

**Philoso 2997F:
Special Topics in Philosophy
Food, Culture, and Values**

Course Outline 2021-22

Dr. Benjamin Hill

Fall Term 2021

Lecture (001)

M 14:30–16:30 Eastern

W 14:30–15:30 Eastern

Instructor: Dr. Benjamin Hill (he/him/his)

STVH 3140

519.661.2111 (x80143)

Office Hours: MW 13:00-13:30 Eastern

Virtual Office Hour: upon request

Email: Please use OWL Messages

Emergencies Only: bhill28@uwo.ca

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Attawandaron peoples, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research, and community service.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Special Topics in Philosophy: Food, Culture, and Values

Food is a central feature of the human condition—we all need to eat every day, multiple times per day. Food (and our relationship with it) is also psychically powerful and intimate—food comforts, pleases, and unites us in a way few other things do or can. This intimacy and ubiquity make food a central node in our conceptions of personal and cultural identities; food (and our relationship with it) is thick with the values that we use to define and orient ourselves within our worlds. Thus, food is an interesting locus for exploring—and critiquing—our personal and cultural values. This course is designed to provoke that often difficult and fraught process of reflective self-discovery and critique, a process made all the more difficult because it is directed at core personal and cultural values that are generally buried so deep as to be hidden even from ourselves.

Philosophy as a Way of Life (PWOL): This course is designed to

COURSE GOAL

The goal of this course is to empower and encourage students to philosophically and critically reflect on their personal and cultural relationships with food and modern food systems as a way of discovering core values that they and their cultures have adopted and continue to perpetuate.

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support philosophy as a way of life. PWOL is a metaphilosophical orientation based on the idea that philosophical practice can and ought to be a first principle for living a flourishing human life. Incorporating philosophical reflective exercises into one's lived experiences is the cornerstone of PWOL. It harkens back to older, Ancient and Renaissance philosophical traditions in that being and living philosophically, rather than a degree of pedantic learning, were the primary outcomes of philosophical study.

Prerequisites: None

Antirequisites: None

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

PREFERRED NAMES AND PRONOUNS

If you prefer to be called something other than the name on file with the Registrar, please let us know. Please also feel free to specify the pronoun(s) you wish to be referred to by. If anyone mispronounces your name or forget your preferred name/pronoun, please correct them. I always greatly appreciate being corrected when I mispronounce or forget someone's preferred name/pronoun.

LEARNING PLATFORMS

[REDACTED]

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

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See Appendix 1 for the alignment of the course learning outcomes with the program and Western degree learning outcomes.

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. **Describe** and **Explain** the philosophical conceptions of identity, personal identity, and personhood.
2. **Apply** the philosophical conceptions of identity, personal identity, and personhood to themselves and their relationship with food.
3. **Analyze** the ways that food directly and indirectly impacts their personhood and personal identity.
4. **Apply** the philosophical conceptions of identity to various social and cultural groups, including their own.
5. **Analyze** the ways that food directly and indirectly impacts those social and cultural groups as well as how these impacts affect their cultural and personal identities.
6. **Critically Evaluate** their own personal and cultural food traditions and practices.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

All assignments are due at 23:59 Eastern time on their specified due dates and must be submitted via OWL unless specified otherwise. Assignments that have an automatic 48-hour grace period may be submitted via OWL as “late” but without any late penalty. To submit an assignment after the 48-hour grace period, when the OWL submission portal has closed, contact Dr. Hill and, if necessary, your Academic Dean, regarding an academic accommodation and alternative submission deadline. Assignments that are designated “Pass/Fail” will be scored as follows: Pass = 100; Fail (with submission) = 40; No Submission = 0. Pass/Fail assessments generally do not include qualitative assessments (comments or rubric scores).

Philosophical Reflections Journal (40%) [Learning Outcomes: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

Due: Sept 24, Oct 15, Nov 12, & Dec 3 (23:59 Eastern)

Eligible for automatic 48-hour grace period

Submission via OWL Assignments

Assessment: Pass/Fail/No Submission without Qualitative Feedback

Students are required to engage in dedicated philosophical reflection exercises on the course material and keep a journal weekly documenting those exercises and their philosophical results. Details regarding the requirements and expectations for those reflective exercises and results can be found in Appendix 2. Each reflection should consist of a substantive engagement with the philosophical content and ideas of course material. Philosophical engagements are generally focused around philosophically interesting or significant issues such as a significant vulnerability in a position or argument, a



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philosophical insight, breakthrough or advancement, or a contested point of conceptualization. In some cases, prompts to be addressed during the reflective exercise will be provided by the instructor; in other cases, students will be expected to develop their own prompts for reflection.

