

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-2018  
Philosophy 1020  
Introduction to Philosophy

Term: Autumn, 2017 and Winter/Spring, 2018

Meeting Times: T, 2:30-3:30; Th, 2:30-3:30; plus a one-hour tutorial per week

Class Location: AHB 1R40

Instructor: Professor Anthony Skelton

Office Location: Western Interdisciplinary Research Building 7178

Office Hours: T, 3:30-4:30; Th, 3:30-4:30

E-mail: askelto4@uwo.ca

Phone: 519-661-2111, 87953

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will be devoted to a range of historically important questions in philosophy. We will explore in particular issues in the following four core areas of philosophy:

1. Epistemology: This is the area of philosophy in which the focus is on knowledge and the justification of belief. We shall consider such questions as: What is knowledge? What is the nature of justification? Is knowledge possible? Are any of our beliefs justified? Are we able to choose what to believe?
2. Metaphysics: This is the area of philosophy in which the focus is on what exists or is the case. We shall consider such questions as: Does God exist? Are there minds or souls? Are there bodies? Do we possess freedom of the will? What is the nature of truth and falsity?
3. Ethics: This is the area of philosophy in which the focus is on the nature of right and wrong, good and bad. We shall consider such questions as: What makes an action right or wrong, permissible or impermissible? What makes something good or bad?

4. Practical Ethics: This the area of philosophy in which the focus is on how one ought to live and on how society ought to regulate itself. We shall consider such questions as: How many people ought there to be? How ought we to react to the fact of global warming? What ought to be done about global poverty? How ought we to treat non-human animals? What justifies punishment?

### TEXTS

All readings found on-line through the OWL site for this course.

### OBJECTIVES

This course has four main objectives. The first is to acquaint students with some historically important problems in philosophy, their articulation and their attempted resolution. The second is to provide students with a deeper appreciation of the ways in which philosophy impacts on our daily lives. The third is to equip students with some of the skills required for conducting philosophical research. The fourth is to help students develop the ability to express philosophical concepts and arguments clearly and economically in writing.

### COURSE SCHEDULE: Autumn Term

Week One (Sept 7): **Organization and Introduction**

Reading: None

Week Two (Sept 11): **The Value of Philosophy**

Readings: Thomas Hurka, "How to get to the Top - - Study Philosophy"; Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"

Week Three (Sept 18): **Descartes's Argument; Foundationalism; Skepticism**

Reading: Descartes, *First Meditation*; Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.1-5

Week Four (Sept 25): **Free Will; Voluntarism about belief**

Readings: Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.6; Galen Strawson, "Your Move: The Maze of Free Will"; Bernard Williams, "Deciding to Believe," 136-37, 147-48

**NOTE: First Essay Assignment is due on Thursday, Sept 28, 2017**

Week Five (Oct 2): **Cogito Ergo Sum; Dualism**

Readings: Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.7-12; Descartes and Elizabeth of Bohemia, *Letters*

Week Six (Oct 9): **Reading Week: No Classes**

Week Seven (Oct 16): **The Ontological Argument; The Cosmological Argument**

Readings: Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.13-15; Anselm, *Prologion*, Chs 2-4; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* First part, question 2, Article 3, "Whether God Exists"

Week Eight (Oct 23): **Pascal's Wager; The Argument from Design**

Readings: Pascal, *Penses*, paragraphs 233-234; Paley, *Natural Theology*, chs. 1-2, beginning of 3 (pp. 7-16)

Week Nine (Oct 30): **Evolution and natural selection; Certainty**

Readings: Jerry Coyne, *Why Evolution is True*, 3-14; Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, 1.22, 29-39, 43-46

**NOTE: Second Essay Assignment is due on Thursday, Nov 2, 2017**

Week Ten (Nov 6): **Belief and Knowledge**

Readings: H. A. Prichard, *Knowledge and Perception*, 86-91; Norman Malcolm, "Knowledge and Belief," 58-72

Week Eleven (Nov 13): **Gettier Cases and the Causal Theory of Knowledge**

Readings: Edmond Gettier, "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?"; Alvin Goldman, "A Causal Theory of Knowing," 369-72

Week Twelve (Nov 20): **Truth: Correspondence and Pragmatist**

Readings: Bertrand Russell, "Truth and Falsehood" in *The Problems of Philosophy*, 69-71; William James, "Pragmatism's Conception of Truth" in *Pragmatism and The Meaning of Truth*, 95-108

Week Thirteen (Nov 27): **Truth: Platonism and Nominalism**

Readings: Plato, *Phaedo* 65a-67b, 74a-77a; David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* Book I, Part I, secs 1 and 7

Week Fourteen (Dec 4): **Natural Kinds and Race**

Readings: Plato, *Statesman* 262a-263a; Jerry Coyne, *Why Evolution is True*, 3-14; John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic* Vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. 7, Sec. 4, first three paragraphs; Sally Haslanger, "Future Genders? Future Races?," 4-11; Michael Root, "How We Divide the World"

