

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

**Philosophy 2300F: Philosophy of Science
(Previously Philosophy 226)**

Fall Term 2015	Instructor: Prof. DiSalle
Tu. 1:30-2:30, Th. 1:30-3:30	Stevenson 4142
TC 303	Office Hours: Tu. 12:30- 1:30, Th. 11:30-1:30
	(and by appointment)
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DESCRIPTION

This course asks some fundamental philosophical questions about science: Is science essentially rational? Is it a uniquely objective pursuit of truth, or is it as subjective as other forms of human thought? Are scientific theories derived from empirical evidence, or are they human constructions that are imposed on the evidence? Is a scientific revolution a progressive change, leading to a better understanding of the world, or is it merely a change of intellectual fashion? When we have “scientific knowledge,” what is it that we really know? We will consider these questions in two ways: by considering contemporary literature on the philosophy of science, and by looking at historical and contemporary cases of scientific revolutions.

TEXTS

Carnap, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (Dover)
Supplementary readings will be posted on the OWL site.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand philosophical issues concerning the aims and methods of science
2. To understand the roles of evidence and theory in science
3. To relate philosophical views of science to historical examples
4. To understand the connections between scientific and philosophical ideas
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

1 take-home midterm assignment (25% of final mark); 1 short essay (25%); one final exam (40%), class participation (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.