

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2019-2020**  
**Winter Term 2018**

**Philosophy 2661G: Philosophy of Religion**  
**Course Outline**

**REVISION 2 06/01/2020 12:41**

<b>Winter Term 2020</b>	<b>Instructor: Prof. Louis C. Charland, PhD</b>
<b>Tue 9:30-10:30, Thu 9:30-11:30</b>	<b>Office Hours: Tue 11:30-12:30, , Thu 12:00-13:00</b>
<b>Classroom: P&amp;AB 148</b>	<b>Tel: (519) 661-2111 x86445</b>
<b>Office: Health Science Building 217</b>	<b>Email: <a href="mailto:charland@uwo.ca">charland@uwo.ca</a></b>

**OFFICIAL DESCRIPTION**

An examination of issues in philosophy of religion, focusing on arguments concerning the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the occurrence of miracles, the validity of religious experience, and the place of religion in morality. Independent critical thinking is stressed, and no particular religious views are presupposed.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This current version of the course will depart from this standard description in focusing on the distinction between religion and spirituality, various approaches to spirituality, and especially the nature of ‘religious’ experience in the thought of William James.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Assorted Articles on the Course OWL website under ‘Resources’. <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal>  
See the Course Schedule of Topics Readings for dates and specific readings for this course.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Introduce students to the philosophy of religion and spirituality
- Encourage students to formulate and defend their own views on these topics
- Develop philosophical, critical thinking, interpretive and evaluative, skills
- Foster general scholarly and professional skills and attitude in all aspects of the course

**EVALUATION**

Essay-Style Test 1 | Out of 30 marks | Worth 30% final mark |  
Thursday February 13, 9:30-11:20 | Written in-class (1 hour 50 min.)

Essay | Out of 100 marks | Worth 30% final mark |  
Due March 19, 11:30 in class and online through the course website assignment function.

Community Participation Commentary | Out of 10 marks | weighted at 10% of final mark.  
Due any time before the last day of class (inclusive).

Final Exam | Out of 30 marks | Worth 30% of final mark.  
Date and Time TBA

## **CLASS LECTURES**

Students are expected to attend class lectures and participate in class discussions. However, class lectures and discussions are just an introduction to the topics and arguments in the readings that concern us. You need to do the real work on your own. Indeed, it is expected that students will read, analyze, and summarize all class readings on their own, using class lectures as their guide. Doing well in this course requires independent work that goes beyond merely summarizing class lecture and discussion material. You must have studied the readings in more depth on your own to do well. Be aware that there are no official posted class lecture notes (power point slides etc.) in this class. Students with medical accommodation can expect some help in this regard by meeting with the course instructor, if they ask in time.

## **IN-CLASS TEST AND FINAL EXAM**

There will be 1 essay style test in this course. The test will be 1 hour 50 minutes duration and out of 30 full marks. The test is worth 30% of the final mark. Tests will consist of a choice of 2 or 3 essay-style questions out of a possible 4 or 5, taken from our weekly readings. Some short answer questions may be included in some versions of the test, in which case there will only be 2 essay-style questions. Be very careful to use the proper spelling of names of authors we have discussed or you will lose 1 mark per error. Short answer questions testing basic definitions and your understanding of key themes and notions may be included in your test and exam.

There will be 1 essay style final exam in this course. This exam will only cover course readings since the mid-term in-class test. The exam is out of 30 full marks, with some short answer questions, in addition to a choice of 2 or 3 out of a possible 4-5 possible essay questions. The exam is worth 30% of your total course mark. It will be 3 hours in duration, with no aids.

## **ESSAY TOPICS**

You must select your essay topic from the weekly topics and readings listed in our course schedule of readings. Your essay must reflect appropriate knowledge of general issues and other course readings that pertain to your topic. The essay is not a straightforward stand-alone assignment on one reading. The essay must interpret and analyze your topic and at the same time demonstrate knowledge of other, relevant and related class materials. The best way to do this – prove this – is to use citations from other class readings.

