

The Hong Kong Plug Initiative

A scheme to promote the teaching of Hong Kong social history in ways that capture how Chinese philosophy and Western civilization contribute to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial spirit and vibrant quality of life.

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The Hong Kong Plug Initiative

Background

During early 2006, Po Chung contacted UGC funded Hong Kong universities for the purpose of determining their respective levels of interest in developing a general education core curriculum focused on enabling students to understand Hong Kong's unique blend of Chinese and Western values, hereby referred to as the Hong Kong Plug. During the same period, he also spoke with several business leaders who expressed interest in providing funding to help support the development and delivery of the curriculum.

As envisioned, each donor would provide a HK\$10,000,000.00 grant to help his or her favourite university establish an endowed Chair that would oversee the development and delivery of the curriculum. Each participating university would then apply to the UGC for a matching grant.

The Hong Kong Plug

A plug is a module or software that can be added to a system to give it extra features or functions. In this sense, the Hong Kong Plug is the unique blend of Chinese philosophy and Western civilisation that enables Hong Kong to achieve its high level of economic prosperity, quality of life, and global business advantage.

Purpose of this Paper

This paper does not promote a specific curriculum or pedagogy, nor does it describe the academic qualifications, teaching and research skills, or experience of the persons who might occupy the Chairs. These details are to be worked out by each university and its partnering donor.

What this paper does provide is lists of Target Outcomes, Curricular Concepts, Chair Responsibilities, Key Elements of Curricular Content and Pedagogy, and a list of Learning Objectives that satisfy the wishes of the prospective donors, and which should be considered by a university when preparing a Request for Donor Support and *draft* Letter of Agreement.

Academic Freedom and Credibility

Nothing in this paper or the proposal is intended to infringe on academic freedom or credibility. Each UGC funded university is expected to develop its own curriculum and pedagogy in alignment with its own values, Vision, Mission, and Institutional Roles.

University Request for Donor Support and Letter of Agreement

Universities wishing to participate in the Hong Kong Plug Initiative are required to submit a Formal Request for Donor Support accompanied by draft Letter of Agreement that describes how the university aims to meet the Donor's wishes regarding the curriculum and responsibilities of the Chair. Upon receipt of the formal request and acceptable draft Letter of Agreement, Po Chung will arrange a meeting between the university and a prospective donor.

It's the responsibility of the university to finalize the terms of the Letter of Agreement and work out funding details with the donor.

Target Outcomes

The Hong Kong Plug Initiative aims to bring about the following outcomes:

1. All Hong Kong university students will acquire an understanding of Hong Kong's Chinese and Western cultural roots.
2. All Hong Kong university students will acquire an understanding of why Hong Kong is such a viable and productive global community.
3. All university students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and values they need to be self-sufficient contributing members of Hong Kong's vibrant civil society.
4. A critical mass of university graduates will develop a life-long sense of pride in Hong Kong and its Chinese and Western cultural heritage - a sense of pride that motivates a strong desire for them to promote and contribute to Hong Kong's competitiveness and high quality of life.
5. A critical mass of university graduates will commit to and act on their desire to safeguard and sustain Hong Kong's global advantage.

Curricular Concept

Supporters of the Hong Kong Plug Initiative, the prospective donors, believe that the best way to bring about the target outcomes is by requiring that all university students complete a course of instruction that explores how Chinese philosophy and Western civilisation have contributed to Hong Kong's global advantage. This may translate into three separate general education courses, e.g. Chinese Philosophy, Western Civilisation, and Hong Kong's Social History; a two-semester course that combines the three areas of study, or a cross curricular approach that might require students to explore Hong Kong historical events and development in a variety of academic courses and disciplines after taking prerequisite courses in Chinese Philosophy and Western Civilisation.

Chair Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the person holding the Chair, or other institutional loci of focus, will include, but not be limited to:

1. Insuring that the spirit of the "Letter of Mutual Understanding" between the university and donor is carried out. This would include meeting with faculty and staff on a regular basis and playing a role in faculty evaluations.
2. Designing, developing and managing an appropriate curriculum and pedagogy that reflects awareness of Bloom's Taxonomy, multiple intelligences theory, different ways of learning, and authentic assessment, as well as different ways of demonstrating deep understanding.
3. Promoting the use of technology to support and enhance teaching and learning.
4. Keeping abreast of developments in the study of Hong Kong's social history, Chinese philosophy, and Western civilisation, and distributing this

information to faculty and staff that are developing and delivering the curriculum.

5. Keeping abreast of developments in humanities education, and distributing this information to faculty and staff that are developing and delivering the curriculum.
6. Teaching at least one course in accordance with the most recent educational research relative to effective teaching and learning.
7. Doing primary research that contributes to academic knowledge and/or student understanding of the curriculum.

Key Elements of the Curricular Content and Pedagogy

Hong Kong Social-History

There is a need for Hong Kong university students to examine and become familiar with Hong Kong's social history from 1841 to the present. This need could be satisfied via a stand-alone general education course or through modules and activities across the curriculum.

