Revised Syllabus as of October 6 (with presentations, adjusted schedule and readings)

PHL401H1F: Seminar in the History of Philosophy: *Technê*:

Time: Tuesdays 3:00-6:00
Location: Northrop Frye Room 235

Prof. R. Barney
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Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:00, Lillian Massey Room 131
Fridays: 3:10-4:00, Jackman Hall Room 423
or by appointment (in person or on Zoom)

The ancient Greek concept of *technê* (pronounced *TECK-nay*) corresponds roughly to our 'craft', 'expertise', 'art', or 'skill'. The *technai* or crafts include traditional handicrafts such as weaving, carpentry, and metalwork; skilled trades ranging from navigation to medicine to accounting; and the fine arts (painting, drawing) and sports. Craft in this broad sense is one of the central concepts of Plato's philosophy, and also figures in the epistemological and ethical theories of Aristotle and the Stoics. Kindred concepts (*ji, yi, shu, dao*) are equally central in the ancient Chinese philosophical tradition, especially in the *Mozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Xunzi*. In ancient Greece and China alike, craft is important both in its own right and as a paradigm, specifically as a model for moral virtue and the 'art of politics' [*politikê technê*] of the skillful ruler.

We will read both ancient and modern texts in order to discuss the philosophical questions raised by craft and the craft model. (Ancient thinkers tend to take craft itself as obvious; but before using it as a model for other things we need to get clear on what it is and how it works.) What *is* a craft -- how can we tell what should count? Can we give a definition of craft -- if so what are its necessary ingredients? What epistemic standards must some practice meet to count as a craft? Should we think of the craftsperson as having a kind of scientific knowledge [*epistêmê*], or is *Zhuangzi* right that expertise at the highest level transcends any explanation or system, and cannot be verbalized or taught? These epistemological questions have received some discussion in contemporary philosophy and cognitive psychology; but we will focus more on questions of value which have been neglected in modern thought. What norms govern govern craft-action and the craft-practitioner? Are there also non-epistemic, moral or quasi-moral standards for craft? Must a craft aim at some good, as Plato seems to think? Can the drug dealer, thief, assassin, or tic-tac-toe player be practising a craft? Should a craftsperson feel an obligation to do their craft well? To use it for the common good? In what ways might craft-practice involve a kind of virtue? Is craft indeed a useful model for moral virtue, or are these two things (as Aristotle insists) different in kind? *Is* there an art of politics: if so, what is its 'work' or end, and how is it like and unlike the familiar crafts?

Students will be encouraged to read widely on the topic, to bring in empirical information (and philosophical ideas) about crafts from a wide range of sources, and to develop unique paper topics in keeping with their own interests.

Readings:

Plato, *Complete Works* ed. John Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997)
Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi* trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)
Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)

These texts are available at the University of Toronto Bookstore: **please buy and use them in hard copy.** (Rationale: We will be reading them very closely, and for most of us a hard-copy book is still the best technology for note-taking and reference-finding.) The other readings will be available as pdf's on Quercus. **You must *always* bring the Core Readings to class, to enable your note-taking and participation in discussion. Hard copy is preferred, so please print them out; having the readings on a laptop or tablet is also ok if you must, but phone use is prohibited in class.**

Evaluation:

Participation and attendance: 10%[1]
In-class 15-minute presentation with handout or slides: 10%[2]
One two-page 'think-piece' (due Oct. 15; optional topics posted Sept. 30): 10%
Quiz on readings (Nov. 19: 90 minutes): 10%

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[1] How this grade works: Regular class attendance -- meaning your punctual, attentive, regular presence and respectful engagement with the course and your fellow students -- is expected and required as part of the course. (This means no phones out ever, no private discussions or distracting web-surfing, no coming late or wandering in and out, etc.) You are also expected to come to class sufficiently well-prepared to answer basic questions about the readings if called upon. If you meet these expectations but do no more, your a&p grade will be roughly the same as the rest of your grade. If you miss a number of sessions and/or never ask or answer questions, you should expect a lower a&p grade. If you attend regularly and participate in an active and helpful way, your a&p grade can raise your grade as a whole.

[2] Each Tuesday there will be one (or occasionally two) presentations on either a chapter of Sennett, *The Craftsman*, or some other relevant reading chosen in consultation with me; sign up for a week which works well for you, and submit a plan to me for your presentation by email **before the end of the preceding Sunday**. (No presentation will take place without a prior plan.) You may join forces with a fellow student to present as a team. Grading will be by ❌, ✅, ✅✅: that is, a zero for didn't do it/obviously gave it no thought; a B-range grade for an adequate presentation; or an A-range grade for a job especially well done. Week 3 will be entirely devoted to presentations, preferably on books/papers which have empirical information on craft useful for our discussions. (See next note.)

One ten-page term paper (due Dec. 2) with required (but not graded) proposal (due Nov. 12; optional topics posted Oct. 30): 60%

All writing assignments will be graded in anonymized form: please put your student number but not your name on your work.

