**Philosophy 1305F: Questions of the Day**

**DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we will examine philosophical questions that are currently being debated in the public forum. We will consider each question from different perspectives with an aim to understanding the philosophical complexities of it. Students will be encouraged not only to see different sides to the issues that we discuss, but also to develop their own reasoned and informed view about them.

The questions we will cover include the following:

1. Is there a moral duty to contribute generously to famine relief?
2. Should *in vitro* fertilization be publicly funded?
3. Is medical aid in dying (i.e., physician-assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia) morally permissible?
4. What limits should there be on freedom of conscience or religion?
5. How should the controversy over sports team names, such as the Washington Redskins, be resolved?
6. Should governments classify people according to their sex or gender, and if so, how should they classify them?
7. Should the Canadian border be more open to new citizens or temporary workers?

**TEXTS**

Many of the materials for the course will be available online through the course website. But students will also be asked to purchase a small coursepack.

**OBJECTIVES**

1) To teach students about the nature of philosophical questions and how they inform public debate;
2) To foster students’ ability to think critically and autonomously about topics in philosophy;
3) To encourage in them an appreciation for the complexity of contemporary philosophical problems;
4) To develop their skills at analytic argument and their capacities for oral and written expression.

**REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to completing all of the required readings and attending and participating in class, students will be expected to do the following:

1) Complete short tutorial assignments, worth 10%;
2) Participate diligently in tutorials, worth 5%;
3) Write two essays (max. 1500 words), each worth 25%;
4) Write a final exam, worth 35%.

**AUDIT**

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

The [Department of Philosophy Policies](http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html) 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://www.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.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [http://www.uwo.ca/uwcom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwcom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.