A Confucian Reflection on Transhumanism: How to Regulate our Posthuman Future?

*Wang Jue*

*Xidian University, China*

As the potential of high technology to manipulate human life becomes increasingly evident, the transhumanist movement is receiving greater scholarly attention, and the number of related research projects is growing exponentially. However, systematic research from a Confucian perspective is still lacking. This paper attempts to demonstrate the unique value of a Confucian perspective in reflecting on transhumanism. Confucian thought can not only help us grasp the implications and risks of transhumanism with clarity and depth but also offer alternative possibilities for imagining as well as regulating our posthuman future beyond the technocratic picture of

transhumanism. Specifically, this paper develops a critical Confucian perspective in an implicitly comparative context to explain why Confucianism cannot accept transhumanism (due to the Confucian notion of “the unity of heaven and man” (天人合一)) and to explore the similarities and differences between Confucian and bio-conservative perspectives on transhumanism. I thereby bring ideas from different cultural sources into dialogue to form a better understanding of what transhumanism means for human society and its future, and to answer the crucial question of how to regulate our posthuman future.

## Rethinking Transhumanism from Zhuangzi’s Idea of Harmony between Man and Nature

*Zhang Wanqiang*

*Xidian University, China*

Professor Wang Jue reflects on transhumanism through the Confucian idea of harmony between man and nature and proposes from a Confucian perspective that we should supervise the formation of our posthuman future. I agree with this suggestion. Here, I discuss transhumanism using Zhuangzi’s idea of “Harmony between Man and Nature” and the concept of

immortality. My conclusion is that from Zhuangzi’s point of view, it would be wrong to use technology solely to plan and control the future of mankind; however, this does not mean that Zhuangzi is an anti-technologist. I think Zhuangzi’s ideas offer limited support for the Confucian suggestion that we should supervise the formation of our post-human future.

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## Reconsidering the Confucian Attitude toward Transhumanism

*Chen Zhiwei*

*Xidian University, China*

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Superhumanism or posthumanism has become our reality. To deal with the resulting humanitarian dilemma, we can consult the abundant theoretical resources provided by Confucianism. Confucius's "The Gentleman

is No Vessel", Zengzi's important concept of filial piety, and Mencius' understanding of human nature contribute valuable theoretical perspectives for reflection on the real-world consequences of transhumanism.

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## How should Human Beings Exist?—Some Criticisms of Transhumanism

*Liu Tao*

*Guangzhou Medical University, China*

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Transhumanism banishes the body from being, which leads to the separation of technology and virtue. In the Confucian view, the body is the symbiosis of technology and virtue, human relations and politics. We can use the notions of "benevolence" and Tao in Confucian ethics to criticize transhumanism. The fundamental problem involved in the debate between Confucianism and transhumanism concerns how human beings

define themselves. Confucianists believe that human beings cannot and should not violate certain fundamental restrictions and principles presented by the universe. We should continue to think about what these fundamental restrictions and principles should be, and whether they are likely to be breached with technological progress.

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## Should we Use Technology to Transform the Human Body?

*Liu Yue-shu*

*Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China*

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Human beings always try to transcend their limitations. Emerging technologies provide a set of powerful tools that promise to significantly improve human performance, stimulating the desire of some technical experts to transform the human body. Against this backdrop, superhumanism has come into being in today's society and is flourishing. Superhumanism has been criticized by some

Chinese scholars on the basis of traditional Chinese thought. Their criticism of superhumanism is a difficult task that involves multi-level reflection on human nature, technology, and value. I argue that for the issue of superhumanism, theoretical innovation is more important than continuing to invoke traditional thought.

## Transhumanism as a New Form of Subject Metaphysics

*Shi Xianming*

*Qufu Normal University, China*

Transhumanism is a contemporary form of Western “subject metaphysics” that combines the dual elements of Cartesianism and Nietzsche’s “metaphysics of will.” The essence of Eros is the human desire for totality, which is interlinked with the secret desire for today’s “human enhancement” technology. The Confucian idea of “the unity of heaven and man” (天人合一) can solve many problems in the debate between

biological conservatism and bioprogressivism. The ideological foundation of this idea in Laozi’s and Zhuangzi’s thought should be taken seriously. Recognition of human limitations is an important aspect of traditional Confucian–Taoist wisdom, but human enhancement technology is in essence a tool for “excessive reduction”.

## Attitude, Principle and Method: The Possible Contribution of Confucianism to the Supervision of Posthuman Future

*Pan Xinli*

*Tianjin Medical University, China*

Human beings are facing problems entailed by the development and application of human enhancement technology. Confucianism and transhumanism respond to these problems in fundamentally different ways. Confucianism calls for a “careful attitude”, makes use of an

“adaptable method”, and bases on the principle that technology is a tool for human continuity and development. Such an attitude, principle and method may represent the contribution of Confucianism to our supervision of Posthuman future.