All assignments will be submitted online, and automatically filtered through our plagiarism-detection software; unless you contact me to request otherwise, your submission of your work on Quercus will be taken to constitute consent to this. I also will make every effort to detect plagiarism and see that it is punished; **and in this course, any detectable reliance on any Artificial Intelligence system (ChatBot GPT and similar) or other writing/rewriting software will be counted as cheating ('reliance on an unauthorized aid') and is prohibited.** If you are not sure what counts as plagiarism, start here: https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/. All grades for written work are subject to revision on the basis of an interview with you to explore your comprehension of what you have submitted. (Lateness policy: For late assignments, one letter grade will be deducted for the first day or two days of lateness (i.e., a B+ becomes a B), and a second letter grade for being any later than that. No work will be accepted after the last day of classes. This does not apply in cases of accommodations/medical problems or where an extension has been granted.)

Tentative Schedule:

For each week, the *Core Readings* are the ones we will focus on in class discussion; the *Other Readings* will help to make sense of them. Both kinds are required (except as noted in class). There will be one or two student presentations each week except for Week One (no presentations) and Week Three (when presentations will make up the bulk of the session); presentations should be 15 minutes long, to be followed by another 10 minutes of questions and discussion.

Week 1 (Sept. 3): Course Introduction; *Technê* in ancient Greek thought (and today)
Core Readings: Sennett, 'The Troubled Craftsman', Chapter One of *The Craftsman* (pp. 19-52); plus Week One Readings (handout in class)

Week 2 (Sept. 10): What is a craft?
Core Readings: Barney, Tanner Lecture One; Plato and Aristotle selections* from *Cratylus, Phaedrus*, *Gorgias*, *Sophist, Meno, Theaetetus*; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.1
Other Readings:
Presentation: RB on Sennett, Chapter 1

Week 3 (Sept. 17): 'Mini-Conference': Presentations on Sennett et al.[3]

[3] I will be at a conference in Ghana this week: I will try to Zoom in, but this may or may not work. Your collective assignment is to have a productive session organized around presentations on chapters of Sennett, *The Craftsman*, and your choice of other empirical material (that is, discussions of how some particular crafts work). Presentations must include slides or a handout,

Core Readings: Sennett, *The Craftsman*
Other Readings: other suggested topics include Crawford, *Shop Class*; Lewis, *We, the Navigators*, papers in Ericsson
*Presentations:*Michael G., Zhaotong G., Pranav P., Zelda S., Nicole R., Victoria B.
MC: Logan R.
Zoom-master: Pranav P.

Week 4 (Sept. 24): Recap: What is a Craft?
Core Readings: Plato, Aristotle excerpts, Tanner Lecture I
Presentation: RB on Sennett, Chapter I

Week 5 (Oct. 1): What Does the Expert Know? Greek and Contemporary Debates
Core Readings: Dreyfuses, Montero, Ryle

Week 6 (Oct. 8): What Does the Expert Know? Chinese Debates
Core Readings: Zhuangzi 3, 19, 22
Other Readings: Mozi, Xunzi, Han Feizi, Analects selections
Presentation: Logan R.

Week 7 (Oct. 15): Hard Cases: 'Bad Crafts'
Core Readings: Barney, Tanner Lecture Three with Korsgaard Comments; *Zhuangzi* 10, 29 on Robber Zhi
Other Readings: Aristotle, *Metaphysics* IX.2
Presentation: Jabez A.

Week 8 (Oct. 22): Plato on Craft and Teleology
Core Readings: Republic I, Barney Tanner Lecture II
Other Readings: selections from *Cratylus, Gorgias, Timaeus, Hippias Minor*
Presentation: Runheng L., Mino C.

-- Reading Week --

Week 9 (Nov. 5): Craft and Virtue
Core Readings: selections from *Apology, Protagoras, Laches, Euthydemus*; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.
Other Readings: Annas, *Intelligent Virtue,* Witt, *Social Goodness*, Stichter, MacIntyre
Presentation: Carina M., Sehaj B.

Week 10 (Nov. 12): Beauty, Fulfilment, Truth
Core Readings: Schwarz, Crawford, Morris, Ruskin
Other Readings: McCarthy, Levi, Leonidas
Presentation: Misha M., Pareesa H.

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and will be graded mostly on these; good questions to other presenters will also be counted towards your grade.

Week 11 (Nov. 19): Readings Quiz (online); Arguments Against the Craft Model
Core Readings: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4 and VI.5; Ryle
Other Readings: Small on Annas
Presentations: Omer Y., Hila B.

Week 12 (Nov. 26): Is there a *Politikê Technê*? Craft and the Art of Politics in Greece and China
Core Readings: Plato, *Protagoras, Republic, Statesman*, Aristotle, *Nicomachean* I.1-2, *Politics* excerpts; *Zhuangzi* 3, 19, 22; *Mozi* selections, *Xunzi* selections
Presentations: Maksim I., Nick S.