

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2019-20**

**Phil 2700F: An Introduction to Ethics and Value Theory**

**Fall 2019**

**Class Hours: Tues 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.,**

**Thurs 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.**

**Room: UC 3110**

**Instructor: Dr. Ryan Robb**

**Office: Stevenson Hall, room 4149**

**Office Hours: Thurs 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

**e-mail: rrobb@uwo.ca**

**DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to the attempts by scholars to understand whether, and the degree to which, humans can/should be held responsible for their actions. Do humans have ethical duties and responsibilities toward one another or themselves? If so, what are the foundations of those ethical duties, and what do they demand? Our survey of the scholarly responses to these questions will be separated in two parts: First a review of prominent positions on meta-ethics, followed by a survey of the five most important ethical theories.

**TEXTS**

Wilfrid J. Waluchow, *The Dimensions of Ethics; An Introduction to Ethical Theory*. (Broadview Press, 2003).

H. Geirsson and M.R. Holmgren, *Ethical Theory: A Concise Anthology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Broadview Press, 2018).

**OBJECTIVES**

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to and/or build upon a set of standard philosophical skills. Using the readings, lectures, and essay assignments this course will help students to identify what it is that makes the set of reasons that support the conclusions of an argument either convincing or implausible by requiring them to formulate well-reasoned responses in their two essays.

The secondary goal of this course is to introduce students to the historically dominant discussions of ethical concerns undertaken by philosophers. Their grasp of those discussions will be assessed on the mid-term and final exams.

**REQUIREMENTS**

15% - In-Class test

60% - two 1250 – 1500 word essays, worth 30% each

25% - Final Exam (to be scheduled by the registrar during the 2019 mid-year examination period, i.e., December 8<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>st</sup>, 2019)

**AUDIT**

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

## COURSE POLICIES

### 1. Submission of essays:

You will need to submit paper copies of your essays in class, as well as an electronic copy to OWL.

In order to submit your assignment electronically, simply 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.

### 2. Extensions:

If you fail to meet the submission dates for the two essays, extensions may be granted only as a result of a petition to the Academic Counselor of the student's faculty (barring a student's use of the new 48 hour 'Self-Reported Absence Form', outlined below). **Instructors have no authority to waive this requirement, and any unofficial arrangements they make with students will not be respected by the administration.**

All course work must be submitted by the last day of classes, i.e., Thursday December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Academic policies on examinations, appeals, absences due to illness, etc. may be found in the 2019-20 Academic Calendar. For further information, contact your Faculty's Academic Counselor.

### 3. Late penalties:

An essay will be considered late if a paper copy is not handed in by the end of lecture on the day that it is due. Late essays will be penalized at the rate of **five** percentage points on the first day it is late, followed by a deduction of **one** percentage point for each subsequent day.

### 4. E-mail policy:

I am **not** able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over e-mail (i.e., I won't discuss concepts/arguments covered in the materials by e-mail). I will address those concerns or questions during my office hours (or by appointment) **only**. If you need to make an appointment with me or you have some private issue you would like to communicate to me, feel free to use e-mail. Otherwise, please attend my office hours (or make an appointment).

## 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 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 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.