Curriculum Content and Pedagogy

- The curriculum and pedagogy should use a variety of student-centered learning strategies to facilitate students' awareness, analysis and deep understanding of how Chinese and Western values influenced Hong Kong's history and development.
- The curriculum should reference appropriate Chinese and Western classical literature and use historical documents, primary sources, and case studies.
- The pedagogy should maximize the effective use of technology and authentic assessment.
- The pedagogy should adhere to the right intercultural spirit and not reinforce unreflective prejudices about the superiority of either the West or China. Rather, the history and texts must be approached as disclosing patterns of viable civilization that contributed to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial culture and quality of life.
- The history, texts and case studies must be understood as *aids* pointing beyond themselves to the true object of our interest and need—the truth of things.

Desirable Learning Objectives

- Students will become familiar with basic facts about the history of Hong Kong from its origins to the present day.
- Students will become familiar with different patterns of interpreting the facts about events that shaped Hong Kong's history and development.
- Students will become familiar with Hong Kong's art, music, and cultural wealth.

- Students will become familiar with the historical development of concepts and institutions, such as rule of law, independent judiciary, contractual agreement, human rights, agency, fiduciary duty, conflict of interest, fair play, property rights, copyright, and representative government.
- Students will become familiar with how Chinese philosophy, history, and culture impacted on historical events in Hong Kong. They will also learn how these foundations influenced the development of Hong Kong's political, economic and cultural attributes and systems.
- Students will learn how to identify and use relevant facts to make coherent arguments about the past and future.
- Students will develop their capacity to understand difficult texts through guided reading assignments.
- Students will develop their capacity to communicate in both oral and written form through class and small group discussion and writing assignments.
- Students will become familiar with the main stages of Hong Kong's development as an expanding force that contributed to globalisation and China's economic prosperity.
- Students will become familiar with major events, persons and ideas that contributed to the development of Hong Kongers' values, beliefs, attitudes, and social institutions.
- Students will develop concepts, which give meaning and order to events in the past.
- Students will enhance their ability to identify, analyze and propose solutions to significant problems and situations. In doing so, they will better understand continuing issues and challenges of contemporary life.
- Students will increase their ability to use technology to collect, organize, and analyze information and produce products that verify learning.
- Students will become motivated to be life-long learners.
- Students will become motivated to participate in and contribute to their community.

Chinese Philosophy

There is a need for Hong Kong students to examine and become familiar with Chinese philosophy as a pragmatic means of enhancing one's social skills, problem-solving skills, and global world-view.

Curriculum Content and Pedagogy

- The curriculum and pedagogy should use a variety of student-centered learning strategies to increase students' awareness and deep understanding of the practical aspects of Chinese philosophy.
- The curriculum should reference appropriate Chinese literature and use historical documents, and primary sources.

- The pedagogy should maximize the effective use of technology and authentic assessment.
- The pedagogy should adhere to the right intercultural spirit and not reinforce unreflective prejudices about the superiority of either the Chinese or Western philosophy or religion. Rather, the curriculum must be approached as disclosing patterns of appropriate thinking and behaviour that contribute to personal well-being, quality of social relationships, and community harmony and vitality.
- Students will have a variety of opportunities to explore and experience how Chinese philosophy is reflected in cultural artefacts, art, music, and literary texts.

Desirable Learning Objectives

- Students will become familiar with the basic Canons of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoist thought and how each evolved into religious or quasi-religious institutions.
- Students will understand and appreciate Buddha's practical contributions to Chinese thinking and behaviour, such as:
 - The "Middle Path" concept provides a moral compass.
 - The "Four Noble Truths" provides a system for solving problems.
 - The "Eightfold Path" provides a checklist for appropriate thinking and behaviour.
 - Following Buddhist philosophy is beneficial to one's mental, physical, and spiritual health.
 - Following Buddhist philosophy enhances one's *intrapersonal* intelligence.
- Students will understand and appreciate Confucius' practical contributions to Chinese thinking and behaviour, such as:
 - There is a natural hierarchy of human relationships.
 - Collective needs have priority over individual needs.
 - Individuals, groups, and human institutions are most productive when people carry out their respective roles and responsibilities appropriately.
 - Education is the way to improve personal well-being, increase social harmony and productivity, and advance up the social ladder.
 - People are more inclined to support the collective and submit to the leadership of superiors when they trust and respect the leader.
 - Trust is enhanced when a leader demonstrates knowledge, skills, and values that are valued by the collective.
 - Credibility is enhanced when a leader's behaviour is not repulsive to followers.

