

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-24**

Philosophy 3450F: Philosophy of Neuroscience

Fall Term 2023-2024

Instructor: N/A

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Advances in neurotechnology over the past two decades have injected new life into old debates about the nature of consciousness, personhood, the self, personal identity, free will, autonomy, privacy, moral responsibility, and neurotypicality. Neuroscientists can now use neurotechnology to communicate with persons in chronic vegetative states, augment the brain's natural capabilities, implant and erase memories, restore functions in persons with severe brain damage, ameliorate the symptoms of some mental illnesses, and even create miniature human brains that may or may not have qualitative experiences. The aim of this course is to engage in lively debates around each of these developments. The course should be of interest to students majoring in philosophy of mind, philosophy of science, ethics, psychology, cognitive science and/or neuroscience.

TEXTS

A combination of philosophical, scientific, and popular press articles extracted from philosophical and scientific journals, books, textbooks, and anthologies will be made available to students as PDF files on OWL.

OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will have developed a detailed understanding of some of the major philosophical issues that emerge around recent advances in neurotechnology. They also will have learned how to critically evaluate seminal philosophical works that engage with these issues, as well as how to formulate and defend an argument on a topic in this research area that interests them.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

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| (1) Attendance & Participation | 15% |
| (2) Collaborative in-class presentation on a set of assigned readings | 20% |
| (3) Mid-term exam | 20% |
| (4) In-class presentation of final paper project | 15% |
| (5) Final paper | 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 that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <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.

EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

At least three days prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty, students will receive an 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

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.