

Philosophy 1020 Introduction to Philosophy



2011-2012
Lectures: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9.30-10.30
Middlesex College 110
plus one tutorial hour each week

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Office Hours:
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10.30-11.20

Course Description:

This is a 'big-picture' course, which endeavours to give a sense of the broad intellectual terrain surrounding such fundamental issues as religion, science, morality, political justice, and the nature of the cosmos and humanity's place in it. The aim is to help students to find their bearings in the welter of debates about these subjects that surround us. Among the particular matters covered will be religion and the existence of God, the nature of the mind or soul, artificial intelligence, personal identity, free will and determinism, problems in scientific reasoning, moral relativism, human rights, feminism, civil disobedience, gender and sexuality, theories of justice, the nature of science, and the meaning of life. Lectures and tutorials will focus on short readings both classical and contemporary, as well as on film and other media. The course is intended for – though not restricted to – students with no prior exposure to philosophy.

Objectives:

This course has two objectives. The first is to give students an initial grasp of the subject of philosophy, in much of its breadth, together with an understanding of some major views and positions in matters of metaphysics, epistemology, religion, morality, and political philosophy. The second is to develop students' critical skills, both in the close reading of argumentative texts, and in the writing of the same.

Requirements:

In addition to regular attendance at lectures and tutorials, and preparatory reading for them, the following will be required:

Five short (500 words) writing assignments on prescribed subjects (40%)

Two mid-year tests (November and February) (20%)

A cumulative final exam (30%)

A participation mark (10%) will reflect tutorial engagement; it may include occasional quizzes and other assignments.

Text:

Philosophy – the quest for truth, eighth edition, Louis P. Pojman & Lewis Vaughn, eds., Oxford University Press, 2011; additional readings will be posted online as required.

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** 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://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/proceduresappeals.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.