

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2017-18
Philosophy 1130G: Big Ideas
(Previously Philosophy 024)

Winter Term 2018 Lectures: T 10:30-11:30, UCC 41 Th 10:30-11:30, P&AB 106 (plus 1-hour weekly tutorial)	Instructor: Prof. DiSalle Stevenson 4142 Office Hours: T-Th 11:30- 12:30 (and by appointment) 661-2111 x85763 rdisalle@uwo.ca
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DESCRIPTION

This course will discuss some of the ideas that have shaped modern culture, politics, science, and philosophy. These “big ideas” are familiar and widely debated in our culture. What we often miss is how closely they are connected with philosophy. Many of the most powerful and influential ideas-- not only in philosophy, politics, and culture, but even in science and technology--developed through philosophical reflections on human problems. Thinkers such as Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King, Hannah Arendt, Charles Darwin, Alan Turing, and Isaac Newton began by asking new philosophical questions about old and established beliefs. Reading and discussing original texts by these and other authors, we will try to understand some of the most revolutionary and interesting of these ideas from a critical philosophical perspective. We will talk about the impact that they have had, might have, or ought to have on our lives and thought. “Big ideas” to be discussed include: justice, equality, evolution, infinity, freedom, determinism, materialism, computation, artificial intelligence, theism, atheism, skepticism, certainty, progress, evil, 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 15% of final mark); one final exam (40%); active participation in tutorials (15%).

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.

