

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline**

Philosophy 2021A: Oppositions and Paradoxes

Fall Term
Monday 1:30-3:30, Wednesday 1:30-2:40
VAC 100

Instructor: Professor John L. Bell
St H 4130

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DESCRIPTION

In this course we will investigate the role played in philosophical and scientific thought by *basic oppositions*, such as the Continuous and the Discrete, the One and the Many, the Finite and the Infinite. We shall also analyze the many paradoxes that have arisen in the history of philosophy and science – e. g Zeno's paradoxes, the Liar Paradox, Russell's paradox, paradoxes of the infinite, and paradoxes arising in relativity theory, quantum theory and time travel.

TEXTS

Oppositions and Paradoxes : Philosophical Perplexities in Science and Mathematics. Broadview Press, 2016. Book available for purchase in bookstore. or online
<https://broadviewpress.com/product/opposition-and-paradoxes/#tab-description>

OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this course is as to convey to students the importance of basic oppositions and paradoxes in scientific and philosophical thought.

REQUIREMENTS

The final grade for the course will be evaluated on the basis of two essays and a final exam, weighted equally. The first essay will be due half-way through the semester on a date to be announced, and the second essay will be due on the last day of classes. Essays may only be submitted late if a good reason, acceptable to the instructor, is provided.

A good essay for this course should:

- (i) contain some discussion of an opposition or a paradox; it should *not* be just a list of dates, or purely biographical;

- (ii) be interesting and comprehensible to the reader (and of course the writer); in particular, unnecessary technical jargon should be avoided;
- (iii) give some indication that the writer understands the ideas involved;
- (iv) be written essentially in the writer's own words – quotations from other sources should be clearly indicated and referenced;
- (v) be 3000-4000 words in length.

The final examination will be of two hours' duration. Students will be asked to write on an opposition or paradox of their choice and to provide brief answers to a few general questions arising from material discussed in the course.

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://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 (<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>).

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>).”

Additional Links

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