

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2023-24

PHILOSOPHY 3730G
Research Ethics

Winter Term

Instructor: N/A

PREREQUISITE CHECKING

None

DESCRIPTION

The course will provide students in science, health science and the humanities with an introduction to ethical issues in human experimentation. The course will review relevant history, an ethical framework for research ethics, and cover core topics, including informed consent, confidentiality, benefit-harm analysis, participant selection, vulnerable participants and communities. Special topics, such as randomized controlled trials, Covid-19 human challenge studies, gene therapy trials, cluster randomized trials, social science research, and health policy and systems research may also be covered.

TEXTS

Readings are made available through the Course Readings tab on the OWL website.

OBJECTIVES

The course has three main objectives. First, it will familiarize students with the history of research involving human participants and the development of major ethical codes and regulations. Second, it will expose them to a variety of key ethical issues and concepts raised by research involving human participants. Third, it will give students an opportunity to apply key ethical concepts to real cases selected from the scientific literature.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Your grade for the course will be based on quizzes, case analyses, and a final exam.

1. Quizzes

When: Five quizzes are given during the term (January 19, February 2, February 16, March 8, March 22)

Format: Definitions and short answer questions based on the lectures and assigned readings. You will be asked about key concepts and arguments. Quizzes have a 25-minute time limit and are closed book. Responses to questions must observe the stated word limit. Responses that exceed the word limit will receive a grade of 0.

Value: The lowest quiz grade will be dropped from the average. 20% of final grade

Late penalty: If you miss a quiz, you cannot take it at a later date. Medical documentation is required for a missed quiz. If medical documentation is provided, the missed quiz will be removed from your grade and the remaining will be reweighted accordingly. If no medical documentation

is received, you will receive a grade of 0% on the quiz.

Medical “documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean’s office, and it will be the Dean’s office that will make the determination whether academic consideration is warranted. Given the University’s Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy, instructors may not collect medical documentation.” DO NOT send me medical documentation directly.

2. Case analyses

When: Two case analyses are assigned during the term (February 12, April 1)

Format: Write an ethical analysis of an assigned scientific case, drawing on course readings, that addresses six questions. Responses to questions must observe the stated word limit. Responses that exceed the word limit will receive a grade of 0.

Value: 50% of final grade (25% each)

Submission instructions: Please submit a digital copy to the OWL website. There is a late penalty of 5% per day.

3. Final exam

When: During exam period

Format: Three-hour in-person exam. Similar format to the quiz and case analysis questions.

Value: 30% of the final grade

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.