

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2016-17**

Philosophy 1040F Ethics, Law, and Politics

Fall Term 2016

Date/Time: Tues. and Thurs. 11:30-12:30

Location: SSC 2032

Instructor: Prof. T. Isaacs

Office: IGAB 1N20

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2-3 p.m.

Email: tisaacs@uwo.ca

DESCRIPTION

Consider:

- I want to sell my body for sex – so what?
- My friend's an addict—why shouldn't she or he have access to clean needles?
- What's so bad about throwing out perfectly good food?
- What if a surgical enhancement will make me run faster—is it okay?
- Whoa! That was the worst public apology ever! How to apologize better.

What do all of these issues have in common? Each has an ethical, legal, and political dimension. We'll take up these and other topics from these three different angles (ethical, legal, political). Along the way, through written work and in-class discussion, activities and assignments, we'll learn:

- how to produce good, clear philosophical analysis
- how to apply, develop, and defend multiple perspectives
- how to provide and articulate convincing arguments in support of our conclusions

TEXTS

Assigned readings will include a combination of scholarly journal articles and internet resources to be made available to students through the course website on OWL.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students who have done the readings, completed the assignments, and attended class will be able to:

- Explain, orally and in writing, the difference between an ethical, legal, and political approach to issues.
- Identify and evaluate arguments expressing diverse points of view in relation to course topics
- Construct strong arguments in support of well-reasoned conclusions
- Approach and analyze new topics and contexts from ethical, legal, and political

standpoints.

In addition, students will develop their written, oral, and critical skills in these ways:

- By doing tutorial homework assignments and engaging in tutorial discussions through the term, students will develop skills of critical analysis, critical writing, and interactive engagement with others concerning course material.
- By participating in in-class discussions (in both large and small groups), students will become stronger and more confident speakers.
- Through philosophical essays designed to promote the synthesizing and consolidating of course material, students will sharpen their critical writing and critical thinking skills.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Three** 1000-word philosophy essays (15% each=45%)
In each paper, you will engage in critical philosophical analysis and argument, requiring you to develop and defend your position on an issue we discuss in class. You will receive detailed instructions and a list of topics to choose from for each of these essays.
DUE DATES: October 6, November 4 (not a class meeting day), December 1
2. Tutorial homework assignments and tutorial attendance (20%)
Each week you will have a one-hour tutorial. You are expected to attend weekly. The homework and assignments for tutorials will vary from week to week, but will typically involve a short written component that you complete at home followed by an in-class oral component, drawing on the homework and involving work/discussion in small groups. Details to be provided.
3. Final examination (35%)
The final examination will be a combination of short and long answer questions based on material covered in the course readings, lectures, and tutorial content (homework and in-class work). The exam will be held in the examination period, December 10-21. Exact date and time TBA.

AUDIT

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

POLICIES

Late Policy: Essays are due to the OWL site under the relevant assignment **by 11:55 p.m. on the due date**. Essays arriving after the due date will be penalized 3 points per day for one week. After one week they will receive a grade of zero. See the medical policy if you require accommodation for medical reasons.

E-mail Policy: My preference is always to meet with students face to face, during office hours or by appointment. If you have a minor matter that requires a brief response, or you would like

to arrange an appointment to see me outside of office hours, feel free to e-mail me (tisaacs@uwo.ca). I'll do my best to get back to you quickly, and certainly within a day or two. If you don't hear from me within a couple of days, that means your message got lost in the shuffle and you need to try me again!

Policy on the use of laptops and other electronic devices in the classroom: [to be devised collectively, as a group agreement, by the class] Things to consider: Screens and sounds can be a distraction to others, so at a minimum please keep all devices on silent during class and devise a policy that minimizes distraction to others. My hope is that you will keep your use as focused as possible on what will promote your learning and engagement with this class, leaving other uses of these wonderful tools for another time. I look forward to seeing what you come up with. For more ideas about the use of electronics in the class see blog posts from Professor Shannon Dea (Philosophy at Waterloo) here: <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/blog/post/electronics-classroom-time-hit-escape-key> and Professor Philip Guo (Computer Science at California at San Diego) here: <http://www.pgbovine.net/class-laptop-policy.htm>

Prerequisites: "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."

This course has no prerequisite.

The **Department of Philosophy Policies**, which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://www.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.

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.

Students are directed to view the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf

Policy on 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 the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Statement on Use of Plagiarism Software

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>).

Accessibility Statement

Your well-being and success in this course are important to me. I recognize that there are multiple ways to learn and that this multiplicity should be acknowledged in the design and structure of university courses and the evaluation of their participants. Every student is entitled to a meaningful and stimulating learning experience. Disabled students are also strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the services provided by the campus Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). The SSD Office is located in the Western Student Services Building, Room 4111. Their contact information is: **Phone:** (519) 661-2147 **Email:** ssd@uwo.ca and you can find out more at their website: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

Additional Links

- Registrarial Services (<http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>)
- Student Support Services (<http://westernusc.ca/services/>)