## Why does Confucianism Oppose Transhumanism ?

*Yang Qianqian*

*Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, China*

The concept of human enhancement is a key to understanding transhumanism. According to Confucian ethics, the supervision of human enhancement technology is vital because we are facing the reasonable expectation of achieving “the unity of heaven and man.” (The idea of harmony between man and nature is not exclusive to Confucianism; it can be found in

other schools of thought in the pre-Qin dynasty period, especially the philosophy of Taoism. However, the idea is uniquely expressed and developed in Confucianism.) Furthermore, human enhancement makes people unable to “settle in their place.” Therefore, Confucianism cannot accept it.

## Public Lecture on “Vaccine Hesitancy and Coercive Vaccination in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Preliminary Moral Evaluation”

**Date:** 15 November 2021 (Mon)  
**Time:** 22:00 - 23:00  
**Online Lecture:** Zoom  
**Language:** English  
**Speaker:** Dr. Benedict S. B. Chan, Associate Professor, Department of Religion and Philosophy, Hong Kong Baptist University  
**Attendance:** 30

**Webinar Series** FALL 2021  
PRESENTED BY:  
JIANN-PING HSU COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF BIOSTATISTICS, EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES  
IN COLLABORATION WITH:  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY  
CENTRE FOR APPLIED ETHICS  
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY  
FACULTY OF ARTS 60  
宗教及哲學系

**Monday, Nov. 15** 9 A.M. – 10 A.M. (EST)  
ONLINE [Click for Zoom link](#) 10 P.M. – 11 P.M. (HKT)



### Benedict S. B. Chan, PhD

Associate Professor of Philosophy, Department of Religion and Philosophy  
Associate Director, Centre for Applied Ethics  
Hong Kong Baptist University

#### TITLE:

**Vaccine Hesitancy and Coercive Vaccination in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Preliminary Moral Evaluation**

#### ABSTRACT:

Vaccine hesitancy, a delay in acceptance or even refusal of vaccination, is a problem not only involved people's level of scientific understanding, but it is also caused by complex beliefs and a lack of confidence in authority. Meanwhile, advocates for coercive vaccination argue that vaccination is a comparatively safe way for a community to reach herd immunity. Weighing the benefits and costs, it is morally permissible to have coercive vaccination. Whether we should allow coercive COVID-19 vaccination, or it is reasonable to respect people who hesitate to receive the vaccine, is a moral problem we should investigate in detail.

Regarding the topic, the speaker puts forth the following arguments. Various scholars suggest a variety of arguments for coercive vaccination against measles. Meanwhile, others put forth those arguments in favor of vaccine hesitancy. These arguments - whether positive or negative - involve many values that are incommensurable but comparable and they should be ranked in different situations. The speaker argues that we should apply consequential evaluation, suggested by Amartya Sen, as the moral reasoning and foundation to evaluate those plural values. Applying consequential evaluation, we can compare the moral similarities and differences between vaccination against COVID-19 and vaccination against measles, and also develop a philosophical framework to evaluate the moral problem of coercive vaccination.

**Dr. Chan's faculty webpage:** <https://rel.hkbu.edu.hk/people/chan-shing-bun-benedict>

**Dr. Chan's personal academic website:** <https://sites.google.com/view/bchan/home>

**HOSTED BY Isaac Chun-Hai Fung, PhD** Associate Professor of Epidemiology, Department of Biostatistics, Epidemiology, & Environmental Health Sciences, Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, Georgia Southern University

## Conference on “New Debates on Human Rights and East Asian Philosophical Traditions: Confucianism and Beyond”

**Date:** 19 January 2022 (Wed)

**Time:** 09:00 - 17:45

**Online Lecture:** Zoom

**Language:** English

**Attendance:** 59

**Programme:**

09:00-09:15 **Opening Ceremony**, Chairperson: Dr. Benedict CHAN  
Opening Speeches  
Group Picture

**Session I**, Chairperson: Dr. KWOK Wai Luen

09:15-10:00 “A Confucian Perspective on the Right to Bereavement”  
Wenqing ZHAO (Whitman College, USA)

10:00-10:45 “Political Confucianism and the Rights to Toleration”  
Zhuoyao (Peter) LI (St. John’s University, USA)

**Session II**, Chairperson: Dr. George MAK

11:00-11:45 “The Challenge of Group Rights: A Buddhist Perspective”  
Ellen Y. ZHANG (Hong Kong Baptist University)

11:45-12:30 “Confucianism, Cognitive Disability, and Moral Status”  
William SIN (The Education University of Hong Kong)