The general purpose of your essay is to ‘interpret and evaluate’ the main points and arguments in your chosen course reading(s). Roughly 70% of your total essay mark will be devoted to the more descriptive interpretive aspects of your reading(s), while the remaining 30% must be devoted to your own personal evaluation of the essay article. Think of yourself as teaching a prospective student about your chosen reading(s). Your essay will be marked out of 100 full marks, according to the following standardized table, taken from the Western University *Academic Calendar*:

University-wide grade descriptors:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and

		eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Remember that essays must be strictly based on, and directly refer and report on, course readings. Speculations and examples based on materials from other courses are therefore inappropriate in your essay for this course. You may allude to materials in films we have seen (if any), but these cannot form the substance of your discussion, which must be traceable to course readings. Try and choose a topic we have not studied extensively in class, in order to maximize your chances of writing an original essay and not repeating material we know already (which might earn less marks for creativity critical thinking and originality). The overall purpose of your essay is to teach us/me something new and original in our course readings, by discussing those readings. Your mark depends on how successful you are in describing your topic and evaluating the points and arguments make in it. Don't be scared to choose a reading we have not discussed extensively in class.

### **ESSAY FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS**

Each essay will be 8-10 pages, excluding separate title and bibliography pages. Essays must be double-spaced in 12 point font. All pages must be numbered consecutively, except the title page, which counts as '0' (preferable hidden). The title page should include your name and student number, course name and number, and the essay title. Endnotes may be included on a separate numbered page at the end of your essay. Footnotes in the body of the text are also acceptable. You must include a numbered bibliographical page at the very end of your essay citing the specific readings considered in your essay. You may use any Reference Manual Style for your essay – just be consistent.

You must include up to 10 direct citations, sometimes also called 'quotations', in your essay. (I will count them!) These should be taken from the weekly readings you select for your essay. When quoting from those readings you must be careful to format your citations properly, according to the reference style you have chosen.

Essays that do not meet the above criteria will be returned and late penalties will apply. You may lose up to 10 marks for improper or careless essay formatting style: one flaw, one mark. Note that this is a research component of your essay and entirely your responsibility. Help is available at the Western Student Development Centre's Learning Help Centre.

### **LATE ESSAYS AND PENALTIES**

Late essays will be penalized one-half letter grade, or equivalent, per day late. Thus, one day late translates to minus one half-letter grade; for example, B+ to B, and so on. All late essays will require a documented excuse from your academic counselor which must be emailed directly to me at charland@uwo.ca . Leave late hard copies at Philosophy Essay Box, Stevenson Hall, Near 1st Floor Elevator.

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION COMMENTARY**

During the course of the term, each student will be expected to get acquainted with - and hopefully visit – a local 'frontline' mental health and well-being service organization of their

choice ( a sample list will be provided), and write a 3-4 page 12-point font double-spaced commentary describing the service and any barriers clients may face in utilizing the service. A special instruction sheet will be posted on OWL providing further information on this community participation exercise at the beginning of the course.

### **FILMS**

Films may be shown during regular lecture hours and all students are expected to attend. Due to logistical and practical realities surrounding the availability of films, these can only be shown once. The films are designed to enrich your experience of the materials covered in the course. But like guest lectures or other special events, they are a one-time thing. If you miss a film, do your best to discuss the film with friends. Please note that films are not available for lending under any conditions. Some films may be available through the UWO library. Some may be available on You Tube or other public media. Please check your course website or course outline for film titles and film questions before coming to classes in which films are shown (this will be specified in your course schedule). At times, film questions may be introduced at the start of each film session. The viewing of films involves ‘active’ and ‘critical’ watching and listening on your part.

### **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).

### **SELF- REPORTED ABSENCE FORM**

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

[http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading\\_322](http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_322)

### **EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive assessment of work accounting for at least 15% of their final grade. For 3000- or 4000-level courses in which such a graded assessment is impracticable, the instructor(s) must obtain an exemption from this policy from the Dean and this exemption must be noted on the corresponding course syllabus. In rare instances and at the Dean's discretion, other courses could receive a similar exemption, which also must be noted in the course syllabus.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENT**

The last day of scheduled classes in any course will be the last day on which course assignments will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

### **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](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.

**THIS OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE MAY BE REVISED WITH PRIOR NOTICE DUE TO CLASS ENROLMENT AND OTHER FACTORS**

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