

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2018-19**

**Philosophy 1200-200&650: Reasoning and Critical Thinking**

**Fall and Winter Term 2018-19**  
**Section 200 W 9:30 - 10:30**  
**Classroom: TC 141**  
**Section 650 online**

**Instructor: Chris Viger**  
**STVH 4149**  
**Fall Office Hours: W 11:30-1:30**  
**Winter Office Hours: W 2:30-4:30**  
**519-661-2111 x 85755**  
**cviger@uwo.ca**

**DESCRIPTION**

This course offers students important critical reading, writing, and thinking skills for being successful at university and in the workplace. Students are taught criteria behind language use, which motivates the criteria of good reasoning. Based on these criteria students learn to represent the structure of complicated reasoning and how to assess it and construct it, with specific techniques for deductive and inductive reasoning. These methods are then applied to practical reasoning, particularly in the context of ethical decision making, as well as scientific and numerical reasoning. The course concludes by examining belief acquisition and the nature of bias using converging evidence from a number of research disciplines.

**TEXTS**

Critical Thinking: An introduction to the Basic Skills 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, W. Hughes and J. Lavery. Broadview Press (2015).

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand language as a representational system with pragmatic uses.
2. Learn to identify and represent the structure of complex reasoning, particularly in academic writing.
3. Learn specific assessments methods for deductive and inductive reasoning.
4. Apply methods of representation and assessment in the student's writing.
5. Understand reasoning more broadly in practical reasoning contexts.
6. Learn methods for evaluating scientific and numerical results as a non-specialist.
7. Learn to recognize multiple factors in belief formation and resulting biases.

**REQUIREMENTS**

|                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Weekly Assignments             | 20% |
| Weekly Tutorial Participation  | 10% |
| Practice Exercises             | 10% |
| Short Critical Essay           | 10% |
| Midyear Examination (December) | 20% |
| Final Examination              | 30% |

## **AUDIT**

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

## **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://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.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

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

## **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

[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)

## **PLAGIARISM CHECKING**

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>.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

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

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

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

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

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.