

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2018-19**

**Philosophy 9605B/4410: Survey in Philosophy of Mind; Topic: Concepts**

**Winter Term 2019  
W 11:30 - 2:30  
STVH 1145**

**Instructor: Chris Viger  
STVH 4145  
Office Number, Office Hours: W 2:30 -- 4:30  
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**DESCRIPTION**

Concepts are considered to be the essential elements or building blocks of thought. In this course, we will read primary sources articulating various theories of concepts from philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience. We will review the strengths and weaknesses of views that concepts are definitions, prototypes, exemplars, stereotypes, or words in a language of thought. We also study various constraints that have been suggested for any theory of concepts, such as that they must compose or whether they are holistic or atomistic and critically assess those constraints. We conclude by considering how the human brain is structured to facilitate the acquisition of concepts.

**TEXTS**

Margolis, E. and Laurence, S. (Eds.) (1999). *Concepts: Core Readings*. Cambridge, MA: Bradford, MIT Press.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Develop critical reading and writing skills necessary for graduate work in philosophy.
2. Develop oral presentation skills of original source material in contemporary philosophy of mind.
3. Develop writing skills for succinctly summarizing difficult material.
4. Learn specific philosophical, psychological, and neuro-scientific theories about the nature of concepts, including definitions, prototypes, stereotypes, exemplars, symbols in a language of thought, and the spoke and hub model.
5. Develop essay writing skills to the standard expected of graduate work in philosophy.

**REQUIREMENTS**

- |                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Weekly Abstracts (100 words)       | 10% |
| 2. Position Summaries (3 x 500 words) | 30% |
| 3. Essay Outline                      | 10% |
| 4. Final Essay (2500-3500 words)      | 50% |

**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 at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

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 UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

[http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **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, at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **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 <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> 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.