

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2015-16**

**Philosophy 1130G: Big Ideas  
(Previously Philosophy 024 )**

<b>Winter Term 2016</b> <b>Lectures WF 10:30-11:30, MC 105B</b> (plus 1-hour weekly tutorial)	<b>Instructor: Prof. DiSalle</b> <b>Stevenson 4142</b> <b>Office Hours: WF 11:30- 1:30</b> <b>(and by appointment)</b> <b>661-2111 x85763</b> <b>rdisalle@uwo.ca</b>
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**DESCRIPTION**

This course will discuss some of the ideas that have shaped modern culture, politics, science, and philosophy—the “big ideas” that are discussed and debated in our culture, and that are familiar to most of us, but that are rarely spelled out in any detail. Through readings and class discussion, we will try to understand some of the most revolutionary and interesting of these ideas from a critical philosophical perspective, and talk about the impact that they have had, might have, or ought to have on our lives and thought. Among the “big ideas” are: infinity, computation, freedom, equality, evolution, determinism, materialism, computation, artificial intelligence, theism, atheism, skepticism, certainty, progress, revolution, relativity, and others.

**TEXTS**

All assigned readings (articles or excerpts from books) will be posted on the 1130G OWL site.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To grasp some influential philosophical ideas
2. To understand how philosophical questions are framed
3. To relate philosophical ideas to larger issues in society, culture, and history
4. To understand the connections between philosophy and other fields of human thought
5. To develop competence in critical analysis by careful reading and discussion
6. To develop skills of oral expression and argument through class discussion
7. To develop writing skills through written assignments

**REQUIREMENTS**

3 short writing assignments (each 20% of final mark); one final exam (30%); active participation in tutorials (10%).

**AUDIT**

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

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.