**Session III**, Chairperson: Prof. ZHANG Jiji

14:30-15:15 “Law of the Will (Tian Li) and the Determination of Human Rights”

Simon WONG (Hong Kong Baptist University)

15:15-16:00 “Human Rights to Privacy, Dignity, and Confucianism:  
Limitations and Beyond”  
Benedict S. B. CHAN (Hong Kong Baptist University)

**Session IV**, Chairperson: Dr. Mark BOONE

16:15-17:00 “A Right to Etiquette: A Discussion of Workplace Rights from a Xunzian Perspective”

Baldwin WONG (The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong)

17:00-17:45 “Epistemic Rights, Human Rights, and Confucian Epistemology”  
Pak hang WONG (H&M Group Sweden)

## Public Lecture on “Just War Theory and Ukraine War”

- Date:** 23 March 2022 (Wed)  
**Time:** 12:30 - 14:00  
**Online Lecture:** Zoom  
**Language:** Cantonese  
**Speaker:** Prof. Lo Ping Cheung, Distinguished Professor of Ethics/  
Scholar in Residence, Logos Evangelical Seminary, Los  
Angeles; Professor Emeritus, Department of Religion and  
Philosophy, Hong Kong Baptist University  
**Attendance:** 423



## New Research Fellow



### **Dr. Wong Baldwin Bon-Wah**

**MA University of York, PgCHE, PhD London School of Economics and Political Science**

**Assistant Professor, Department of Social Science, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong**

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Science, and an Associate Programme Director of BSSc in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. I acquired my PhD at London School of Economics and Political Science, specializing in political philosophy. After that, I taught at the University of Essex, the University of Hong Kong, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I also organized the 1st Oxford Symposium in Comparative Political Philosophy, and was invited to deliver talks at the University of Pittsburgh, the City University of Hong Kong and the Education University of Hong Kong. My research areas are Chinese philosophy, political philosophy, and applied ethics. I also taught courses in normative ethics, feminism, history of western political thought, and critical thinking.

My research question focuses on one of the pressing democratic challenges: political polarization. I am interested in *how traditional religions and cultures, such as Christianity, Islam and Confucianism, can contribute to the stability of a polarized society*, and these contributions include educating citizens and participating in public discourses. My research project is therefore two-folded:

- (a) My first research project explores the condition for the reconciliation between religious beliefs and civic duties of citizens in a constitutional democracy. I argue that religious beliefs play a crucial role in political emotion and behavior. Accordingly, citizens' religious beliefs should be shaped in a way that is compatible with their civic duties. I am particularly interested in the shaping role that religious schools and organizations could play in civic education and public debates, related to controversial issues like gender inequality and abortion. A part of this research can be seen in my article in *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, in which I show how Islamic religious schools, *madrassa*, can educate reasonable citizens in political liberalism.
- (b) My second research project is about how Confucianism can address polarization in East Asian societies. I disagree with the common view that Confucianism should endorse a meritocratic, perfectionist government. This underestimates the pluralism in East Asia and will intensify political polarization. I rather offer an interpretation of Confucianism that supports a democratic, neutralist government. I also argue that the true contribution of Confucianism is that it provides a code of



etiquette that maintains the civility of public sphere in a polarized society. A part of this research can be seen in my article in *Journal of Social Philosophy*, in which I argue that Confucians should reject perfectionism and embrace liberal neutrality.

The two projects have applications in various theoretical debates (e.g. theories of justice and ethics of citizenship) as well as practical issues (e.g., civic education, gender inequality, the role of etiquette in public debate, East Asian political meritocracy, etc.) In sum, my first project discusses how western democracies can address the problem of polarization, whereas my second project explains that meritocracy fails to challenge democracy. Together, they form a timely response to the critiques of democracy that are currently in vogue in Eastern and Western societies.

Since my research falls into the overlapping area of religion, philosophy and applied ethics, I am very excited to have a chance to become a Research Fellow of the Centre for Applied Ethics at the Hong Kong Baptist University, where I believe I can learn a lot from distinguished philosophers here. I look forward to discussing and collaborating on various issues of applied ethics and comparative philosophy.



《中外醫學哲學》

*International Journal of Chinese & Comparative Philosophy of Medicine*  
Vol.19 No.1 2021

疫情防務中的倫理學思考及其他

Ethical Dimensions Concerning Pandemic Control and Other Issues

本期編輯：張 穎

Issue Editor: Ellen Y. Zhang

張 穎 Ellen Y. Zhang	前言：疫情防務中的倫理學思考及其他 Introduction: Ethical Dimensions Concerning Pandemic Control and Other Issues
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生命技術的倫理反思

Ethical Reflections on Biomedical Technologies

本期編輯：范瑞平、蔡 昱

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