COURSE SCHEDULE: Winter/Spring Term

Week One (Jan 8): **Problem of Evil and Utilitarianism**

Readings: GW Leibniz, *Monadology*, paragraphs 31-32, 53-55; GW Leibniz, *The Theodicy: Abridgment of the Argument*, Objection 1; Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch 1

Week Two (Jan 15): **Kant**

Reading: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 9-15, 40-42

Week Three (Jan 22): **Kant and Ross**

Readings: Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 9-15, 40-42; W. D. Ross, "What Makes Right Acts Right?," 17-47

Week Four (Jan 29): **Ross and catchup**

Reading: No new readings

Week Five (Feb 5): **The Trolley Problem**

Reading: Judith Thomson, "The Trolley Problem," *Yale Law Journal* 94 (1985), 1395-1401 (to the bottom, including the first three paragraphs of part IV).

**NOTE: Third Essay Assignment is due on Thursday, Feb 8, 2018**

Week Six (Feb 12): **Do the Numbers Count?**

Reading: John Taurek, "Should the Numbers Count?" *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 6 (1977), 293-94 (the first two paragraphs of the paper), and 299-307 (From "Suppose the drug ..." on p. 299 to "...an equal chance to be spared his loss" on p. 307).

Week Seven (Feb 19): **Reading Week: No Classes**

Week Eight (Feb 26): **Population Ethics**

Reading: Derek Parfit, "Overpopulation and the Quality of Life"

Week Nine (Mar 5): **Global Warming and Collective Responsibility**

Readings: John Broome, *Climate Matters*, 49-64; Tracy Isaacs, "Collective Responsibility and Collective Obligation," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 38 (2014), 40-46

**NOTE: Fourth Essay Assignment is due on Thursday, Mar 8, 2018**

Week Ten (Mar 12): **Global Ethics**

Readings: Peter Singer, "Famine, Affluence, and Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1 (1972), 229-43; Colin McGinn, "Our Duties to Animals and the Poor"

Week Eleven (Mar 19): **Obligations to Non-human Animals**

Readings: Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal"; Tom Regan, "The Rights of Humans and Other Animals"

Week Twelve (Mar 26): **Punishment**

Reading: Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Ch 13; Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, "On the Right to Punish and to Grant Clemency"

Week Thirteen (April 2): **Moral Saints**

Reading: Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints"

Week Fourteen (April 9): **Review**

Reading: No readings

## REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Tutorial Participation

Value: 10 percent of final grade (5 percent per term)

### 2. Essay 1

Due date: Thursday, Sept. 28, 2017

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

### 3. Essay 2

Due date: Thursday, Nov. 2, 2017

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

### 4. Mid-term Examination

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar

Length: Two Hours

Value: 20 percent of final grade

### 5. Essay 3

Due date: Thursday, Feb. 8, 2018

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

### 6. Essay 4

Due date: Thursday, Mar. 8, 2018

Length: No more than 800 words

Value: 10 percent of final grade

### 7. Final Examination

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar  
Length: Three Hours  
Value: 30 percent of final grade

## REGULATIONS

### 1. Audit

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

### 2. Submission of essays

Please submit your assignments electronically. Do not submit a paper copy.

In order to submit your assignment, visit the OWL site for this course. On the left-hand navigation menu you will find the assignment tool. Click on this tool and you will find the assignment guidelines and basic instructions for submitting your assignment. To submit your assignment upload it and click on the submit button at the bottom of the page.

A corrected version of your paper will be returned to you through the OWL site.

### 3. Turnitin.com

All required papers will 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 will be included as course 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>).

### 4. Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10 percent 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 the 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://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

## 5. Late essays and penalties

An essay will be considered late if it is handed in after the due date without a prearranged extension (or after the extended date, in the case of an extension). Late essays will be penalized at the rate of three percentage points per day late. Essays more than ten days late will not be accepted.

## 6. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Plagiarism is unacknowledged copying or paraphrasing of the words or ideas of another person. In general, anyone who learns something from a source (other than course lectures or general background knowledge any student of the course could reasonably be expected to have) and then presents that knowledge as their own discovery is considered to have plagiarized, even if the words used to express the ideas are not exactly the same.

Examples of plagiarism include: misrepresenting co-authored or group work as individually done, cutting and pasting copied or paraphrased work by others in with your own work, paraphrasing or otherwise altering the order of words or phrases and/or substituting words or phrases of similar meaning without acknowledgement that you are doing so, aiding and abetting such offences, among others.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Scholastic offences are taken very seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence: [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)

## 7. E-mail policy

I am not able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over e-mail. I will deal with such concerns or questions during my office hours only. If you have a problem turning in an assignment on time or you need to make an appointment with me or you have some private issue you wish to communicate to me, feel free to use e-mail. Otherwise, please attend my office hours or make an appointment to see me.

## 8. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Feel free to use electronic devices in class but please use them for academic purposes only.

## 9. Prerequisites

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission form 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.

10. 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://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.

11. Mental Health

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 and holidays).

The policy on Accommodation for Mental Illness is here:

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

12. Support Services

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

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

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

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