

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2024—25

Course Number: PHILOSOP 1020
Introduction to Philosophy

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course OWL BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

PREREQUISITE and ANTI-REQUISITE CHECKING

This course has no prerequisites.

Philosoph 1000E, 1022E, 1100E, 1250F/G, 1300E, and 1350 F/G are anti-requisites.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will study some of the most profound problems in the following core areas of philosophy:

1. Epistemology or the theory of knowledge. We shall consider such questions as: Is knowledge possible? How, if at all, is it possible to justify one's own beliefs, or to resolve conflicts with the beliefs of others? Does science provide a true picture of the world?
2. Metaphysics or the theory of what exists. We shall consider such questions as: Does God exist? What is the nature of the mind, and what is its relation to the physical world? Is the human mind different from a computer? Do we possess freedom of the will?
3. Ethics or the study of the nature of right and wrong, good and bad. We shall consider such questions as: What makes an action right or wrong, permissible or impermissible? What makes something good or bad?
4. Practical Ethics or the study of how one ought to live. We shall consider such questions as: Is abortion permissible? Is Medical Assistance in Dying morally justified? Is there an obligation to alleviate poverty in developing nations? Is it permissible to eat non-human animals? Is mandatory vaccination justified?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, students who have attended all the lectures and tutorials, completed the readings and all the assignments will

1. Understand some of the important problems in philosophy, their articulation and their attempted resolution.

2. Possess the ability to identify, properly analyse, formulate, and evaluate an argument or a philosophical position.
3. Possess some of the skills required for writing clearly and economically and for conversing knowledgeably about philosophical topics.
4. Possess a deeper appreciation of the ways in which philosophy matters to daily life.

TEXTS

All course readings are found online – free! – through the course OWL BrightSpace page for this course.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Students in this course will be evaluated using the following assignments.

1. Attendance and participation in weekly tutorials.

Point: Each student is required to attend a weekly tutorial; it is an opportunity to reflect on and to discuss course material with peers and a teaching assistant.

Value: 10 percent of final grade.

2. In-class writing assignments.

Due date: To be done in tutorials in weeks 3, 6, 9, and 12 of each term.

Value: 20 percent of final grade.

To receive credit for these assignments you must attend the tutorial.

3. Mid-term Exam in first term.

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar.

Length: Two Hours.

Value: 15 percent final grade.

4. Final Exam in first term.

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar.

Length: Three Hours.

Value: 20 percent of final grade.

5. Mid-term Exam in second term.

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar.

Length: Two Hours.

Value: 15 percent of final grade.

6. Final Exam in second term.

Due Date: To be determined by the Office of the Registrar

Length: Three Hours.

Value: 20 percent of final grade.

AUDIT

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

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend all lectures and required to attend your weekly tutorial.

E-MAIL POLICY

The instructor is not able to respond to philosophical concerns or questions over email. These are to be dealt with in office hours only. Use email only if you wish to make an appointment with the instructor or have some business or administrative issue that can be dealt with briefly. When you write an email to the instructor, please make sure to include your name and student number in the email message.

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.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No aids are permitted for this exam. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted.

STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If unauthorized AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for **research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines**, and other materials used in **preparing assignments**. Students are expected to **retain** these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

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

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATION

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of Faculty in which the student is registered.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a [Western Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner. Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Western's Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays can be found here: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf.

In the case of mid-term tests, notification is to be "given in writing to the instructor as early as possible, but not later than **one week** prior to the writing of the test".

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.

SCHOLASTIC 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

ACADEMIC ADVISING

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) 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 (24/7 availability).

GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.