Blog Posts (40%) [Learning Outcomes: 3, 5, 6]

Due: Oct 1, Oct 22, Nov 19, & Dec 6 (23:59 Eastern)

Eligible for automatic 48-hour grace period

Submission via OWL Assignments

Assessment: Numeric with Qualitative Feedback

Non-academic philosophical expression and writing are as important for PWOL as academic writing is for theoretical philosophy. Students are required to write 4 (FOUR) blog-style posts engaging with the course material. Each post must contain a minimum of 500 words and conform to the guidelines for a philosophical blog post outlined in Appendix 3. Successful posts will provide pervasive reasons supporting a philosophically interesting and contested issue encountered in or directly connected with the course material.

Final Examination (20%) [Learning Outcomes: 1, 3, 5]

Due: Final Examinations Period

Self-administered via OWL

Assessment: Numeric without Qualitative Feedback

Students will be asked to complete a 3-hour, cumulative final examination during the time assigned by the Registrar's Office. Pending approval from the Dean's office, the examination will be open book/open resource and self-administered via OWL. Details on the format and scheduling will be circulated when they are available.

Extra Credit Opportunities [Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6]

Opportunities for extra credits may be made available throughout the term. Some may be for extra credit on the score of a particular assignment; some may be for extra credit on a student's overall course grade. All opportunities will be announced in MS Teams and on OWL with the expectations and potential credits specified.

- ExCr Opportunity #1: "Make Me an Offer" **Due Dec 8 (FIRM)** [Learning Outcomes: TBD] Max +10 points on your final grade.

It is expected that an extra credit project to involve an additional 15–20 hours of work for the average student. **Only projects that have received prior special permission from Dr. Hill will be graded.** Possible extra credit projects include:

- a) Review a recent book within the relevant secondary literature.
- b) Locate and review a collection of relevant philosophical resources or online materials.

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- c) Build a philosophical resources webpage.
 - d) Write a special 1500–1800-word research paper.
- Contact Dr. Hill if you are interest in submitting a proposal for an extra credit project.

Essay Course Word Count

As a course that satisfies the senior level essay course requirement, student enrolled in this course should expect to submit a minimum of 3500 words of written work.

Department Target Average Policy

The Philosophy Department has a policy requiring a 74 average for each 2nd year course. The grades I assign will be in the OWL “Gradebook”. Should there be any discrepancy between the grade I recorded for you in OWL and your “official” grade reported by the Registrar, you should contact the Philosophy Department Undergraduate Chair for clarification and explanation. Western’s current policies and procedures for undergraduate student academic appeals can be found [here](#).

REQUIRED TEXTS

TBA

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Upon request, I can be available via Zoom once per week to answer questions or for extended discussion of the course material.

COURSE SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to our official MS Teams and OWL site, we have a course website and blog as well as social media presenece.

Website and blog: TBA

Facebook public page: TBA

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DrBenjaminHill>

To receive credit for any public event or social media challenge, your posting must include the official course tags. Students without any social media presenece or who wish not to post anything that might compromise their personal privacy to social media should contact Prof. Hill regarding alternative ways of documenting their participation or meeting the social media challenge(s).

~~@drbenjaminhill~~

~~@ TBA~~

~~#~~

~~#westernleibniz2021~~

~~#westernu~~



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PROFESSIONALISM

Education is a professional activity and campus is a professional environment. Everyone is expected to comport themselves in a manner appropriate for and conducive of such an environment. All academic activities, interactions, and conversations should be conducted in a respectful, inclusive, and professional manner. **Judgmental, belittling, shaming, rude, ridiculing, bullying, and all other such behavior, comments, and attitudes are inappropriate and will not be tolerated.** We require that all discussion be respectful and kind even when that discussion is critical, defensive, emotional, and contradictory.

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AUDIT

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website [here](#). It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

ACCOMMODATION

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Western Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found [here](#).

SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams,



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completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. The conditions in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances are [here](#).

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

For Phil 2997F the following grades will be available prior November 5 a total of 40.00% of your final grade:

Philosophical Reflections Journals #1 and #2
Blog posts #1 and #2

COURSE ASSIGNMENT

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, [here](#).

PLAGIARISM CHECKING

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

SUPPORT SERVICES

[Registrarial Services](#)

[Student Support Services](#)

[Services provided by the USC](#)



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[Student Development Centre](#)

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Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.