- Adhering to Confucian philosophy enhances one's *interpersonal* intelligence.
- Students will understand and appreciate Lao Tzu's practical contributions to Chinese thinking and behaviour, such as:
 - Everything has its own 'natural' nature.
 - Everything is connected.
 - Things work best when their natural nature is not disturbed.
 - A person will be less anxious and less inclined to make mistakes if s/he finds a way to exist within the natural nature of things.
 - A person's efficacy is enhanced when s/he learns to *apprehend* the natural nature and inter-relatedness of things.
- Students will become familiar with Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist art, music, and literature.
- Students will develop their capacity to understand difficult texts through guided reading assignments.
- Students will become familiar with how Chinese philosophy impacted, or was impacted by, historical events in Hong Kong, China and elsewhere.
- Students will learn how to identify and use relevant facts to make coherent arguments about the past and future.
- Students will develop their capacity to communicate in both oral and written form through class and small group discussion and writing assignments.
- Students will become familiar with the main stages of the development of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism as expanding forces that influenced the development of Chinese culture.
- Students will become familiar with major events, persons and ideas that contributed to the development of Chinese philosophy, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social institutions.
- Students will develop concepts which give meaning and order to events in the recorded past.
- Students will enhance their ability to use Chinese philosophy to identify, analyze and propose solutions to significant problems and situations as they relate to the continuing issues and problems of contemporary life.
- Students will enhance their ability to use technology to collect, organize, and analyze information and produce products that verify learning.
- Students will be prepared for a comprehensive study of Hong Kong's history and how Chinese philosophy, concepts and institutions contributed to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial spirit and rich quality of life.
- Students will become motivated to participate in and contribute to their community.

Western Civilization

There is a need for Hong Kong students to study Hebrew, Christian, Greek, Roman, and European and American civilizations and how each contributed to Western values, beliefs, attitudes, and social practices.

Curriculum Content and Pedagogy

- An appropriate course of Western Civilization should increase students' appreciation for and understanding of the main stages of Western Civilization, from the foundations of human history and the advent of agriculture in the Fertile Crescent to the West's domination of the globe at the beginning of the twentieth century.
- The curriculum could be designed to explore the complex dimensions of the Western world and the cumulative experience of its past, and provide an understanding of how yesterday influences today and the outlook for tomorrow. Lessons could facilitate students' understanding of the major developments of Western peoples until the 20th century, because most of the institutions and problems of contemporary society have distinguishable roots in the West's historical past. Moreover, because of the physical and material expansion of the West in the modern period, many of the West's institutions – e.g. capitalism, industrial manufacturing, the nation-state system, and more – have become global in nature.
- The curriculum could study the specifics of particular societies at particular times. It could also examine 'themes' like religion, geographical expansion, technological innovation, and evolution of thought and philosophy, economic development and political transformation that cut across the chronology of events.
- By examining some of the most influential literary, philosophical, scientific and religious texts, together with art and music from these societies, students could explore the ways that people in the West lived during each of these historical epochs, and the ways they thought about themselves and about their relations with one another, their gods, their state, and the physical world.
- Students could examine how the creators of Western culture modified the environment, ordered government, structured society, produced wealth, expressed ideas in word and form, and conceived their ultimate meaning of life and the universe.
- By actively listening to lectures, watching videos, participating in small group discussions and facilitated inquiries, and writing analytical papers, students could come to understand how events in the past led to the development of Western thought, behaviour, and institutions that contributed to the development of international trade and globalization.
- The curriculum should reference appropriate classical literature and use historical documents, primary sources, and cultural artefacts.
- The pedagogy should maximise the effective use of technology and authentic assessment.
- The pedagogy should adhere to the right intercultural spirit and not reinforce unreflective prejudices about the superiority of either the Eastern

or Western culture. Rather, the curriculum must be approached as disclosing patterns of appropriate thinking and behaviour that contributed to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial culture and quality of life.

- The history, the texts and the case studies must be understood as *aids* pointing beyond themselves to the true object of our interest and need—the truth of things.

Desirable Learning Objectives

- Students will become familiar with major events, persons and ideas that contributed to the development of Western civilization.
- Students will become familiar with the main stages of Western Civilization as an expanding force that produced important forms of political, economic, and cultural organization.
- Students will become familiar with how the evolution of Western civilization, from its origins through modern times, influences the way all modern people think and behave.
- Students will understand how Monotheism influenced Western values, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Students will understand how the concept of linear time influenced the development of Western values, beliefs, and attitudes.
- Students will understand how change and the rise and fall of Western civilizations occurred over time.
- Students will become familiar with the art, music, cultural artefacts and literature of Western civilizations.
- Students will become familiar with the origin and historical development of concepts and institutions such as individualism, democracy, rule of law, independent judiciary, contractual agreement, human rights, agency, fiduciary duty, conflict of interest, fair play, property rights, copyright, and more.
- Students will learn to identify and use relevant facts to make coherent arguments about the past and future.
- Students will develop their capacity to understand difficult texts through daily, guided reading assignments.
- Students will develop their capacity to communicate in both oral and written form, through class and small group discussion, and writing assignments.
- Students will develop their ability to give meaning and order to events in the recorded past.
- Students will enhance their ability to identify, analyze, and propose solutions to significant problems and situations as they relate to the continuing issues and problems of contemporary life.

- Students will be prepared for a comprehensive study of Hong Kong's history and how Western civilization, concepts and institutions contributed to Hong Kong's entrepreneurial spirit and rich quality of life.

Timeframe

The prospective donors are willing to make a binding pledge prior to June 1, 2006, subject to the terms of an acceptable Letter of Mutual Understanding (MOU), in order to facilitate a university's desire to submit a request for UGC matching funds.

More Information

Questions about the scheme, concepts, curriculum, or pedagogy, or requests for aide in developing a draft proposal should be sent by email to:

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