

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Graduate Course Syllabus 2016-2017
Philosophy 9226B
Epistemology of Experimentation

Spring term 2017
Mon. 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
STVH-1145

Instructor: Jackie Sullivan
Office Hours: Mon 3-4 p.m., Tues 11am-12pm
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Description

Science advances our understanding of the world and ourselves primarily by means of experimentation. Yet, what is an experiment? How do experiments differ across different areas of science? How do experiments produce knowledge? Are experiments always knowledge-generating? What differentiates a successful experiment from an unsuccessful experiment? Answering these questions by exploring historical, philosophical and theoretical analyses of experimentation in the physical, biological and mind-brain sciences will be the primary aims of this course.

Texts

The texts for this course will consist of philosophical and scientific journal articles that are accessible through Western's library system and will be made available via Dropbox as PDFs.

Requirements

- 50% - Research Paper (3500-4500 words)
- 15% - In-class presentation (on one assigned reading)
- 15% - In-class presentation (on research paper)
- 20% - Attendance & Participation (clear demonstration of having read the assigned readings)

All students will be required to write a research paper that will be due at the end of the term. Each student is also required to do two in-class presentations. The primary aim of the first presentation is to raise questions about the assigned readings for discussion. The purpose of the second presentation will be to provide a 15-20 min presentation of the final research paper. As the course will be conducted as a seminar, registered students and auditors are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Rules for auditors

If you plan to take this course for credit as an auditor you are required to do one in-class presentation and miss no more than 5 of the lectures.

Department policies

The Department of Philosophy Policies which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available on the Department's website.