

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2024-25

**PHILOSOP 4107F**  
**History of the Philosophy of Race**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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

**PREREQUISITE CHECKING**

Prerequisites: At least 60% in 1.0 Philosophy course at the 2000-2999 level, or permission of the department.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the prerequisites for this course or have special permission to take the course without the prerequisites. [Student Responsibility for Course Selection](#)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Among the many innovations credited to the thinkers of the long 18th century, perhaps the most infamous is the invention of the concept of race. In this seminar we will look closely at the 18th century discussion of this concept by both prominent thinkers (including Hume and Kant) and less well-known but influential figures (such as C. Meiners and J. F. Blumenbach), and we will consider a variety of issues including but not limited to the monogenesis/polygenesis debate and the rise of “scientific” racism. In addition, we will consider the work of an African-born thinker in the period, the German philosopher Anton Wilhelm Amo.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students completing this course successfully will (1) be familiar with some of the key works of major and minor figures in the history of philosophy of race, (2) have demonstrated an ability to comprehend complex philosophical arguments and reflect critically upon them, and (3) be able to write concise argumentative papers exhibiting research competence.

**TEXTS**

*Kant and the Concept of Race: Late Eighteenth-Century Writings*, ed. and trans. J. Mikkelsen  
(Other texts will be distributed via the course OWL page)

**METHOD OF EVALUATION**

Your grade for this course will be determined through your contributions to class and through a final major research paper.

**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.

### **AUDIT**

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

### **STATEMENT ON THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

Use of AI tools such as ChatGPT is \*not\* forbidden in this course, but it is restricted to the purposes of brainstorming, information gathering, preliminary research, and improving expression. If you have made use of AI tools for your essay assignment you are required to specify the purposes for which you have used it in your paper itself (in, for instance, an initial footnote). Your final assignments should in any case reflect your own critical thinking and independent work.

### **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](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](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**

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

#### **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](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

#### **Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software**

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>).

#### **GENDER-BASED AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

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

connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

### **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 (24/7 availability).