DRAFT



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Arts&Humanities**

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Appendix 1 (Alignment of Learning Outcomes)

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| Course Learning Outcomes | Aligned Philosophy Program Learning Outcomes | Aligned <u>Western</u> <u>Degree</u> <u>Learning</u> <u>Outcomes</u> |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Describe and Explain the philosophical conceptions of identity, personal identity, and personhood. | HSp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 MajP 1, 2, 3, 4 | 1, 2, 3 |
| 2. Apply the philosophical conceptions of identity, personal identity, and personhood to themselves and their relationship with food. | HSp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 MajP 1, 2, 3, 4 | 1, 2, 3, 6 |
| 3. Analyze the ways that food directly and indirectly impacts their personhood and personal identity. | HSp 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 MajP 2, 4 | 1, 2, 6 |
| 4. Apply the philosophical conceptions of identity to various social and cultural groups, including their own. | HSp 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 MajP 1, 2, 3, 4 | 1, 2, 3 |
| 5. Analyze the ways that food directly and indirectly impacts those social and cultural groups as well as how these impacts affect their cultural and personal identities. | HSp 2, 4 MajP 2, 4 | 2, 3, 6 |
| 6. Critically Evaluate their own personal and cultural food traditions and practices. | HSp 2, 3, 4, MajP 2, 4 | 1, 3, 6, 7 |



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Appendix 2 (Philosophical Reflection Guidelines)**

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The Project

Keep a journal documenting your weekly, dedicated philosophical reflection exercises by means of which you engage with the assigned materials. Each reflection should consist of a substantive engagement with the philosophical content and ideas contained in the assigned materials. Some weeks you will be provided with prompts to address in your journals; other weeks you will be expected to devise your own philosophically important prompts to address. A philosophical engagement is generally focused on philosophically interesting or significant issues such as a significant vulnerability in a position or argument, a philosophical insight, breakthrough or advancement, or a contested point of conceptualization.

**Concrete Deliverable DUE 23:59 EASTERN ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:
Sept 24, Oct 15, Nov 12, & Dec 3**

Eligible for automatic 48-hour grace period

Students will be supplied with a form-fillable MSWord document that they may use as their philosophical journal. Should a student choose an alternative format, they should make sure that the following information is clearly included in each journal entry:

- Minimum 350-word per weekly section consisting of
 - the prompt(s) you've selected to occasion or guide your reflections
 - your philosophical reflections addressing the prompt(s)
 - the conclusions or resolutions (if any) that you achieve as a result of your reflective engagement.

Submission via OWL Assignments, Attachment only [MSWord]

Project Parameters

- The reflective engagements should be considered part of your weekly study activities and should build directly out of your regular weekly studies.
- Dedicate time each week to engage in the recommended reflective activities and to keep your journal current and up to date between submissions.
- Feel free to be creative with how you reflectively engage with the material and how you record and document your reflection; embed in the document any non-text material you wish to record and submit.

Assessment

Pass/Fail/No Submission, no Qualitative Feedback

Learning Outcomes

2. **Apply** the philosophical conceptions of identity, personal identity, and personhood to themselves and their relationship with food.
3. **Analyze** the ways that food directly and indirectly impacts their personhood and personal identity.

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Appendix 2 (Philosophical Reflection Guidelines)

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4. **Apply** the philosophical conceptions of identity to various social and cultural groups, including their own.
5. **Analyze** the ways that food directly and indirectly impacts those social and cultural groups as well as how these impacts affect their cultural and personal identities.
6. **Critically Evaluate** their own personal and cultural food traditions and practices.

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Appendix 2 (Philosophical Reflection Guidelines)**

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ADVICE FOR APPROACHING THIS ASSIGNMENT

Reflection is work, hard work. While it comes naturally to some students, others find it difficult and intimidating. For this course, almost all of the reflective exercises are philosophical and/or cognitive, which means that they are designed to foster philosophical analysis and engagement or knowledge retention and recollection. They are not, in other words, exercises in self-reflection, which are designed to uncover aspects about your own character, belief system, or experiences. That being said, there are considerable overlaps in the techniques and practices conducive to both forms of reflective exercises. Here are some bits of practical advice and hints that may help you get started and be successful at philosophical and cognitive reflective exercises. Because the reflective exercises for this course are ungraded, no rubric for assessing them will be used. But because a rubric may be helpful in guiding self-evaluation, I offer you one to review.

- Find a quiet place with no distractions; a place that you can turn inward toward your thoughts and ideas. Music can help to set the mood for introspective meditation and reflection.
- **TURN OFF THE DAMN PHONE AND ITS DINGING NOTIFICATIONS!!!** (At least while you are reflecting.)
- Take 5 minutes to settle and relax before beginning the reflective exercise.
- Plan on spending 20 minutes (or so) on the reflective exercise — spend at least 15 minutes engaged in reflection, thinking through the prompts and responding to the questions *before* writing notes your thoughts and ideas.
- Focus on contrasts—compare what you believe or want to say with alternative perspectives. If it helps to think about how another philosopher (Hume, Locke, Socrates, Leibniz, Russell, etc.) would respond or react, do it.
- Before transitioning to jotting down note or writing up your reflections, recap the significant findings and recollections and how the ideas connect and intersect with each other.
- The most important thing any reflective exercise is the act of reflection and how deeply or intently you were engaged in it. If you are the type of person who thinks best while writing, then write away while you reflect! If you are the type of person who thinks best while talking, don't be afraid to use a voice-to-text tool or some similar way of getting your reflections down. But if you are not either of those kinds of people and you find it easier or better to think first and then write down your ideas, do that. What is important is making it work for you, no matter how you do it.
- When engaging in *postcognitia* reflections, spend some time bringing everything together: the *praecognitia* prompts and reflections, your questions and analyses and assessments of the reading, and the *postcognitia* prompts and reflections.

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Appendix 2 (Philosophical Reflection Guidelines)

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| Philosophical Reflections Assignments Rubric | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Categories | Exemplary (4 +/-) | Superior (3 +/-) | Adequate (2 +/-) | Inadequate (1 +/-) | |
| Depth of Reflections | Seeks to understand the text or ideas by examining rigorous and in-depth their meaning and philosophical significance as well as their connections to one another and other sections of the text. Demonstrates a sophisticated ability to analyze texts, ideas, and logical structures. Consistently asks probing questions about ideas and seeks to answer these in detail. | Seeks to understand the text or ideas by examining somewhat cautiously their meaning and philosophical significance as well as their connections to one another and other sections of the text. Demonstrates some aptitude for analyzing texts, ideas, and logical structures. Occasionally asks probing questions about ideas and often seeks an answer to these. | Seeks to understand the text or ideas by examining cautiously their meaning and philosophical significance as well as their connections to one another and other sections of the text. Demonstrates a merely adequate ability for analysis texts, ideas, and logical structures. Rarely asks probing questions about ideas and make little headway toward answering them. | Exhibits little to no examination of the underlying philosophical meaning and significance of the text. Little to no evidence of analytic ability or the potential thereof is displayed. Almost never asks philosophically interesting questions about the ideas and makes little to no progress toward answering any philosophically interesting questions. | |
| Makes Effective Use of Previously Acquired Philosophical Insights | Integrates rich and effective comparisons (or contrasts) between the text or ideas being reflected on and previously encountered material. Makes clear connections through judicious references and allusions to said material. | Somewhat interesting comparisons or contrasts between the texts or ideas being reflected on and previous material are presented. A connection is indicated through references to the previous material. | A vague or unclear attempt to incorporate some previous material is perhaps evident . What connection(s), if any, with the previously assigned material are unclear or murky . | No attempt to incorporate or connect with any previously encountered material is evident or plausibly presented by or through the reflection. | |
| Makes Effective Use of Previous Course Material (as appropriate) | Integrates rich and effective comparisons (or contrasts) between the text or ideas being reflected on and previously course material. Makes clear connections through judicious references and allusions to said materials | Somewhat interesting comparisons or contrasts between the texts or ideas being reflected on and previous course materials are presented. A connection is indicated through references to said materials | A vague or unclear attempt to incorporate some previous course material is perhaps evident . What connection(s), if any, with the previously presented course materials are unclear or murky . | No attempt to incorporate or connect with any previous course materials is evident or plausibly presented by or through the reflection. | |
| Thoroughness | Reflection provides complete explanations of all of the philosophically salient points and completely covers the issue flagged by the prompt. | Reflection provides detailed explanations of almost all of the philosophically salient points and satisfactorily covers most of the issue flagged by the prompt. | Reflection provides merely adequate explanations of the main philosophical point and covers somewhat the issue flagged by the prompt. | Reflection fails to provide adequate explanations of key philosophical points and barely covers the issue flagged by the prompt, if at all. | |
| Overall Assessment | 100–80 Could not reasonably demand better work from a student at this level. 4 or greater in most areas of the rubric. | 79–70 Above average work for students at this level. May include lower in one area, if outweighed by exemplary and strongly superior marks in the remaining areas. | 69–60 Average work for students at this level. May include exemplary marks (3- or greater) in one or two areas that are overwhelmed by adequate marks in the other areas. | 59–50 Below average work for students at this level. May include a 2- in one area that is overwhelmed by inadequate marks or in the other areas. | 50> Failing work. No submission, submission formally unacceptable, or so poorly completed as to warrant no credit. |

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Appendix 3 (Blog Posts Project)**

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